

Early Evaluation of the Techscaler Programme 2022-24

February 2026

Early Evaluation of the Techscaler Programme 2022-24

Main Report for the Scottish Government

February 2026



In partnership with



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Glossary

Different business stages are referred to within this evaluation report and this differs by source.

For the period (2022-2024) covered by this early evaluation of the Techscaler Programme, CodeBase defined four business stages as follows:

- **ideation** – an individual with an idea but no clear focus or commitment to building a company.
- **early-stage** – an individual focused on a specific market or problem space. The person may/may not have a registered business, prototype, or Minimum Viable Product (MVP) but are dedicating time to advancing their idea.
- **growth** – a company with a live product looking to acquire customers and may/may not have existing customers.
- **scaling** – a company with a live product, revenue, and a team including department heads/specialists (for example, product team, engineering team, growth team).

CodeBase has evolved its segmentation definitions based on user feedback, and the new definitions are being used for 2025 delivery and company categorisation. While the new definitions are not relevant for the timeline of this early evaluation we have presented them in the main body of report for information purposes. We refer to different business stages in our Conclusions and Recommendations Chapters and the new segmentation definitions provide relevant context.

To further support the reader, we have provided further clarity on other key definitions used within this evaluation report.

The [Scottish Innovation Strategy \(2023-2033\)](#) defines a startup as follows:

Startup – refers to a completely new business that wants to bring new ideas to a market and create innovative products and services. There is no defined timescale for what businesses are considered startup, but we have assumed they are under five years old.

The [Scottish National Investment Bank](#) (SNIB) defines a scaleup as follows:

Scaleup – businesses that have moved beyond startup and demonstrated rapid, sustained growth in revenue or employees, typically growing at least 20% annually over three years. That is, a company that maintains at least 20% annual growth in either employee headcount or revenue for three consecutive years – starting with at least 10 employees.

The SNIB definition is in line with that established by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to provide a clear benchmark for identifying companies in their growth phase.

It should be noted that the definition CodeBase uses for scaling (see Page 24 of this report) is not the same as the SNIB or OECD definition.

1 Introduction

1.1 This evaluation report

This report presents the findings from the independent early evaluation of the [Techscaler Programme](#) which was commissioned by the Scottish Government.

The evaluation was undertaken by EKOS, in partnership with Frontline and Research Resource, between January and December 2025. Representatives from the Chief Economist and Economic Development directorates in the Scottish Government have been part of the steering group to help guide the research.

The Techscaler Programme is the Scottish Government's flagship, transformational programme for creating, developing, and scaling digital technology (tech)¹ startups in Scotland. The overall policy proposal is to develop longstanding entrepreneurship infrastructure to propel startup and scaleup within the Scottish digital tech ecosystem.

The aims of the early evaluation were to:

- undertake an early indicative impact assessment in relation to emerging and intermediate outcomes achieved (for example, emerging and intermediate capabilities within supported individuals and companies, and across the ecosystem).
- undertake a process evaluation, and to provide a summary of the findings.
- identify lessons learned of Techscaler Programme delivery experience to date to facilitate continuous improvement in terms of implementation and delivery.
- provide recommendations as appropriate.

The early evaluation covered the period July 2022 to December 2024, and future evaluations of the programme are planned. The Techscaler Programme entered its third year of delivery in 2025 and CodeBase has continued to refine, develop, and improve programme processes and support in line with Scottish Government and user feedback as well as market trends.

Changes that have been made include for example:

- the development of new education courses such as [Techscaler Catalyst](#) which offers guided progression aligned to founder stage, pace, and ambition – an intensive 10-week accelerator, delivered by founders and industry experts.
- bringing in [entrepreneurs in residence](#) to support companies.

¹ There is a distinction between the tech sector and the digital tech sector. The former includes a wider range of manufacturing (advance manufacturing, etc.) activities which in some instances is outside the Scottish Technology Ecosystem Review (STER) and Techscaler Programme. The digital tech sector is more focused on solving problems and meeting customer needs through the use of scalable computer technology solutions.

- closer engagement with universities, for example via [AI Discovery](#) – a nine-week programme to help postgraduate researchers in Scotland become startup founders.
- a shift in focus of the mentorship programme toward more one-to-one support for growth and scaling stage businesses (as defined by CodeBase) while replacing some early-stage one-to-one capacity with one-to-many group mentorship to increase reach and efficiency.
- continuing expansion of international programmes.

Further, additional changes are in the process of taking place, including efforts to strengthen financial reporting to the Scottish Government in order to provide more granular detail.

Please see [Appendix I](#) for more information.

This evaluation report has not considered the changes introduced in 2025 in line with the agreed time period for this early evaluation.

1.2 Scottish Technology Ecosystem Review

The independent [Scottish Technology Ecosystem Review](#) (STER, August 2020) was commissioned by the Scottish Government to better understand the nature and extent of blockages and challenges that exist in the tech ecosystem in Scotland. The STER was authored by Professor Mark Logan, former Chief Operating Officer at Skyscanner.

Subsequently, Professor Mark Logan was appointed as [Chief Entrepreneur](#) to act as a senior adviser to the programme to deliver the remaining recommendations of STER. Professor Mark Logan left this role in 2024 and Ana Stewart was appointed the Scottish Government's [new Chief Entrepreneur](#) in April 2025.

STER's main observation was that technology ecosystems exist in either the 'post-tipping point' (the preferred state) or 'pre-tipping point' state.

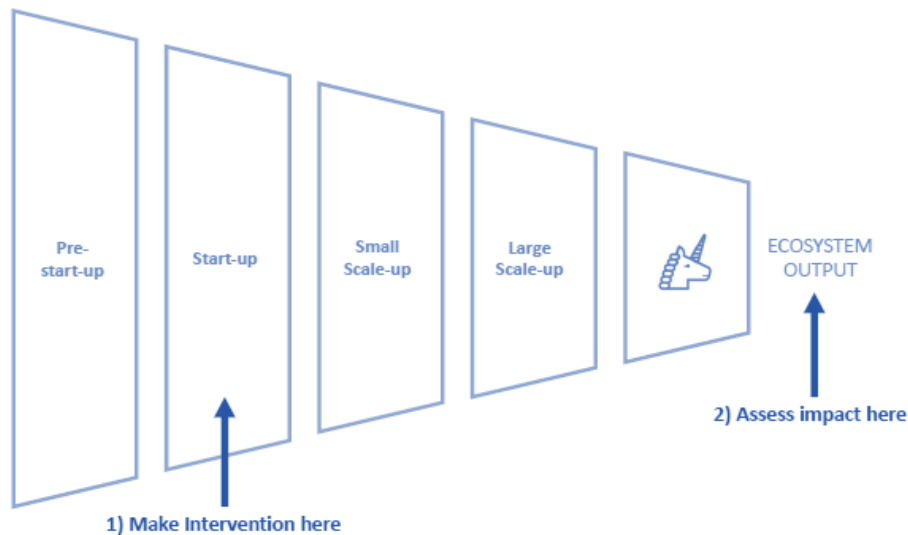
While Scotland's technology ecosystem is the strongest it has ever been, it remains in a pre-tipping point state. The 'post-tipping point' state is characterised by a critical mass of viable startups and scaleups to continually strengthen the ecosystem without requirement for state intervention.

The Techscaler Programme's origins stem from the recommendations contained within the STER to help strengthen the country's tech sector, encourage entrepreneurship, and accelerate maturity of the Scottish ecosystem.

"By this we mean the system, in its widest sense, that supports and nurtures technology businesses in Scotland, from the early startup phase through to fully scaled maturity." (STER, 2020)

The recommendations in STER seek to optimise the rate at which large scaleup and unicorns are achieved, as well as to create other successful companies of scale along the way, see **Figure 1.1**.

Figure 1.1: Ecosystem model – the funnel model



Source: STER, 2020

The origins of the Techscaler Programme stem from the report’s central recommendation that Scotland should:

“Create a nationwide network of Tech-Scaler centres...whose capabilities build upon and extend beyond traditional incubation programmes. Tech-Scalers combine best practice in incubation, intensive founder education in Internet Economy best practice, ecosystem social infrastructure, and integrated funding. Access to all services would be provided both physically and in a fully-virtualised form, enabling country-wide participation in Scotland’s high-technology economy.”

The overall goal is to help increase the rate of profitable, scaled tech businesses, and reduce the average time taken for viable individual startups to reach scale – the theory is that building startups is teachable, and that being playbook-literate can help communicate and build ideas better, and faster.

STER emphasised the importance of implementing the recommendations in their entirety – not least as the interventions identified are mutually reinforcing, and in order to evolve the ecosystem at pace and achieve transformational change.

The Scottish Government, in its formal [response](#) (September 2020) to the technology review accepted the STER recommendations in full. The STER recommendations were [welcomed](#) by the then Finance Secretary Kate Forbes who said:

“The review provides an industry-led blueprint for the Scottish tech industry, outlining the actions necessary to elevate the sector to a world-class level.”

1.3 Procuring a delivery partner for the Techscaler Programme

The Scottish Government began an open, competitive procurement exercise for delivery of the 'Tech-scalers Network' (now known as the Techscaler Programme) in November 2021. The procurement exercise was undertaken to secure a suitably qualified and experienced independent supplier with a proven track record in helping technology startups and scaleups to learn, grow and achieve their ambitions.

The Scottish Government specification for the Techscaler Programme set out that:

"The service provider will undertake the administration and management of a national network of tech-scalers – new economic infrastructure to provide technology startups and scaleups with the community environment, networks, support, and education they need to grow. This will include the provision of first-rate commercial education, mentoring, virtual support, and the facilitation of a vibrant peer community."

Following the procurement exercise and scoring process, the Scottish Government identified [CodeBase](#) (an ecosystem builder in Scotland, the UK and internationally since 2014) as its preferred service provider and delivery partner for the Techscaler Programme.

The Techscaler Programme mobilisation period commenced on 8 July 2022, and the programme formally launched on 30 November 2022. STER recommended:

"At least a five-year contract window (with appropriate exit clauses for non-performance), based on a combination of key build-out milestones, occupancy milestones and performance against an ecosystem-value-based north-star metric with associated target levels. This timescale provides a sufficient period for the model and implementation to demonstrate its value to the ecosystem and aligns the measurement of that value with the point in the ecosystem where the value is manifested."

In November 2022, Scottish Ministers published an [update on the progress](#) on implementing the recommendations from Professor Mark Logan's review of Scotland's technology ecosystem. The report notes that it remains important to support the growth of startups as a way to boost the economy, unlock sustainable growth and better career opportunities. While the report acknowledged that Scotland's entrepreneurial activity was improving, there is recognition that transformational change of the scale required is a long-term process – and that Scotland is still in the 'pre-tipping point' stage.

1.4 The Techscaler Programme

The Techscaler Programme's investment from the Scottish Government represents a significant investment for entrepreneurship support. The programme is key to the Scottish Government's ambitions as reflected in the [National Strategy for Economic Transformation](#) (NSET, March 2022) for Scotland to be a top performing startup economy by cultivating a culture of innovation and high growth entrepreneurship – for Scotland to be recognised at home and throughout the world as the best place to start and to grow a business, and as a nation of entrepreneurs and innovators.

Techscaler vision, ambition, mission, and method

- Vision: Scotland is recognised as Europe's leading startup economy.
- Ambition: The Scottish ecosystem reaches tipping point and generates positive economic output.
- Mission: Increase the number of successful tech startups from a diverse group of founders.
- Method: Deliver a programme which supports founders and employees to accelerate the creation and growth of tech startups

The Scottish Government continues to invest significantly in innovation, enterprise, and entrepreneurship. Despite challenging financial conditions, the [2025-2026 budget breakdown](#) shows a significant increase compared to the previous year. This growth reflects the Government's ambition to establish Scotland as a top-performing start-up economy by cultivating a culture of innovation and high-growth entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurship programme has a budget of £23.4 million for the 2025-2026 financial year.

The Scottish Government in its specification for the procurement of the Techscaler Programme identified seven broad objectives, based on the STER recommendations, to guide programme delivery.

The objectives are to:

- contribute, over time, to a sustained increase in the rate of profitable, scaled technology businesses generated by the Scottish tech ecosystem.
- create, for the first time, a truly world-class national infrastructure to co-locate, educate, and scale technology companies.
- provide technology companies with free access to first-rate commercial education in internet economy growth techniques and related disciplines.
- provide technology companies with access to high-quality, long-term, flexible, and affordable incubation space.
- support the creation of a world-class community and market square environment – facilitating collaboration, networking, and the exchange of ideas.
- provide full virtual access to commercial education and community events for technology companies unable to physically co-locate.
- provide a clear focal point for the Scottish tech ecosystem and to create a scaled, expert partner to collaborate with the broader STER programme to establish Scotland as a first-rate European tech hub.

These objectives formed the basis of the Services Contract between the Scottish Government and CodeBase, and this early evaluation has sought to explore progress in delivery.

To deliver against the specified programme objectives, the Techscaler Programme in the first two years of delivery has provided eligible members with access to a range of activities and support under three broad pillars. This has included support to:

1. **Build core startup and scaleup skills** – the Techscaler Programme provides Scottish entrepreneurs with access to expert-led education courses and mentorship sessions which provide founders with the practical playbooks, frameworks, and tools needed to launch and grow their business. STER notes that education is important since pre-tipping point ecosystems such as Scotland will typically lack a critical mass of experienced founders and senior employees – ‘since we are short on experience we must go long on education.’
2. **Foster social infrastructure development** – the Techscaler Programme nurtures a supportive community which supports founders and their teams to make valuable connections, explore collaborative opportunities, and find relevant support from ecosystem builders and experts.
3. **Increase investor connectivity and internationalisation** – the Techscaler Programme fosters actionable connections with investors, creating accessible funding pathways for high potential companies and offers global opportunities through international residencies.

The Techscaler Programme is one of the 27 entrepreneurial support programmes listed in the [Scottish Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Guide 2025-2026](#) (Scottish Enterprise). What distinguishes the Techscaler Programme from other ecosystem support provision in Scotland is that it is a national endeavour and has a focus on people – it invests in founders and their teams to provide the right support and environments to help reach their potential.

In line with STER, the Techscaler Programme offers members access to physical and social infrastructure such as education courses, expert mentorship, fundraising support, partnerships, community and events, and a network of physical hubs. STER recommended that the network of physical hubs should initially be created in six cities – Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, and Stirling.

CodeBase, via the Techscaler Programme, also seeks to work collaboratively with other ecosystem players to:

- build capability and entrepreneurial skills.
- increase the average likelihood of startup success.
- engage and support companies on their growth journey.
- establish Scotland as a leading startup economy and tech ecosystem.

The Scottish Government purposefully designed the specification for the procurement of the delivery of the Techscaler Programme and its objectives to be broad. This was with a view to inviting bidders to:

- provide their own vision for the service.
- encourage innovation in service delivery.
- ensure sufficient flexibility within the Services Contract for the Scottish Government's Techscaler Programme delivery partner to continue to evolve how, and what, is delivered through the programme in response to changing needs and circumstances and based on experimentation and learning – but within the parameters of the Techscaler Programme objectives.

1.5 Scotland is performing well in startup creation and attracting equity investment

The [Global Entrepreneurship Monitor \(GEM\) Scotland 2024-2025 Report](#) notes that entrepreneurial activity in Scotland has reached record levels, with one in ten adults now starting or running a young business. The latest survey shows that 10.4% of working-age adults were engaged in early-stage entrepreneurship in 2024 – the highest figure recorded since GEM began tracking Scotland's entrepreneurial landscape in 2002. With an additional 8% of adults reporting as established business owners (in operation for more than 42 months), it means nearly one in five Scots are now classed as entrepreneurs.

Recent market intelligence in [The State of Investment in Scotland](#) (Beauhurst, May 2025) also shows that Scotland is performing well in startup creation and attracting equity investment.

"If we discount the heights of post COVID-19 funding where 2021 and 2022 saw huge amounts of capital injected all across the UK, Scotland's investment seems to be on the steady incline. This is particularly positive if we consider that the amount of investment and the number of deals is on the decline across the UK as a whole.

In fact, from 2023 to 2024, the amount invested into Scottish companies grew by 24%. And while the number of deals dropped by 9% year-on-year, it shows that there's still investor confidence in Scottish companies – and even that investors are choosing to invest larger amounts".

The tech sector – particularly in application software and data services – accounts for about one-third of all equity deals. While this is below the UK average (where tech makes up half of all deals), it is still a strong showing. Funding activity in 2025 has been led by venture-stage and scaling companies. This suggests that Scottish investors are showing greater interest in later-stage businesses than the UK average.

Further, the [TechNation Report](#) (2025) paints a positive picture at a Scotland level – key findings in this report include that:

- London dominates the UK tech sector (based on a market share of 59%) but exciting tech hubs are emerging and fast-growing elsewhere, including in Scotland, East Midlands, and North East England. Scotland’s market share is 2.2% and has a value of \$25.6 billion.
- London-based startups raised 7x more in venture capital investment than any other UK region in 2024, while Scotland and the East of England have seen the biggest growth in investment – Scotland saw venture capital funding increase by 120% to \$660 million between 2020 and 2024 (a 4.1% share of total investment raised in the UK).
- Scotland’s tech sector is growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR)² of 19% – the second highest in the UK after the East Midlands (21%), and higher than Greater London (12%) and the UK as a whole (12.5%). It is higher than other European countries, including France (12%), Sweden (10%), Germany (7.5%), Netherlands (6%) and Switzerland (6%).
- London-based founders give up the least equity (11.6%) when raising early stage funding – the equivalent for Scotland-based founders is 13.1% which is considered good.
- Scotland has three unicorns headquartered in the country.

Three Scottish startups made [TechNation’s Future Fifty Report 2025](#) (September 2025) which places a spotlight on the UK’s top 50 late-stage tech scaleups poised for global impact. The three Scottish startups that made the list are Techscaler members demonstrating the strength of Scotland’s potential.

The signals are positive, as the Techscaler Programme moves into its third year of delivery to help further grow and accelerate Scotland’s tech sector. The data above, and wider insights captured through this evaluation, suggests that there is an ongoing need and strategic rationale for interventions such as the Techscaler Programme that aim to further propel startup and scaleup within the Scottish digital tech ecosystem.

1.6 Purpose and scope of the early evaluation

Relationship to future Techscaler evaluations

The Scottish Government is developing a longer-term evaluation programme to assess and evidence whether the Techscaler Programme has been delivered as intended and to measure its outcomes and impact. A letter from the then Deputy First Minister (dated 17 June 2024) considered at the Economy and Fair Work Committee noted that:

“We are scoping an early evaluation exercise for next year to learn lessons from the Techscaler delivery experience to support continuous improvement.”

² CAGR is measure of the mean annual growth rate of an investment over a specific period (in this case between 2020 and 2025).

As set out in the letter, a more strongly outcome focussed evaluation (impact evaluation) is planned at a later stage in the programme's delivery to assess 'harder' quantifiable economic impacts.

Programme period in scope of the early evaluation (2022-2024)

This early evaluation of the Techscaler Programme is the first stage of that longer-term evaluation programme and covers the period from procurement of the contract to the mobilisation period as well as the first two full years of programme delivery – the period from July 2022 to December 2024. The evaluation covers a specific point in time, and CodeBase has continued to adapt Techscaler Programme delivery as the programme moved into its third year of delivery, and in tandem with the evaluation process. Future impact evaluations of the programme will consider the remaining years of the contract.

Research aims, objectives and approach

For the process evaluation element of the research, the [Magenta Book](#) specifies that this type of evaluation has a focus on how a policy, project, or programme was implemented.

Process evaluations examine whether the delivery of the intervention matches the intended design, and it investigates how the intervention's operational processes contributed to or hampered its outcomes.

Key questions addressed in process evaluations include:

- **implementation fidelity:** was the policy or programme delivered in the way it was originally planned? If not, what changed and why?
- **reach and coverage:** who received (or did not receive) the intervention and to what extent were certain populations missed?
- **delivery mechanisms:** which delivery mechanisms or processes were most and least effective?
- **contextual factors:** how did external factors (for example, socioeconomic context, political environment, staffing, stakeholder engagement) influence delivery?
- **resource use and efficiency:** were resources (time, personnel, funds) used effectively in implementing the intervention?

In relation to the impact assessment element of the early evaluation it is understood that it will take time for the Techscaler Programme to translate into these types of outcomes – recognising the lead-in time for genuine transformation in the companies supported and ecosystem will take years.

The focus of this early evaluation has been on the extent to which the support provided is building the capabilities and expertise of entrepreneurs and what improvements can be made to how the support is provided and on how the programme is administered.

The evaluation findings and recommendations from the evaluation team will be considered by the Scottish Government, and in turn CodeBase and stakeholders, as government looks to maximise the impact and value for money from its investment. The data captured through the research will also be used by the Scottish Government to help inform future evaluations of the Techscaler Programme, acting as a baseline to measure progress.

1.7 Report structure

The remainder of this evaluation report has been structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** provides an overview of the evaluation methodology.
- **Chapter 3** provides an overview of Techscaler Programme mobilisation and implementation to December 2024, including financial reporting.
- **Chapter 4** presents a summary of the feedback received from Techscaler members, including those highly and least engaged with Techscaler Programme activities and support.
- **Chapter 5** presents a summary of the feedback received from Techscaler mentors.
- **Chapter 6** presents the main themes arising from the stakeholder and partner interviews undertaken as part of the early evaluation.
- **Chapter 7** presents an early indicative impact assessment of the Techscaler Programme to date.
- **Chapter 8** presents the conclusions of the evaluation.
- **Chapter 9** provides the recommendations from the evaluation team to the Scottish Government.

The evaluation is supported by the following appendices:

- **Appendix A** – Recommended actions from this evaluation
- **Appendix B** – Study methodology.
- **Appendix C** – Stakeholder organisations interviewed.
- **Appendix D** – Lessons learned from undertaking the early evaluation.
- **Appendix E** – Techscaler Programme context
- **Appendix F** – Current theory of change and critical review.
- **Appendix G** – International connectivity.
- **Appendix H** – Technical impact assessment.
- **Appendix I** – Post 2024 changes to programme delivery (some examples).

A **standalone executive summary** has been published separately to this main evaluation report.

The **supplementary report** which has been provided separately to this main evaluation report contains the full survey findings and data tables, with summary findings presented in this main evaluation report.

The **fieldworks materials** document contains the topic guides and survey questionnaires used for the primary research stage of the evaluation.

2 Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the evaluation methodology which draws on a mixed methods quantitative and qualitative approach to capture the full picture of the mobilisation and delivery of the Techscaler Programme to December 2024.

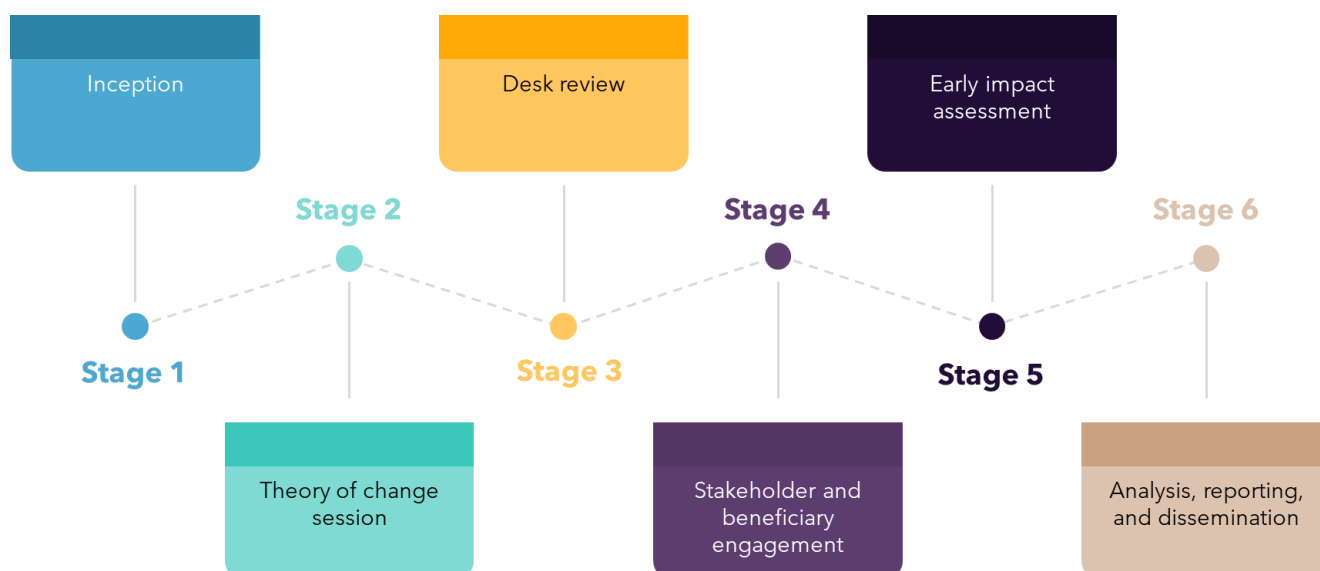
Please also see:

- **Appendix B** – Study methodology.
- **Appendix C** – Stakeholder organisations interviewed.
- **Appendix D** – Lessons learned from undertaking the early evaluation.
- **Appendix F** – Current theory of change and critical review.

2.2 Study method

The evaluation was undertaken in six main stages, **Figure 2.1**, and each stage has been described in more detail on the following pages.

Figure 2.1: Techscaler Programme evaluation methodology



Stage 1: Inception

The research started with an inception and set-up meeting on the 8th January 2025 between the evaluators and the steering group for the evaluation and subsequent agreement with CodeBase on a Data Sharing Agreement for the purpose of this evaluation.

Stage 2: Theory of change session

Scottish Government, together with CodeBase, have developed and refined a theory of change (and logic model) for the Techscaler Programme. The evaluation team facilitated a high-level critical review session with Scottish Government and CodeBase representatives on 14th January 2025 to develop an understanding of the development work that has been done to develop the current theory of change and to stress test whether the right evidence is being collected. The session was also undertaken to identify possible gaps in data collection, and to inform questionnaire design for the primary research for this early evaluation of the Techscaler Programme.

Stage 3: Desk review

The secondary desk research element included a wide-ranging review of existing information and data. This included a review of Techscaler Programme documentation and data provided by both the Scottish Government and CodeBase (for example, specification, bid and contract documents, quarterly reports, etc.), and a review of published strategy and research documents.

Stage 4: Stakeholder and beneficiary engagement

Scoping interviews

Fourteen scoping interviews³ were undertaken with representatives from the Scottish Government, CodeBase, and Enterprise Agencies during February 2025. A semi-structured topic guide was used to inform these discussions, and these were undertaken prior to the wider primary research starting to help the evaluators:

- understand the context for the development, mobilisation, and initial delivery of the Techscaler Programme.
- understand how the programme works in practice and how Techscaler Programme support is evolving.
- inform primary research design.

³ A further three scoping interviews were undertaken with Techscaler member companies. Follow-up interviews were subsequently undertaken with these three companies to take the founder/co-founder through the remainder of the company telephone survey. The three company interviews are captured in the survey response numbers and analysis rather than the scoping interviews. In addition, a further interview with a Scottish Government representative was undertaken as part of the wider stakeholder interview process rather than at the scoping stage. We were not able to establish contact with the then Chief Entrepreneur, however, an interview with the current Chief Entrepreneur was undertaken as part of the wider stakeholder interview process.

Techscaler company member (beneficiary) surveys

Techscaler members who have engaged with the programme’s support – a telephone survey, which was undertaken by our study partner Research Resource, started in late March 2025, and was completed in mid-May 2025 with email reminders issued by CodeBase during the survey period.

CodeBase internal categorisation of the 978 key company contact members who have joined the Techscaler Programme as members since its launch (Techscaler Annual Report 2024) identified 330 members who have not accessed formal programme support or recorded at events. This reduced the telephone sample from 978 to 648, see **Table 2.1**.

The 330 key company contacts may, however, have had a touchpoint(s) which has not been recorded by CodeBase such partnership engagement, referrals, and ad hoc support and engagement with Community and Engagement Managers in the regional hubs. They may also have formed their own networks following attendance at Techscaler Programme partner event(s).

The sample then reduced from 648 to 587 when undelivered emails and those who declined to take part are accounted for.

Table 2.1: Techscaler company interviews – sample and completed interviews

Engagement with Techscaler services	Original sample	Revised sample	Revised sample by engagement level (%)	Number of telephone interviews completed	Completed interviews by engagement level (%)
Low	319	292	50%	26	19%
Some	207	185	32%	62	44%
A lot	108	98	17%	49	35%
High	14	12	2%	3	2%
Total	648	587	100%	140	100%

Research Resource conducted a telephone survey using a randomised sample of Techscaler members. All selected contacts were emailed and invited to take part. While the sampling method gave each member an equal chance of being chosen, participation was voluntary and only those who agreed were interviewed. This approach helped reduce selection bias and increased the fairness of the sampling process. However, randomisation alone does not guarantee the final sample will reflect the full population, it only gives the selected contacts an equal opportunity to be included. Because of this self-selection, the final sample is not wholly representative, and the results cannot be generalised to all Techscaler members.

A total of 140 telephone interviews were undertaken with mainly founders and co-founders of companies who have engaged with Techscaler Programme formal activities and support. The proportion of completed interviews by engagement level are considered acceptable given the size of the sampling frame.

This survey sought feedback on companies' experience of Techscaler Programme engagement, including on:

- initial engagement with CodeBase.
- the type of Techscaler Programme support accessed and satisfaction with the support.
- personal and company benefits and impacts achieved and forecast as a direct result of the support.
- the extent to which the Techscaler Programme support has met their needs.
- suggestions for how Techscaler Programme support could be further improved.

The telephone survey was supplemented with an abbreviated online survey aimed at an agreed sample – those company founders and co-founders who did not take part in the telephone survey as well as some other individual members of Techscaler (that is, member company employees and individuals at the ideation stage). This online survey went live in late April 2025 and closed mid-May 2025. This resulted in another 34 responses, all bar one was from Techscaler members who have formally engaged with the programme in some way⁴.

The surveys aimed at engaged Techscaler members resulted in a total of 173 interviews, against a target of 200 interviews (86% achieved).

Techscaler members who have not formally engaged with the programme's support – CodeBase issued an online survey to the 330 company contacts⁵ who are registered Techscaler members but who have not yet accessed Techscaler Programme formal support. As noted above, they may have had a touchpoint(s) which has not been recorded by CodeBase or may have formed their own networks following attendance at Techscaler Programme partner event(s).

This short online survey asked questions related to:

- reasons for joining Techscaler.
- views on the application process.
- the support companies were interested in accessing from the programme.
- why they have not yet accessed formal support from the programme.
- barriers faced in accessing Techscaler Programme support.
- likelihood of accessing Techscaler Programme formal support in the future.
- suggestions for how the programme could be further improved.

⁴ One response to the online survey was received from a Techscaler member who has not yet accessed formal support from the programme – this response has been included within the non-engaged member survey analysis (see page below and the supplementary report for the non-engaged member survey write-up).

⁵ CodeBase internal categorisation of the 978 key company contact members who have joined the Techscaler Programme as members since its launch identified 330 members who have not accessed formal programme support or recorded at events.

This survey went live on 21st March 2025, an email reminder was issued on 7th April 2025, and the survey closed on 18th April 2025.

A total of nine responses were received. This increased to **ten responses** once the other online survey (as described above) closed.

Partner and stakeholder interviews

In addition to the 14 scoping interviews, a further 33 interviews have been undertaken with representatives from organisations across the ecosystem. These interviews were largely undertaken during June and July 2025, and a semi-structured topic guide was used to capture informed views on startups, investment, the Techscaler Programme, and the programme’s fit within the tech ecosystem. When the initial scoping interviews are included, **47 interviews** have been undertaken with Techscaler Programme partners and stakeholders as part of the early evaluation. **Table 2.2** provides a further breakdown of these interviews.

Table 2.2: Stakeholder interviews completed

Stakeholder type	Number of interviews completed
CodeBase staff	8
Scottish Government	6
Support provider (for example, sector or target group specific)	4
Enterprise agency	5
Innovation centre/innovation-related	4
Startup and scaleup accelerator	4
University	5
Scaleup funder and investor	4
Working space provider	3
Local authority	2
Other	2
Total	47

Note: The total number of interviews includes three CodeBase Board members who have been included within the broader categories listed in the table (that is, they have multiple roles).

Techscaler mentors

A two-pronged approach was undertaken to capture the views of Techscaler mentors, including: an online survey which received 43 responses (29% response rate); and 12 follow-up interviews.

The purpose of this engagement was to capture the perspectives of mentors on:

- their experience of becoming a Techscaler mentor.
- how the matching and relationship management process worked.
- benefits of mentorship for Techscaler mentees.
- benefits of being a Techscaler mentor.
- the effectiveness of the Techscaler Programme support for tech startups and scaleups.
- suggestions for how the mentorship/Techscaler Programme could be further improved.

Stage 5: Early indicative impact assessment

The Techscaler member telephone survey asked questions that sought to understand the economic impacts and benefits that have been generated to date and anticipated in the future as a direct result of members engagement with the programme. It also provided an early indicative assessment of the net additionality delivered by the Techscaler Programme including the Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) and Value for Money (VfM).

The questions were segmented based on the stage of the company (ideation, early-stage, growth, scaling) and gathered impact data relating to jobs, turnover, and levels of investment secured.

The impact assessment will also be used to set a baseline position to help monitor progress (for example, have forecast impacts been achieved) as part of future evaluations of the Techscaler Programme.

Stage 6: Analysis, reporting and dissemination

The information and data captured during the preceding stages helped to inform the interim, draft, and final reports. On submission of the draft report a presentation of emerging findings was undertaken with the client team and the Scottish Government's new Chief Entrepreneur on the 30th July 2025.

A further presentation of findings was held with the Scottish Government and CodeBase on 11th December 2025. Following this meeting and further feedback the main report and executive summary were finalised.

3 Mobilisation and delivery

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of Techscaler Programme implementation covering the mobilisation period, programme launch and the first two full years of delivery, including financial expenditure.

The contract between the Scottish Government and CodeBase has been designed to encourage and enable CodeBase to evolve the Techscaler Programme to meet the changing needs of tech startups and scaleups and in response to a rapidly changing world. An iterative model is at the core of the Techscaler Programme.

At the time of the early evaluation, the Techscaler Programme moved into its third year of delivery. As noted, the early evaluation covers the period to December 2024 and changes made since this time are not in scope and have not been described in this chapter. However, it is important to note that CodeBase has continued to refresh the service offer as well as develop new services and courses.

With a pipeline of Techscaler members at the ideation or early-stage now firmly established, CodeBase has shifted the balance of its efforts in 2025 to ensure the programme has a greater focus on growth-stage and scaling companies, while still supporting and inspiring those at the ideation stage and early-stage. An increased focus has been placed on supporting high-growth businesses, including creating the pathways to fast track these companies. This includes the provision of more targeted and intensive support for particular problem areas and more structured interventions.

Please also see:

- **[Appendix E](#)** – Techscaler Programme context
- **[Appendix G](#)** – International connectivity.
- **[Appendix I](#)** – Post 2024 changes to programme delivery (some examples).

3.2 Techscaler mobilisation period

Following the procurement exercise and scoring process, the Scottish Government identified CodeBase as its preferred service provider and delivery partner for the Techscaler Programme. Through the early evaluation, Scottish Government representatives highlighted CodeBase's:

- understanding of its requirements for the programme.
- deep knowledge of the Scottish tech ecosystem – including staff with direct experience of working in tech businesses or who have been entrepreneurs themselves.
- innovative approach to delivery.

They said this helped the CodeBase bid to stand out from the other submissions.

The Techscaler Programme mobilisation period commenced on 8th July 2022 and ended when the programme formally commenced on 30th November 2022. CodeBase was required to submit a mobilisation plan to the Scottish Government within 30 days of contract award. The mobilisation plans shared with the evaluators as part of the early evaluation provided details of all the tasks and sub-tasks that were to be initiated and completed in the run up to formal programme launch. This included an array of tasks related to:

- recruitment.
- office accommodation and infrastructure.
- communications and marketing.
- securing education licences and partnerships.
- securing physical buildings (physical hub spaces), including fitout and decoration.
- virtual technology.

Mobilisation plans were monitored using a Red, Amber, and Green (RAG) approach. During the mobilisation period there were regular weekly meetings between Scottish Government and key senior individuals within CodeBase to enable the Scottish Government to provide support, answer queries, monitor progress and troubleshoot issues. A particular focus over the mobilisation period was to put in place the Techscaler foundational infrastructure to support the Scottish tech ecosystem.

The mobilisation of the Techscaler Programme has been a key and early success and was testament to the efforts of individuals within the Scottish Government and CodeBase involved in the procurement and mobilisation exercises. Most notably, this included CodeBase's ability to:

- meet a relatively tight deadline in respect to the scale of the programme.
- scaleup employment (significantly) and to set up the physical regional hubs at pace.
- use its existing networks and connections to bring experienced team members into the programme, including some with startup, scaleup, and private sector backgrounds and experience.
- partner with other existing physical hubs to minimise the rental/lease costs to the Scottish Government – focusing expenditure on the staffing/events.
- design an actionable/deliverable programme that was a strong reflection of the STER recommendations.
- develop a series of online education modules that are now firmly part of the core offer and that require minimal updating going forward – allowing resources to be redirected to other areas of the programme.

As noted later in this chapter – **Table 3.4** – a fixed fee of circa £1.8 million (excluding VAT) (4% of the total programme budget) was agreed for the mobilisation period. This expenditure was achieved in its entirety.

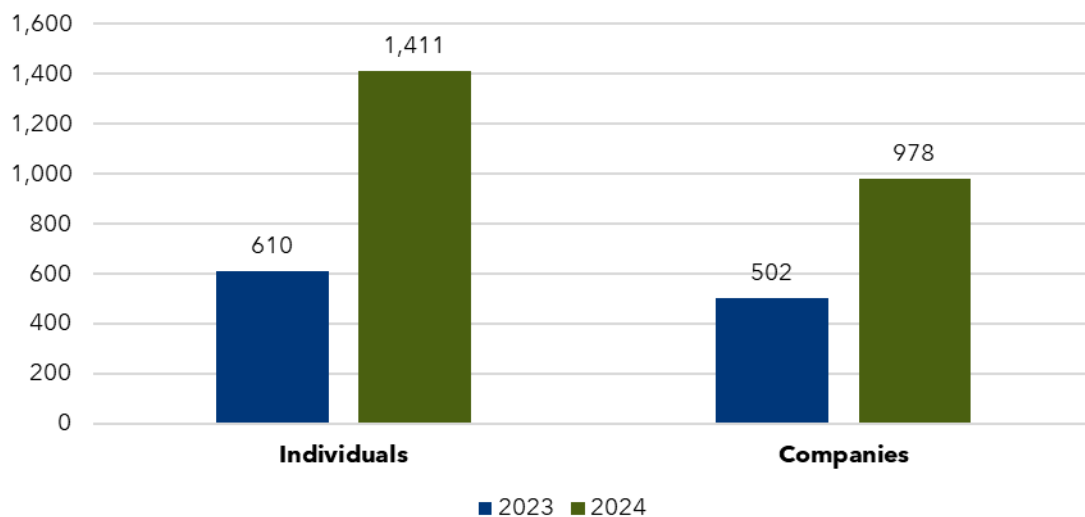
3.3 Techscaler membership

A growing Techscaler membership

Techscaler is a free national membership programme – it is open to anyone in Scotland working in startups who are at all stages of the startup journey, from ideation through to scaling, and with ambitions to grow the business. To become a Techscaler member and gain member benefits (such as education, mentorship, community-building), applicants are required to complete an online application form.

Figure 3.1 shows Techscaler membership in its first two years of delivery.

Figure 3.1: Techscaler membership – individuals and companies (2023 and 2024)



Source: Techscaler Annual Reports 2023 and 2024.

Note 1: The Techscaler Annual Report 2024 presents updated data for individual and company members in 2023 following an ongoing exercise to review and clean the data. The Techscaler Annual Report 2023 set out membership as 643 and 517 respectively.

Note 2: The company membership figures are included in the individual members figures too (that is, it is not in addition to the individual membership).

Points to note include that:

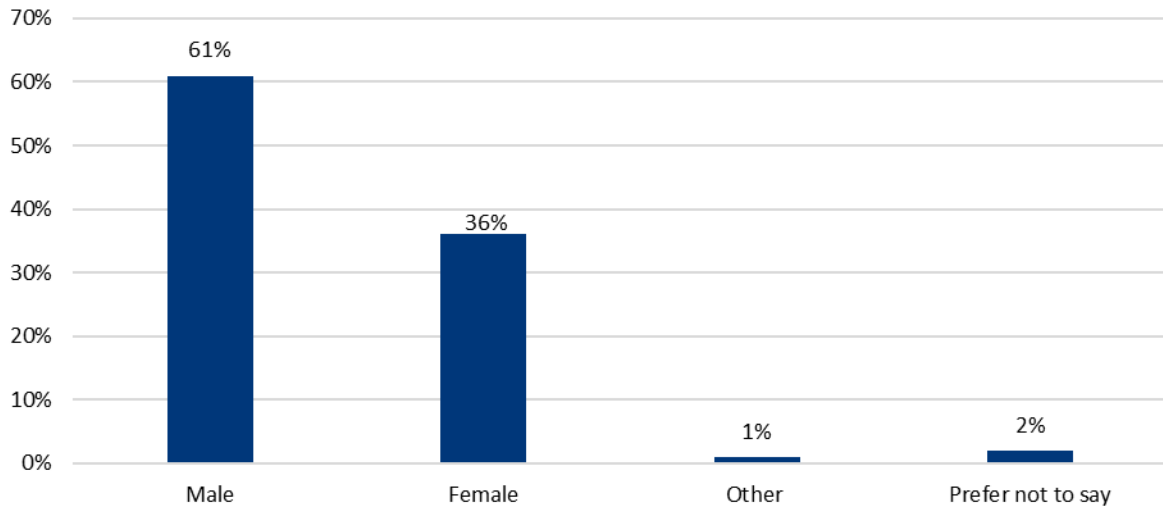
- Techscaler membership numbers got off to a very strong start in 2023 and membership has continued to grow in 2024.
- individual Techscaler membership stands at 1,411 members in 2024 – an increase of 57% since 2023.
- the number of Techscaler company members has grown over the same period – by 49% to 978 members in 2024.
- from the data provided in the annual report it is not possible to tell the extent of the individual membership who are employed in the same company.

Techscaler membership by gender and age band

Figure 3.2 and **Figure 3.3** provide a breakdown of Techscaler membership by gender and age. Points to note from the data include that:

- 36% of members are female – this is a good level of representation and is higher than the [industry average](#) where 20% of SME employers are women-led (defined as a business with the majority of the combined total number of owners, partners and directors being female). The majority (61%) of Techscaler members are male.
- Techscaler members span a wide range of age-bands, with almost three-quarters under the age of 44 years.

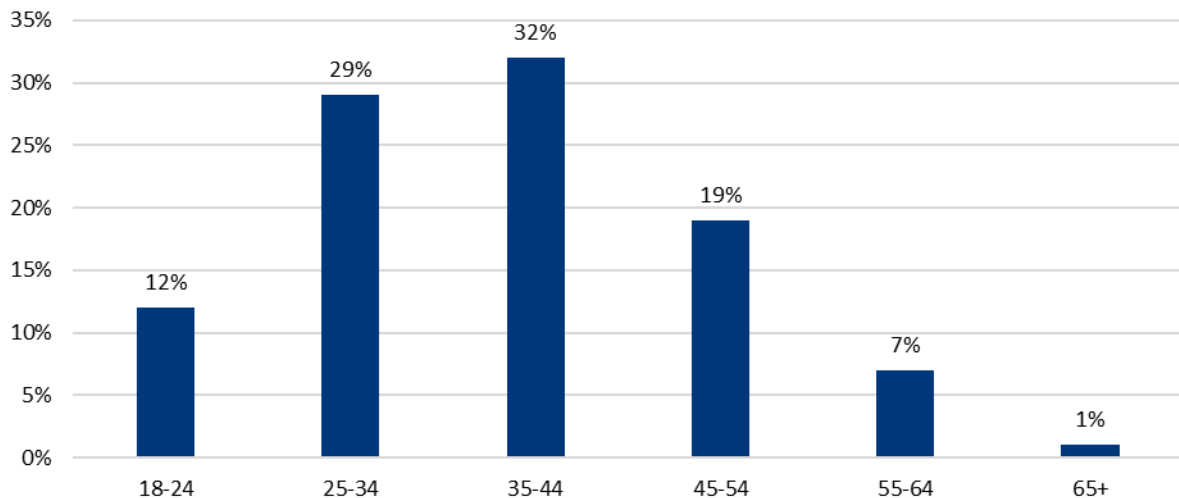
Figure 3.2: Techscaler membership by gender (2023 and 2024)



Source: Data provided directly by CodeBase. Base = 560.

Note: The gender data is self-reported and there are some data gaps.

Figure 3.3: Techscaler membership by age band (2023 and 2024)



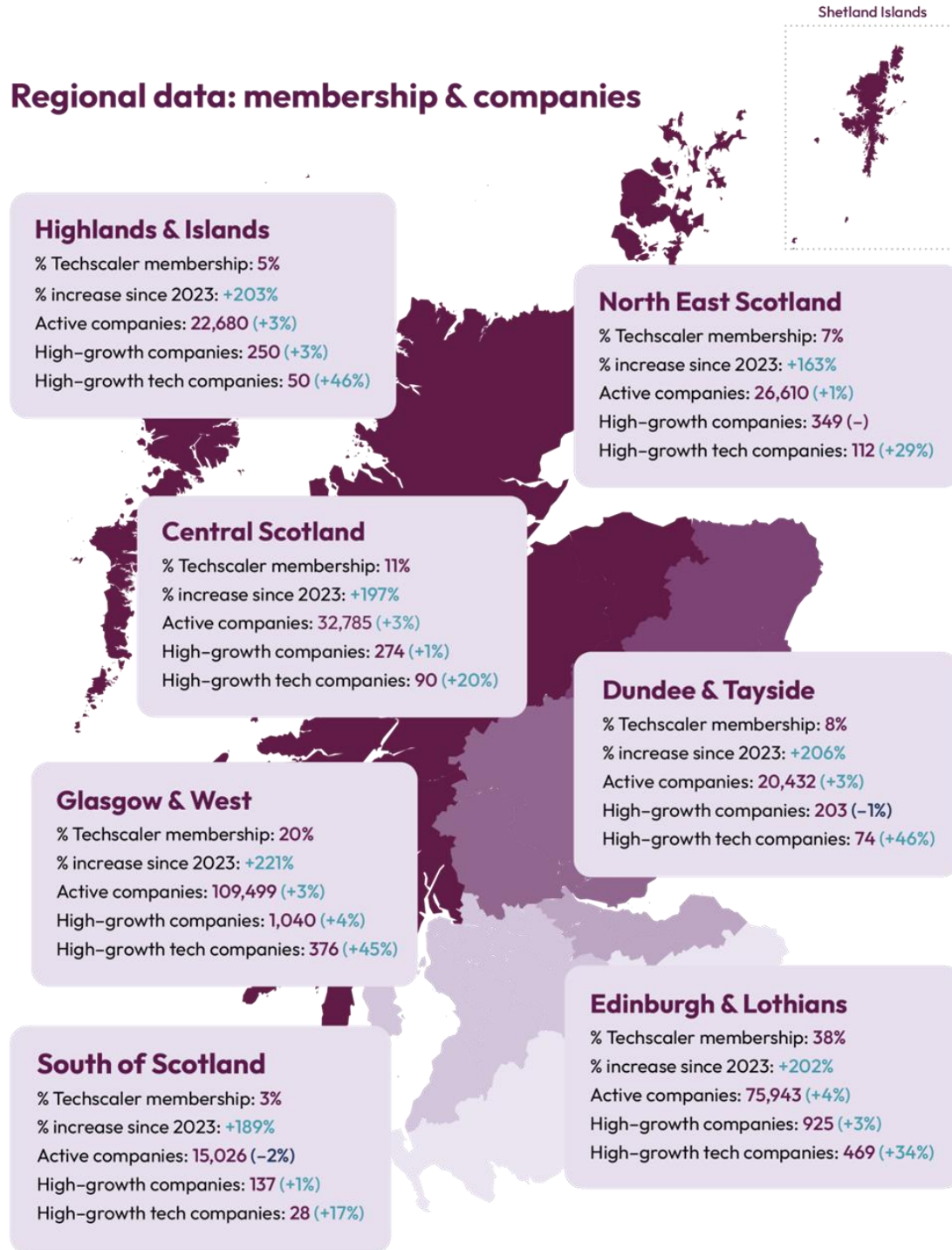
Source: Data provided directly by CodeBase. Base = 560

Note: The age data is self-reported and there are some data gaps.

Techscaler membership – reach and coverage

Figure 3.4 presents a map of the Techscaler membership and companies at a regional level.

Figure 3.4: Techscaler regional data – membership and companies



Note: The remaining 8% of Techscaler members represents non-regionally allocated memberships, including Reforge memberships that do not have a designated home region.

Source: Techscaler Annual Report 2024.

The main points to note from the data include that:

- Techscaler is a pan-Scotland programme – the offer has been designed to reach all areas of Scotland including those on Islands. Over two-thirds (69%) of the Techscaler membership are based in the central belt – this is, however, where the main population and business bases are located.
- there has been strong growth in Techscaler membership across all regions in Scotland since 2023 – the highest growth has been in Glasgow and West, followed by Dundee and Tayside.
- the location of physical hubs shape the actual geographical reach and engagement of projects and programmes such as Techscaler – for example 38% of the Techscaler membership are based in Edinburgh and Lothians and 20% are based in Glasgow and West. As noted above, these regions are where the main population and business bases are located, and the location of hubs, especially those in more rural or mixed geographies will naturally be limited to people who can easily physically travel there. This is further reflected in the proportion of the Techscaler membership based in the Highlands and Islands and South of Scotland, for example.

Wider membership data (at point of application) shows that medtech⁶ and edtech⁷ businesses are the main sectors represented in the Techscaler membership base – combined 24% of total membership (each account for 12%).

Membership segmentation

Approach to segmentation

Once an online application to become a Techscaler member is submitted, it is reviewed by CodeBase to check eligibility for access to the programme. Eligible applicants then have an introductory call with CodeBase to discuss how they can get the most from their Techscaler membership.

Techscaler members are also encouraged to complete an online growth plan within two weeks of their initial meeting. The growth planning exercise is designed to help members and CodeBase better understand members' key areas of focus and priorities over the coming 12 months and to inform how the programme can best respond to the specific needs of its members.

At the application stage CodeBase undertake an internal exercise to segment Techscaler members into one of four business stages, based on information provided in the application form. The internal segmentation process has been designed to enable founders/members access tailored support.

⁶ Med tech, or medical technology, refers to a broad range of technologies used in healthcare settings. It includes medical devices, diagnostics, digital health solutions, and telemedicine platforms that enhance patient care and treatment. Med tech encompasses products and services that diagnose, treat, and improve a person's health and wellbeing.

⁷ Ed tech, or educational technology, is the process of integrating technology into education in a positive manner that promotes a more diverse learning environment and a way for students to learn how to use technology as well as their common assignments.

Once accepted as a Techscaler member they are emailed with stage-relevant support – when applications open for a Techscaler Silicon Valley cohort, a new education course, or to book a mentoring session, for example. If a new Techscaler member joins when the application window for the programme opportunity is closed, they can register their interest in advance so that CodeBase has a sense of how many new members are interested between cohorts. There is, however, support that is 'always on' in the form of mentorship, Techscaler discovery, and events.

CodeBase has also evolved its segmentation definitions based on user feedback, as shown below in **Table 3.1**. These new signals are being used for 2025 delivery and company categorisation.

Table 3.1: Techscaler membership segmentation definitions

Stage	Definitions used over the first two years of the Techscaler Programme	How definitions have since changed
Ideation stage	An individual with an idea but no clear focus or commitment to building a company.	Member with an idea.
Early-stage	An individual focused on a specific market or problem space. They may/may not have a registered business, prototype, or Minimum Viable Product (MVP) but are dedicating time to advancing their idea.	Member has a registered company or has a MVP/ demo/prototype or is spending at least eight hours a week on exploring and building their idea.
Growth-stage	A company with a live product looking to acquire customers and may/may not have existing customers.	Member has Annual Recurring Revenue (ARR) or annual revenue of £250,000 or has pre-seed investment and meets all prior requirements.
Scaling	A company with a live product, revenue, and a team including department heads/specialists (for example, product team, engineering team, growth team).	Member has £1 million ARR or has seed funding and meets all prior requirements.

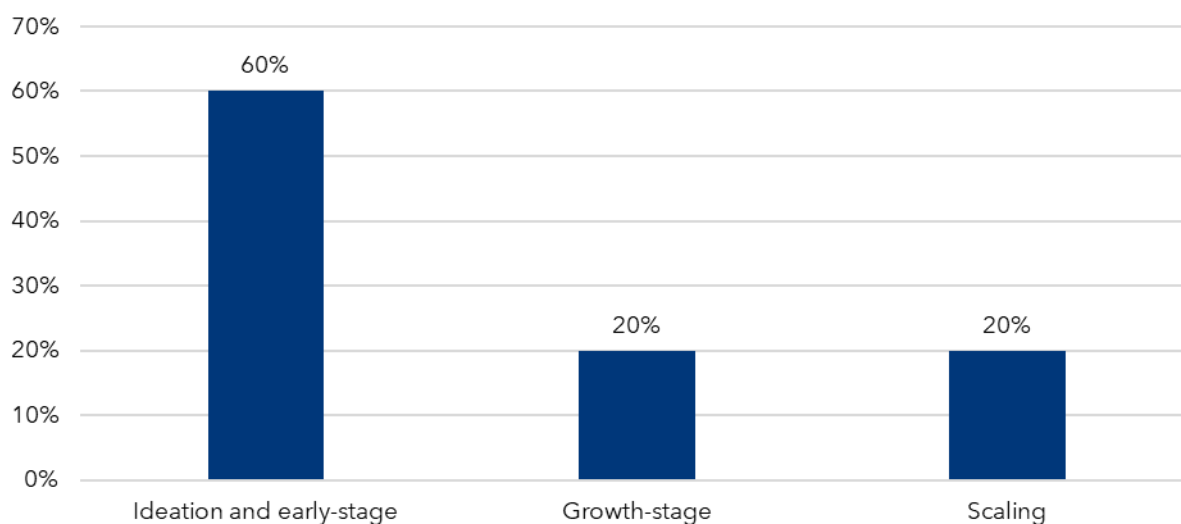
Note: While the refreshed segmentation definitions are not relevant for the timeline of this early evaluation we have presented them in the table above for information purposes. We refer to different business stages in our Conclusions and Recommendations Chapters and the new definitions provide relevant context.

Techscaler membership is predominantly very early-stage

The majority (60%) of Techscaler members (startups supported) at the time of becoming a member are at a very early-stage of their startup development journey – that is at the ideation stage or early-stage. The remainder (40%) are either at the growth or scaling stages, see **Figure 3.5**.

While companies in later stages (growth and scaling) have steadily joined Techscaler over the first two years of delivery, the most significant increase in members has come from very early-stage founders. In the early years of programme delivery the Scottish Government and CodeBase considered this approach necessary to fill and widen the funnel of early-stage companies entering the Scottish tech economy.

Figure 3.5: Techscaler membership by business stage



Source: Techscaler Annual Report 2024.

Variation in membership base at a regional level

Figure 3.6 provides more detail on Techscaler membership by business stage.

Points to note from the data include that there is variation at a regional level among the Techscaler membership in terms of business stage – Edinburgh and Lothians and Glasgow and the West have larger concentrations of members at the growth and scaling stages when compared to other regions, albeit some regions have started from a smaller base.

Figure 3.6: Techscaler membership by region (business stage)

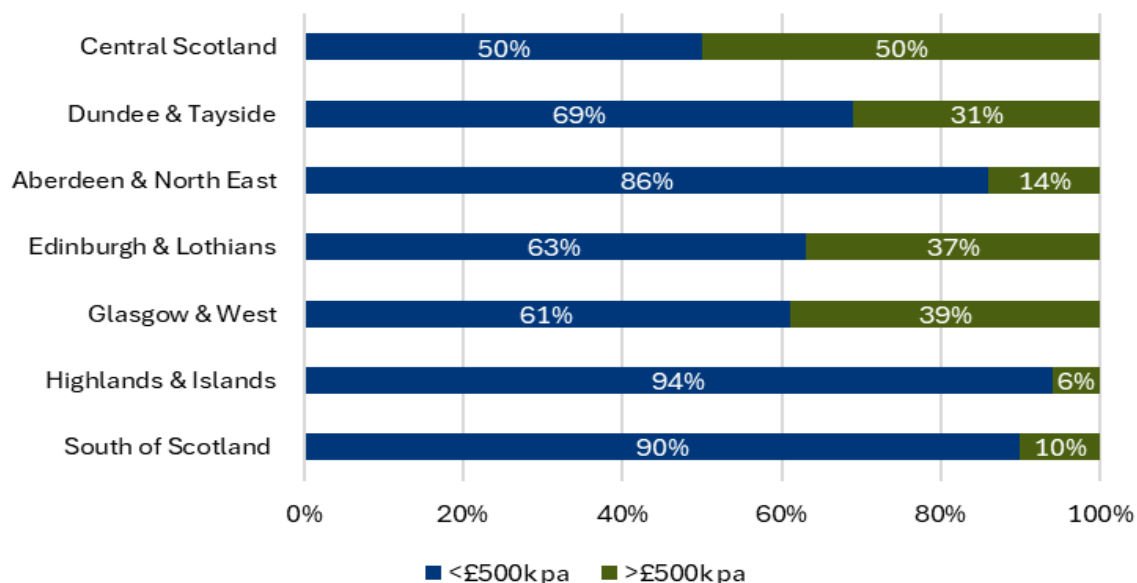


Source: Codebase.

Figure 3.7 provides detail on membership by annual revenue. Points to note include that:

- similarly there is variation among the Techscaler membership in terms of annual revenue generated – the data paints a slightly different picture in that a majority of the membership typically have annual revenue of less than £500,000 (this includes those members located in regions with larger concentrations of members at the growth and scaling stages).
- the exception is the South of Scotland which has an equal split of Techscaler members with an annual revenue of less than £500,000 or more than this.

Figure 3.7: Techscaler membership by region (annual revenue)



Source: Codebase.

3.4 Techscaler delivery in its first two years

Over the first year two years of Techscaler Programme delivery, activity and support was designed and developed across the programme’s three strategic pillars.

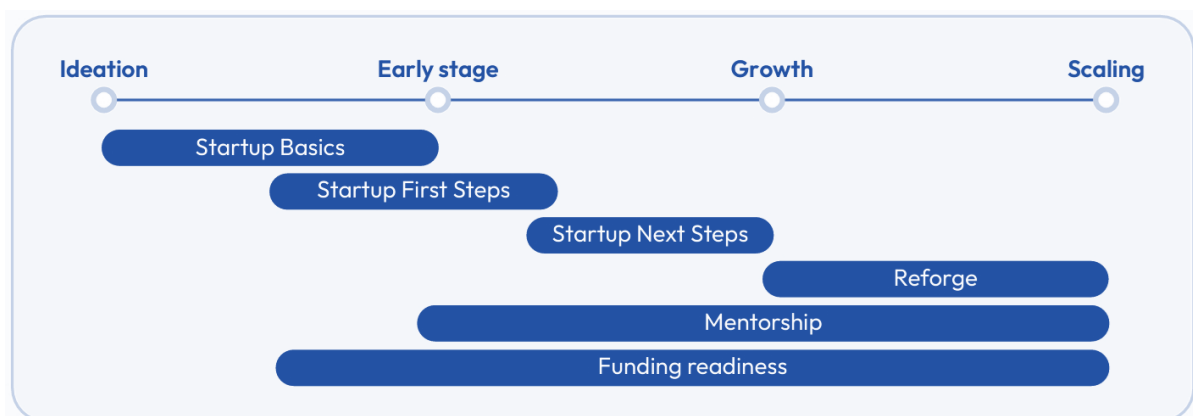
CodeBase, through the Techscaler Programme, continues to provide accessible support to entrepreneurs and founders from all over Scotland to:

- strengthen entrepreneurial skills and mindsets.
- create a supportive environment where founders (and their teams) can build better startups faster.
- enable businesses to improve their growth prospects.

The programme’s support has been tailored for those at every stage of starting and scaling a tech business, see **Figure 3.8** – with enhanced levels of support available as founders/startups progress along their startup journey. In addition, Techscaler community and events activities, including those delivered in partnership with other ecosystem partners, are delivered throughout the year.

The programme’s support has been designed to be flexible and adapt to members’ changing needs and circumstances. For example, members can take part when it suits them and can also defer attending an education course to a later cohort or take a break from mentorship.

Figure 3.8: Techscaler Programme support offer in 2023 and 2024



Source: Techscaler Annual Report 2024.

At an early stage in its delivery period, the Techscaler Programme has been recognised as [Sifted’s 13th best first founder communities in Europe](#) (August 2025).

3.5 Pillar one – build core startup and scaleup skills

Scottish entrepreneurs can access expert-led Techscaler Programme education courses and mentorship sessions which provide them the practical playbooks, frameworks, and tools needed to launch and grow their business. The underpinning rationale is that building startups is teachable, and that being playbook-literate can help communicate and build ideas better, and faster.

Education programmes

The Techscaler education programmes are delivered by experienced founders and expert industry operators and are positioned as the backbone of the programme – to help drive CodeBase’s engagement with new pools of founders to work with.

The Techscaler education programmes, as described below, have been designed to:

- focus on building core startup and scaleup skills.
- support founders to learn from other entrepreneurs who have been on the same journey.
- connect founders with fundraising opportunities.
- create a strong cohort community (peer support and learning).

Techscaler members can access: online education courses – self-paced and self-guided courses via the Techscaler Online Community Platform which can be started at any time and members can work at their own pace; and cohort-based courses and workshops to learn the skills needed to build, grow, and scale their startup.

As noted, STER emphasised the importance of education since pre-tipping point ecosystems such as Scotland will typically lack a critical mass of experienced founders and senior employees.

Hybrid delivery and format of the education courses differ with each course cohort (reflecting CodeBase’s commitment to iterate based on founder feedback), and has included:

- a blend of online and live delivery (moved to different hubs each week).
- ‘watch parties’ and live delivery (moved to different hubs each week) as well as the option for independent online attendance.
- online delivery only, with cohort meetups in the first and final weeks (and during the course).

Online teaching helps ensure reach in areas with lower startup density as well as reducing barriers to travel. Watch parties and live delivery provides opportunities for founders to engage with, learn from, and support their peers who are at similar stages.

Enrolment in Techscaler Programme education courses has remained broadly consistent across 2023 and 2024. The data shows:

- 742 members enrolled in education programmes since Techscaler launch
- 52% of all members enrolled in education programmes since launch

This data shows that 742 (around half) Techscaler members have enrolled in Techscaler Programme education courses since the programme’s launch – this is a good level of participation. The education programmes have been refined and updated over the first two years of delivery based on learning and experience to date, including feedback gained directly from participants and from those delivering courses and workshops.

Data provided by CodeBase shows that enrolment in education courses has been strongest among scaling and early-stage members, see **Table 3.2**.

Table 3.2: Techscaler members enrolled in Techscaler Programme education courses (2023 and 2024) by stage

Stage	Percentage of total stage membership enrolled
Ideation	39%
Early-stage	42%
Growth	36%
Scaling	53%

Source: CodeBase.

Note: 742 individuals were enrolled and CodeBase tracks company by stage, so there might be a slight variance in these figures (for example, a small number of ideation stage participants may not be associated with a company).

In the first two years of delivery, CodeBase has iterated the Techscaler Programme education content to help ensure members can both mitigate the risks of AI and Deep tech⁸ and make the most of potential opportunities.

Almost 50% of Techscaler members do not enrol in education courses which reflects the fact that not all members need the same type of support, etc. As reflected in the member and mentor feedback, some Techscaler members:

- may not all be looking for this type of support.
- may not be at the right stage to access this support.
- may have already accessed this information and knowledge in other ways (for example, online, in books, involvement in accelerators, etc.) – and do not feel they need it.

⁸ Deep tech, or deep technology, refers to startups and companies that develop innovative solutions based on significant scientific or engineering advancements. These organisations typically focus on addressing complex challenges and societal issues, leveraging high-tech innovations for long-term benefits.

Further, drawing on support and networks from the community can sometimes be enough to encourage new founders to tip into seriousness.

Startup Basics (now known as Techscaler Discovery)

The Startup Basics course was delivered over the first two years of the programme⁹. Startup Basics was a free online self-paced course aimed at anyone with an idea or an interest in startups who was unsure where to begin. The course included modules covering aspects such as: startups and how they grow; where do startup ideas come from; what skills do I need; working with others; culture, values, and leadership; funding a startup; discovering customers and markets; and early product experimentations.

The Startup Basics course was designed to demystify startups, address common doubts in prospective founders about idea viability and development, teach the fundamentals of building and growing a startup, as well as instil industry language and transition mindsets from employee to founder. Startup Basics delivery included videos and exercises to encourage participants to reflect and refocus – to think about their own circumstances, further develop an idea they might have, and cultivate a learning-based approach to creating a new business.

Startup Basics enrolment, which increased from 2023 to 2024:

- 193 enrolments in Startup Basics in 2023.
- 232 enrolments in Startup Basics in 2024.
- a total of 425 enrolments by the end of 2024.
- 17% increase in enrolments over this period.

Source: Techscaler Annual Report 2023 and 2024. Note: Startup Basics is a self-paced online programme and people go through this programme at their own pace. As such completion rates are not available.

During 2024, additional modules were added to Startup Basics (for example, discovering customers and markets, and early product experimentations) and existing modules were also updated to incorporate the impact of AI.

Startup First Steps

Startup First Steps was delivered in 2023 and 2024 and involved three cohorts in total. Delivery of First Steps in this form has stopped¹⁰.

The 12-week Startup First Steps course was designed for early-stage startup founders looking to develop a tech startup from ideation to launch, get a first version of their product into market, and start acquiring customers. Course sessions were designed to be highly collaborative, with lectures from industry experts and practical activities and group discussions to support the application of learning.

⁹ In Year 3, Startup Basics has been pivoted by CodeBase into [Techscaler Discovery](#).

¹⁰ In Year 3 Startup First Steps and Next Steps have been replaced by the [Techscaler Catalyst](#) programme which takes this education course to a different level than what First Steps provided.

Startup First Steps aimed to help founders fail less at the early hurdles and set a strong foundation upon which to build and grow a tech startup and support the widening of the funnel later on. The course included aspects such as building a strong problem area, customer and market understanding, before undertaking solution experimentation, MVP building and launch tactics. Course delivery was underpinned with operational fundamentals for the business of a tech product, including business model innovation, funding, pitching and business obligations.

First Steps enrolment also increased from 2023 to 2024:

- 210 enrolments in Startup First Steps in 2023.
- 276 enrolments in 2024.
- total 386 enrolments by end of 2024.
- 24% year-on-year increase in enrolments.
- 88% completion rate across 2023–2024 combined.

Source: Techscaler Annual Report 2023 and 2024. Note: Completion rate provided directly by CodeBase.

CodeBase confirmed they received more applications than they had places available (which demonstrates a strong level of demand).

Techscaler Quarterly Review reports highlighted that some members dropped out of the First Steps course because they may have been at too early a stage for this course. If this was the main or only reason for course drop out, then this suggests there could be further scope for improved segmentation and needs assessment to be undertaken to ensure members access the right course at the right time, etc. As noted, CodeBase has refreshed its segmentation approach to support delivery in 2025.

Startup Next Steps

Startup Next Steps was delivered in 2023 and 2024¹¹ and as noted has been replaced with a revised programme based on user feedback and learning.

Startup Next Steps was a practical course designed for founders (and senior team members) who had a product live in the market and were looking to scale. The rationale for this course was that a lack of clear understanding within the Scottish ecosystem about achieving product/market fit contributed to startup failure. Startup Next Steps looked to address this by focusing on product development, business planning, growth strategies, sales, team building, funding, and pivoting in response to market signals.

Unlike other Techscaler Programme education courses, enrolment in Startup Next Steps declined in 2024 – a 55% decrease from the previous year.

¹¹ The Startup First Steps and Startup Next Steps education programmes have since been condensed by CodeBase into Techscaler Catalyst.

However, it should be noted that CodeBase made a deliberate decision to reduce the cohort size between cohorts 1 and 2, to offer more targeted support to founders at this stage.

The Techscaler Quarterly Review report (October 2024) noted that drop out from the Startup Next Steps course largely occurred because:

“Startup Next Steps is not yet serving the ‘enabling more startups to achieve product/market-fit’ purpose. We believe Startup Next Steps is too prescriptive and not timely enough when they experience the need for support.”

Startup Next Steps course enrolment and completion rate (2023 and 2024)

- 66 enrolments in Startup Next Steps in 2023
- 30 enrolments in 2024
- A total of 96 enrolments by the end of 2024
- Startup Next Steps completion rate is 72%

Source: Techscaler Annual Report 2023 and 2024. Note: 70 unique companies participated to the end of 2024.

Reforge

A formal partnership has been established between CodeBase and [Reforge](#) – a world leading career development platform for top-tier professionals in tech – the partnership arrangement offers Techscaler scaling members with a six-month membership to Reforge’s platform.

Reforge provides Techscaler members (founders and senior specialists within scaleups) with access to cohort-based courses/programmes, on-demand access to content and community, and events to give teams the tools they need to support growth beyond product/market fit and to further scale up. Techscaler participants are onboarded in cohorts throughout the year.

There has been a 61% increase in participation among Techscaler scaleup companies in Reforge over the period 2023 to 2024 – this confirms that interest and demand for this type of education support has been strong. Indeed, CodeBase confirmed that Reforge has been well subscribed to with consistent interest from scaling member employees.

Over 200 members from 50+ companies have been supported by Reforge by the end of 2024.¹² It delivered cutting-edge Silicon Valley playbooks to scaling leaders, helping them adopt new ways of working, grow faster, and strengthen the talent across our ecosystem.

¹² Source: Techscaler Annual Report 2023 and 2024. Reforge is an always-on programme, and CodeBase note that completion data is not applicable for this provision. The raw data CodeBase receive from Reforge does not include module completion data.

Funding Accelerator

The Techscaler Programme Funding Accelerator pilot launched in November 2024 and ran until February 2025.¹³ The pilot was operated in partnership between CodeBase and its delivery partner [Focused for Business](#). The 12-week online programme with weekly sessions and assignments, using a 'sprint' format. The pilot was aimed at Techscaler members (founders/C-suite) with proven products and early traction; equity raising for the first or second time (within 12-months of the support). CodeBase reached out directly to existing Techscaler members they identified as suitable candidates.

The Funding Accelerator pilot supported 10 startups as originally planned who were looking to raise first or second rounds of equity investment, in the £100,000 to £1 million range. As part of the pilot participating founders and startup company executives were exposed to aspects including valuation and financial planning investor engagement, pitching, building 'data rooms' for investors, maximising advisory services, through to negotiating and closing deals.

CodeBase confirmed that they have experienced increased demand for more courses that addresses this need and are currently working on another iteration of the Funding Accelerator.

Mentorship programme

Mentorship within the Techscaler Programme has provided a one-to-one opportunity for founders to be matched with experienced startup experts to support business and professional growth.

The mentorship programme predates the Techscaler Programme – CodeBase is a Barclay's Eagle Labs partner and CodeBase had an existing contact for the provision of mentoring support. When the Techscaler Programme launched in November 2022, CodeBase already had some staff, processes, and a pool of around 25 mentors working across CodeBase activity that could also support the Techscaler Programme. The mentor pool has been expanded significantly – it now has around 150 mentors.¹⁴

Individuals interested in becoming a Techscaler mentor are required to complete an online form, then have an interview/discussion with CodeBase, and also complete an exercise to identify their relevant sectoral and areas of expertise. Onboarding processes enable new Techscaler mentors to speak with and shadow an existing experienced Techscaler mentor before their own mentoring journey takes place, and Techscaler mentors are also invited to participate in:

- online mentor meet ups – opportunities to connect with other mentors.

¹³ Based on learning and experience of the pilot, CodeBase in Year 3 has launched the Venture Network which will allow growth and scaling companies to join for specific sessions that meet their requirements, rather than running this as a cohort programme.

¹⁴ An update from CodeBase provided as part of the evaluation (August 2025) indicates that there are currently 279 mentors working across all CodeBase activity, of which 199 are Techscaler mentors (125 are currently active mentors).

- mentor mixers – an informal get together of mentors and founders a few times a year.

CodeBase indicated that the organisation prioritises the recruitment of mentors with direct experience in founding and working within successful tech startups and scaleups to help build trusted relationships between mentors and mentees building relationships which are firmly rooted in practical business knowledge and a deep understanding of the entrepreneurial journey. Mentors are recruited to the mentor pool to bring real-life experience of the issues and challenges Techscaler members face.

CodeBase said the company has not required to undertake a recruitment exercise for mentors since the launch of the Techscaler Programme – interest in becoming a mentor is reported by CodeBase to have been strong, and is further evidenced by the large mentor pool.

Not all Techscaler mentors are active to the same degree – in part this depends on the type of mentoring support needed by mentees (for example, general mentoring support or more specific/technical support). This may also reflect other factors such as:

- the quality of the mentor pool – that is, the extent to which all mentors have direct experience in founding and/or working in tech startups and scaleups.
- the size of the mentor pool.

Mentorship is the most frequent reason founders apply to CodeBase to become a Techscaler member – the 2023 Annual Report specified that circa 85% of Techscaler members identified mentorship as a key motivation at the application stage.

Mentorship is frequently identified when Techscaler members complete their growth plan – this then triggers the matching process between mentor and mentee which is undertaken by CodeBase.

The Techscaler member survey undertaken as part of this early evaluation of the Techscaler Programme confirmed that access to expert mentorship advice, guidance, and support was the joint top motivating factor for becoming a Techscaler member (**Engaged members feedback, Chapter 4.4**).

Further CodeBase’s mentorship programme was ranked 6th in [Europe's Leading Startup Hubs](#) (Financial Times, March 2024) which shows that it is well-regarded.

The mentorship process is tailored to align with each founder’s unique background, expertise, and immediate needs. As part of the programme, new Techscaler members engage in an initial mentoring session to evaluate their current status and formulate/revise a strategic growth plan tailored to their needs.

During the first two years of the Techscaler Programme:

- early-stage businesses have been able to access one mentorship session a month.
- growth-stage businesses have been able to access two sessions a month.

- scaling businesses have been able to access three sessions month – there is some flexibility built in for scaleups to request additional mentorship sessions if they have a specific ask (this is assessed by CodeBase on a case-by-case basis and is dependent on factors such as available budget, etc.).

Mentorship support most in demand has been:

- product market fit.
- investment readiness/fundraising.
- product refinement.
- growth strategies.
- building teams.

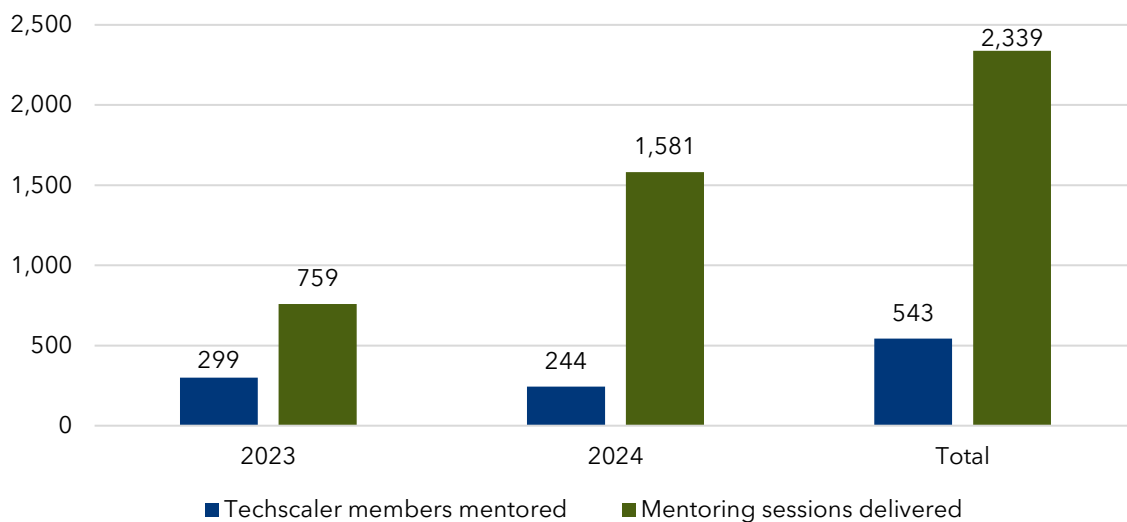
There are some differences in need for mentoring support by business stage:

- at the early-stage specifically there has been demand for user acquisitions, product development, and sales and marketing in particular.
- for growth and scaling stages, strongest interest has been for leadership skills, internationalisation/global expertise, and partnerships.

CodeBase undertake follow ups with the mentor and mentee after their first session to check whether they are both happy with the match and whether the first session went well.

Figure 3.9 shows that participation in, and delivery of, mentorship has increased over the period 2023 to 2024. The Net Promoter Score below shows that satisfaction with this aspect of the Techscaler Programme remains high.

Figure 3.9: Techscaler mentorship programme – participation and sessions delivered



Source: Techscaler Annual Report 2023 and 2024.

Up to the end of 2024, Techscaler mentorship relied on direct, manual outreach and was tightly coupled with the membership journey and onboarding.

Techscaler mentorship programme (2023 and 2024)

- Techscaler has a pool of 150 mentors from across Scotland (23% are female)
- 45% of Techscaler members have received mentoring support
- Net Promoter Score (NPS) for mentorship remains high at 90 which is excellent*

Source: Techscaler Annual Report 2023 and 2024.

Note 1: An update from CodeBase is that there are currently 279 mentors working across all CodeBase activity, of which 199 are Techscaler mentors (125 are currently active mentors).

Note 2*: NPS is a recognised way for businesses and organisations to measure customer loyalty and satisfaction. The question asked is a rating scale asking the respondent to select a number from 0 (least likely to recommend) to 10 (most likely to recommend). Depending on the number that each respondent selects, they are grouped into one of three groups: Promoters are respondents who select a 9 or 10 rating. This group represents the most satisfied customers, who are highly likely to recommend the service to others; Passives are respondents who select a 7 or 8 rating. This group is relatively satisfied. However, they could choose a competitor based on price, new features, customer service or other factors; and Detractors select a rating between 0 to 6. They are the least content customers. They are at risk of leaving and sharing their negative experiences with others. NPS is the percentage of promoters minus the percentage of detractors. The NPS will be between -100 and 100. A score of -100-0 (needs improvement), 1-29 (good); 30-69 (great); 70-100 (excellent).

3.6 Pillar two – foster social infrastructure development

The Techscaler Programme has sought to nurture a supportive community which supports founders and team members to make valuable connections, explore collaborative opportunities, and find relevant support from ecosystem builders and experts.

Hub network

In line with the STER, the Scottish Government specified that a national network of at least five Techscaler physical hubs were to be established in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee, and Inverness. These locations were identified based on evidence presented in the STER relating to scale, lessons from other ecosystems, proximity to essential partners, and the importance of looking outward.

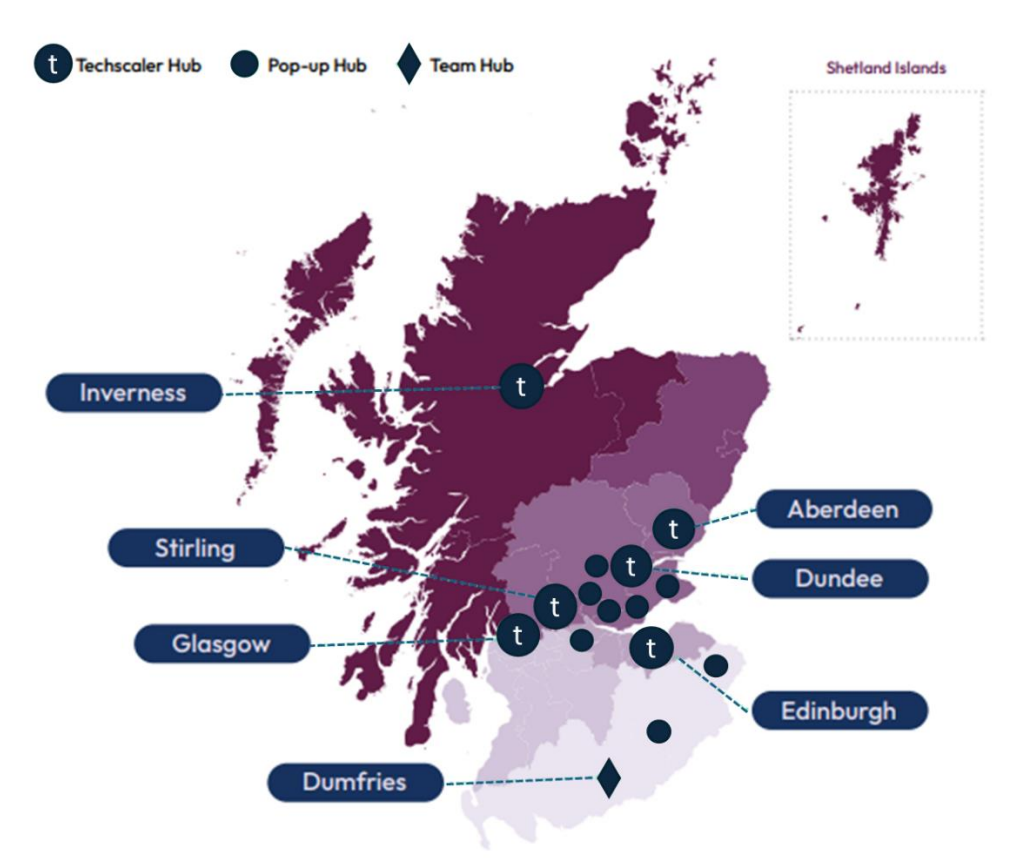
The rationale for the provision of the Techscaler hub network was that high quality spaces are viewed as critical to success and that they could help to address barriers around access and opportunity – in that the cost of accessing office/ workspace can often be prohibitive for startups, and provision may not always be flexible enough to meet their specific needs. Hub spaces can also foster a sense of community and collaboration and encourage a culture of cooperation and innovation (that is, startups often gravitate to areas where other startups already exist or are based).

By the end of 2024, Techscaler had six regions with physical hubs and eight pop up hubs (more than that specified by the Scottish Government).

Edinburgh and Stirling are the only physical hub sites operated directly by CodeBase (and pre-dated the Techscaler Programme) – all others are operated by partners.

These regional hubs are situated in: Aberdeen (ONE Tech Hub); Dundee (Abertay University Cyber Quarter); Dumfries (a partnership with Midsteeple Quarter the base is within The Standard); Edinburgh (CodeBase Edinburgh); Glasgow (Glasgow Eagle Lab which part of the Barclays Eagle Lab Campus); Inverness (Wasps Inverness Creative Academy); and Stirling (CodeBase Stirling).

Figure 3.10: Techscaler regional and pop-up hubs (to date)



Source: Techscaler Annual Report 2024.

Note: The Dumfries hub was only confirmed in November 2025.

The regional hubs typically comprise a mix of hot-desking, co-working, private office space, meeting space, and/or event space. Techscaler members who are not also hub tenants may be able to pay for meeting rooms and event spaces directly with the hub space, but the arrangement varies by hub partner.

CodeBase does not incur a cost for running the physical spaces (other than for the Edinburgh hub). Rather the main cost associated with the hub network is staffing – that is, for the Engagement Teams).

This is further reflected in **Table 3.4** later in this chapter which provides a breakdown of how the Techscaler Programme budget has been spent by CodeBase in the first two years of programme delivery – this confirms that accommodation costs have represented a small proportion of total spend to date.

During 2024, the six dedicated regional hubs have been supplemented by eight Techscaler ‘pop-up’ hubs operated by partners in locations in Clackmannanshire, Fife, and the Scottish Borders.

CodeBase has embedded Techscaler Engagement Teams in each regional ecosystem, including Heads of Regional Engagement (first point of contact for founders, stakeholders, and partners), Community Managers, and in some hubs Events Support. The role of Engagement Teams is to respond to the specific needs in their region and to build community through regular engagement with founders.

This includes hosting events and hybrid delivery of education programmes to maximise accessibility of the programme support. Techscaler engagement is now managed centrally.

Information collected at the Techscaler member application stage indicates that accessing workspace is of least interest to those looking to become a member/ access support. That is, accessing workspace has not been a key motivator for participation in the programme to date. One-third intimated interest in co-working, 26% in hotdesking, and 23% in dedicated office space. This is as expected given the sustained trend in distributed teams post COVID-19.

The Techscaler members survey undertaken as part of this early evaluation also found that access to an affordable place to work or meet from was not a key motivating factor for joining Techscaler (only reported by 2%) (see Engaged members survey). That being said, some interest was expressed for future use.

CodeBase noted that it was difficult to secure information from hub partners on hub occupancy based on Techscaler members alone. However, for the two hubs CodeBase manages, the data is as follows¹⁵:

- Edinburgh – Techscaler members are 43% of the total hub occupancy – broken down further, that figure is 60% for offices and 23% for coworking.
- Stirling – Techscaler members are 57% of total hub occupancy.

Community and events

Fostering and building a community for Techscaler members to connect, learn and grow with is at the heart of the Techscaler Programme’s approach – the programme was designed to provide supportive environments along with opportunities to help members forge new relationships and connections, share knowledge and experiences.

¹⁵ The data provided is as at September 2025.

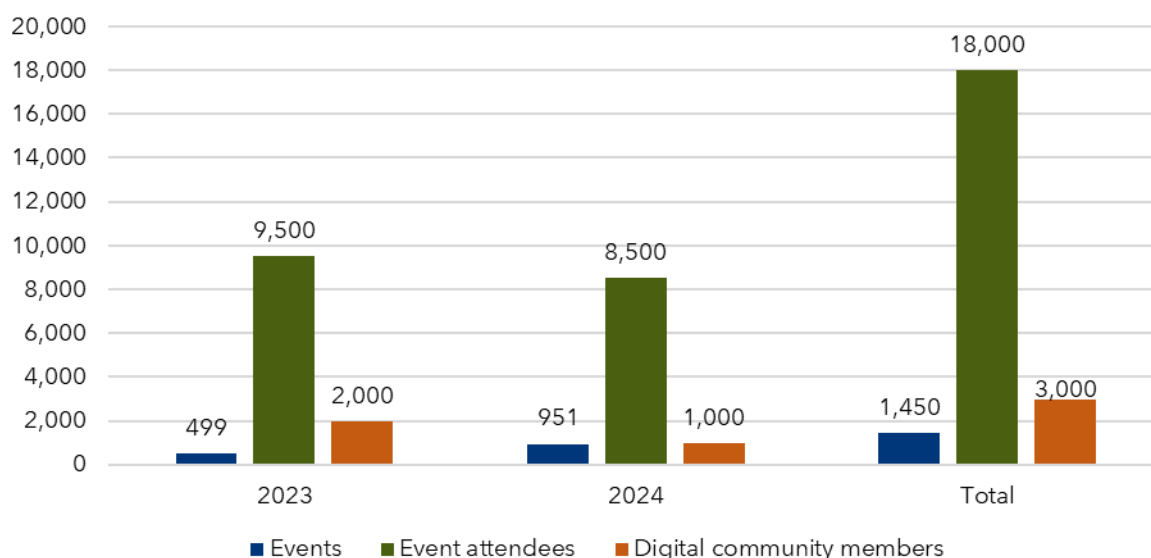
Techscaler Programme community and events activity seeks to connect people/founders at all stages of the startup journey as well as across the ecosystem in Scotland and beyond. Together with the hub networks, community and events supported via the programme look to provide founders and their teams access to the physical and social infrastructure required to develop and grow successful startups.

Events held to date include a mix of Codebase/Techscaler Programme hosted events and those hosted in partnership with other organisations which is a sensible approach. In 2023 and 2024, almost half of the total events held were run in partnership between CodeBase and other organisations, and circa one-fifth had a diversity, equality, and inclusion focus.

Figure 3.11 shows that:

- there have been circa 18,000 cumulative event attendees since the launch of the Techscaler Programme – there has been a slight dip in event attendance in 2024 when compared to 2023.
- CodeBase currently has 3,000 digital community members – there has been a dip in the growth of the digital community membership between 2023 and 2024.

Figure 3.11: Community and events (2023 and 2024 cumulative)



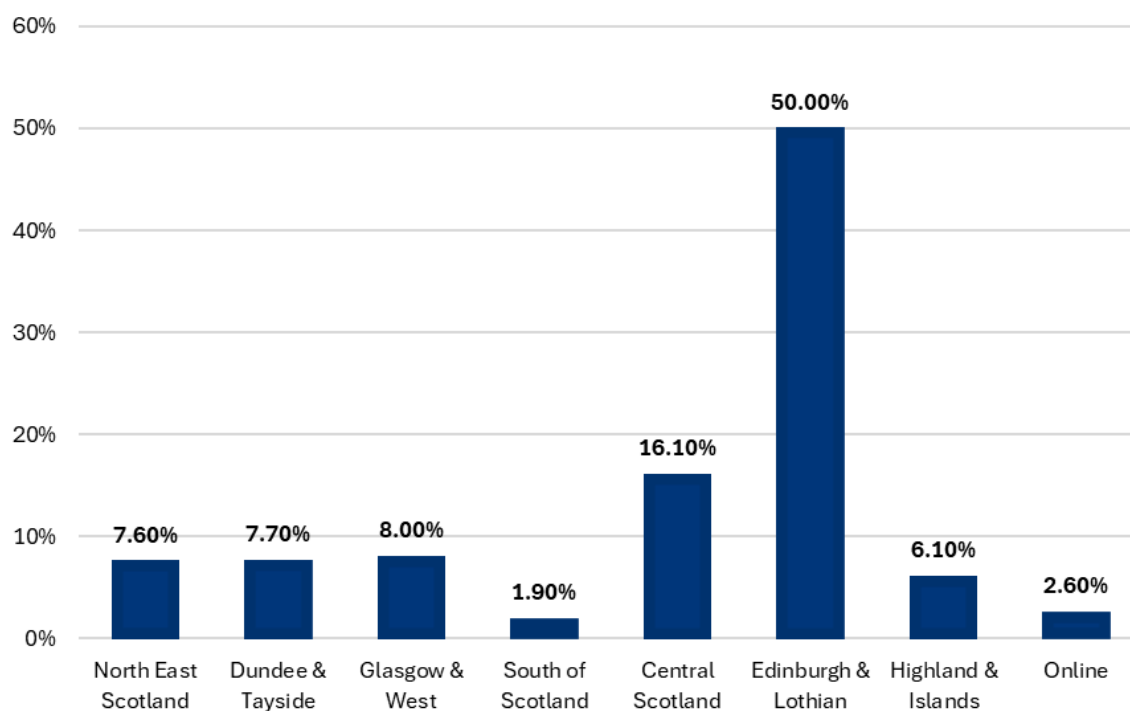
Source: Techscaler Annual Report 2023 and 2024.

Codebase note that while they track attendance at events and correlate to Techscaler CRM, there are elements outside CodeBase’s control such as members signing up with different email addresses and their attendance not correlating to their member record.

Most events have been held in-person and across all regions – half were held in Edinburgh and Lothians, see **Figure 3.12**. As reported in the **Engaged members feedback (Chapter 4)** and **Partner and stakeholder views (Chapter 6)** there remains a perception in some quarters that the Techscaler Programme has a focus that does not extend beyond the central belt.

It should, however, be noted that the specification for the Techscaler Programme specifies the assumption that 50% of activity would be in Edinburgh, 25% in Glasgow, 10% in Dundee, 10% in Aberdeen, 5% in Inverness.

Figure 3.12: Events by region (cumulative to December 2024)



Source: Techscaler Annual Report 2024

Other data provided by CodeBase as part of the evaluation shows the number of Techscaler-related events held at each of the hubs and attendance:

- Aberdeen – 49 events and 1,329 attendees (average 27 per event).
- Stirling – 199 events and 2,797 attendees (average 14 per event).
- Dundee – 78 events and 1,342 attendees (average 17 per event).
- Edinburgh – 408 events and 8,756 attendees (average 21 per event).
- Glasgow – 85 events and 1,389 attendees (average 16 per event).
- Inverness – 60 events and 1,018 attendees (average 17 per event).

The data above, for the period November 2022 to December 2024, shows that a majority (69%) of these events were held in hubs where CodeBase is the landlord, and over half were held in the central belt (in line with the Techscaler Programme specification).

Partnerships

Over the first two years of Techscaler Programme delivery, CodeBase has sought to develop and widen formal partnerships with a range of organisations across the entrepreneurial ecosystem. In doing so CodeBase has sought to form a wider support network for the programme that is greater than the sum of its parts – playing to the strengths and capabilities of each partner in the entrepreneurial ecosystem to support tech startups and scaleups.

As well as helping to signpost and facilitate connections across Scotland's entrepreneurial ecosystem so that startups and scaleups can access other support.

By the end of 2024 CodeBase reported that it has developed formal partnership working arrangements with 63 organisations (a steady increase of 11% from 2023).

Partners for the Techscaler Programme span, for example:

- local and national government.
- other public sector partners – for example, enterprise agencies, universities.
- innovation centres and innovation-related support providers.
- other business support providers and industry bodies – for example, sector, equality, diversity and inclusion specific organisations.
- startup and scaleup accelerator organisations.
- funders and investors.

CodeBase's formal partnerships for the Techscaler Programme (2023 and 2024)

- 56 partnerships in 2023.
- Increased to 63 partnerships in 2024.

Source: Techscaler Annual Report 2024.

The nature and depth of this engagement is equally varied – for example, from co-hosting events to joint grant schemes.

3.7 Pillar three – increase investor connectivity and internationalisation

CodeBase, via the Techscaler Programme, has also sought to foster actionable connections between founders and investors, creating accessible funding pathways for high potential companies, offering global opportunities through international residencies, and hosting investor events in Scotland.

Fundraising

The STER noted that raising capital is a fundamental requirement for many startups – the Techscaler Programme has supported companies by helping founders and their teams to develop the skills and connections necessary for fundraising. CodeBase does this by partnering with organisations, including Scottish Enterprise and Panache Ventures.

The capital raised by Techscaler members as detailed in the Techscaler Annual Report 2024 is presented below:

- £54.1 million capital raised by member businesses by the end 2023.
- £63.3 million capital raised by member businesses during 2024.
- a total of £118 million capital raised by member businesses over the first two years of the programme.¹⁶

Points to note include that:

- the £118 million capital raised by member businesses since the Techscaler Programme began (to the end of December 2024) is based on the investment figures reported by Beauhurst, which is based on a combination of account filings and announced raises – this indicates market faith in future returns and the metric helps to demonstrate improvement for the Techscaler Programme and wider ecosystem in Scotland.
- the £118 million has been raised by 147 companies – this represents 15% of Techscaler’s 978 company members.
- the vast majority of these companies are based in Edinburgh (55%) or Glasgow (26%).
- companies operating in the Health and Medicine sector have raised much of this investment (circa £50 million), followed but to a much lesser extent by Legal (circa £9 million), Energy, Climate and Sustainability (circa £6 million), and Data and Analytics (circa £5 million).
- funding/investment sources – the £118 million is made up of £105.25 million equity investment and £12.86 million grant funding.

However, it is not clear to what extent these impacts are fully or partially attributable to the programme.

Investor connectivity and internationalisation

CodeBase, via a range of collaborations and activities, has sought to facilitate and connect tech startups and scaleups including with industry investors (in Scotland and further afield) and with international ecosystems and funding opportunities. This has spanned a broad range of activities during 2023 and 2024 including those aimed at supporting founders to:

- showcase who they are and what they do.
- gain exposure to global best practice and to learn from others.
- build relationships and connections across the tech ecosystem.
- meet and connect with global investors.
- increase their exposure to international markets.

¹⁶ Source: Techscaler Annual Report 2024. Note 1: This comprises 89% equity based investment and 11% grant funding. Note 2: This includes £1.5 million in grant funding (Lifetime) awarded directly through Techscaler MVP Grant in partnership with Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and South of Scotland Enterprise.

Some examples of international connectivity activity supported via the Techscaler Programme has included:

- hosting delegates from other countries in Scotland – for example, CodeBase hosted a delegation of representatives from Singapore in 2023 to give founders the opportunity to engage with Scotland’s Trade and Investment Envoy to Singapore.
- international pop up hubs.
- presenting and speaking at the global tech events and forums – for example, at the World Incubators Forum (Shanghai).
- attending leading startup and scaleup events and conferences in America, Asia, and Europe.

These activities have often been undertaken by CodeBase in partnership with Scottish Development International (SDI), enterprise agencies, Scottish Government, universities, to name a few examples.

This activity has been undertaken to help position tech startups and scaleups to compete more effectively on the global stage. CodeBase has done this through the delivery of international programmes that seek to engage with mature tech ecosystems like Silicon Valley and Singapore – the approach has been to help embed and integrate founders within these tech ecosystems for extended periods, see **Table 3.3**.

CodeBase’s international programmes have provided opportunities for each of cohort of Scotland-based founders, of which there have been three (to the end of 2024), to:

- work on their startups directly from these locations.
- broaden their ambition and mindset.
- foster meaningful connections with local networks, and meet investors, peers, and potential customers.
- implement key changes and share insights with their team on their return.

Table 3.3: Techscaler international programme

International programme	When	Where	Who
Techscaler – Silicon Valley (Cohort 1).	February 2024.	Participants spent up to one month in the San Francisco Bay Area based at Mindspace59 (a co-working space near San Francisco’s financial district).	Founders and CMOs from 12 companies.
Techscaler: Silicon Valley (Cohort 2).	26 August – 13 September 2024.	Participants attended hackathons, pivoted their products, built a lasting support network, and attended SaaStr60, to learn from the latest innovators on the impact of AI on the software-as-a-Service (SaaS) business model.	Founders from 13 companies. A focus on SaaS startups with a product in market, ARR of maximum £500,000, and no permanent US team member or office.
Techscaler: Singapore (in partnership with SDI).	21 October – 8 November 2024.	Participants were based at BLOCK71, a global ecosystem builder and startup incubator.	Founders from 12 companies. Participating startups belonged to industries spanning fintech, professional services, AI, hardware, medtech, and energytech/ sustainability.

Source: Techscaler Annual Report 2024. 35 unique companies involved.

Key investor activity

A wider summary of key investor activity up to December 2024 has included:

- investor roadshows which visited Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness and Dundee during August 2023 – this featured five venture capitalists and was undertaken in partnership with Panache Ventures.
- broadening of investor network through one-to-one outreach.
- establishing virtual and in-person office hours with investors, for example, Maven Capital Partners.
- investors (for example, Archangels) regularly appearing on panels for First Steps and Next Steps.
- partnered with Foras for Sifted investor showcase in London in October 2024.
- fundraising accelerator which commenced in October 2024.
- featured in Praetura Investor Portal in November 2024.
- a roundtable discussion with Techstart Ventures in November 2024.
- prep work for first Ones to Watch in Q4 2024 (launched in January 2025).

3.8 Contract meetings

The Services Contract specifies that contract meetings will usually be held every two months and will be held at Scottish Government offices. It notes that occasions may arise where meetings will be held at the Service Provider's (CodeBase's) offices, and that any change to the location of a meeting will be communicated by the Scottish Government with as much notice as reasonably practicable.

The Services Contract specifies that the contract meetings will cover, among other topics:

- the most recently submitted performance report.
- the progression of the STER programme and the exploration of any challenges and opportunities.
- other standing agenda items such as sustainability, community benefits, fair work practices, and ethical considerations such as supply chain matters.

In practice, contract meetings are usually held at CodeBase offices or online – and there are additional touchpoints to what is specified in the Services Contract. This includes weekly check-ins, monthly contract meetings, and quarterly review meetings.

3.9 Financial overview

Context

The financial information presented in the following section was provided directly to the evaluation team by the Scottish Government. The summary format shown in **Table 3.4** reflects the reporting arrangements agreed between the Scottish Government and CodeBase up to December 2024. While CodeBase maintains more detailed internal financial records for each cost centre, the evaluation team only received the information in the summary format provided by the Scottish Government. As evaluators, we would have welcomed access to a more granular financial breakdown; however, the summary-level data provided aligns with the formal reporting requirements in place during the period under review. It should be noted that reporting arrangements have since been revised and the 2025-2026 Delivery Plan introduces a more detailed financial breakdown by workstream, representing an improvement in transparency that should support more robust monitoring going forward.

Financial overview

CodeBase is required to submit invoices monthly in arrears to the Scottish Government for review and payment, and other documentation reasonably required to substantiate any invoice.

CodeBase provides details of the Techscaler Programme 'financial outlook and variation proposals' in its Quarterly Review reports to the Scottish Government, to inform discussions at the quarterly contract meetings.

The financial information presented in the Quarterly Review reports has typically been presented in summary form and at a high level, and covering the broad budget lines of:

- **management fee (capital)** – relates to office equipment required to deliver the programme.
- **management fee (revenue)** – contains professional fees, IT and subscriptions, marketing, travel and events.
- **accommodation** – relates to premises costs for hosting the Edinburgh Techscaler hub.
- **education costs** – includes activity such as licenses for programmes, event space, speaker costs and marketing.
- **staff costs** – covers all CodeBase staff and board time that is dedicated to the programme.

During 2023, CodeBase adjusted its financial reporting to be presented in financial years.

Row three, in **Table 3.4** provides details about the re-profiled forecast to align with financial years. This was requested by the Scottish Government in 2023 as within the contract the annual budgets were provided to align with contract years (for example, November to November). However, this did not work with the Scottish Government's systems and budgeting process.

Row four provides details on the actual spend incurred for each financial year to date. These totals have been broken down further to align with the five categories that are detailed in the contract and what is on the invoices, these can be found within **Rows six to ten**.

Table 3.4: Financial overview of the Techscaler Programme

Row	Spend category	Mobilisation (Jul-Nov 2022)	FY22-23 (Nov 22-Mar 23)	FY23-24	FY24-25	FY25-26	FY26-27 (F)
2a	Planned spend (contract)	£1,847,380.00	-	-	-	-	-
3a	Reprofiled forecast (Dec 2023)	-	£2,185,319.00	£8,880,000.00	£9,514,857.60	£9,731,449.20	£10,226,449.20
4a	Actual spend	£1,847,343.93	£2,622,382.49	£8,890,838.72	£9,431,626.80	-	-
6a	Accommodation	-	£102,705.00	£298,512.59	£260,580.00	-	-
7a	Management fee (capital)	-	£2,446,795.33	£316,066.36	£13,126.80	-	-
8a	Management fee (revenue)	-	-	£1,467,211.47	£1,335,836.40	-	-
9a	Education	£71,816.00	£638,909.42	£972,855.00	-	-	-
10a	Staff	Included in Mgmt Fee	£6,170,138.84	£6,489,228.00	-	-	-

Note 1: Invoices and reporting categories changed partway through FY 2023/24 and therefore will be small variances where some costs would fall when broken down into categories. Note 2: The variance between Actual spend (FY 2022-2023) and the total of the breakdown for the same FY is the VAT. It is worth noting that the original financial figures that were included in the contract have VAT excluded. Future forecasts were VAT inclusive.

Key messages from **Table 3.4** are outlined below.

A **budget of circa £42.4 million (excluding VAT)** has been provided by the Scottish Government to CodeBase for the Techscaler Programme for the five-year contract period.

A fixed fee of circa **£1.8 million (excluding VAT) (4% of the total budget)** was agreed for the mobilisation period and was not subject to variation. Payment was made to CodeBase in arrears once approved by Scottish Government, on successful completion of each stage. 100% expenditure was achieved over the mobilisation period.

The remainder of Scottish Government funding (circa £40.5 million excluding VAT) for the Techscaler Programme has been budgeted (and re-profiled) over the five years of the contract delivery period, and can be broken down as follows:

- circa £20.5 million (excluding VAT) or 49% of the total budget has been budgeted for the period November 2022 and March 2025 which aligns most closely to the scope of this early evaluation of the programme – this rises to circa £22.4 million excluding VAT (or 53% of the total budget) when the mobilisation period budget is included.
- circa £20 million or 47% of the total budget has been budgeted for the remainder of the contract period – that is, for the financial years 2025-2026 to 2026-2027.

By March 2025, approximately £22.8 million (excluding VAT) has been spent, representing 54% of the total budget. The Scottish Government is leading changes to financial reporting to strengthen contract management, improve transparency, and enable more detailed evaluation. Available breakdowns indicate that staff costs remain the largest expenditure, followed by the management fee.

4 Engaged members feedback

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the feedback received from Techscaler members who have engaged with the programme over the first two years of delivery.¹⁷ Where appropriate we have provided anonymised quotes from Techscaler members to provide greater insights and to highlight the diversity of views.

The survey methodology is described in **Chapter 2** and **Appendix B**, and the full survey findings are presented in the **supplementary report**.

The surveys aimed at engaged Techscaler members resulted in a total of 173 interviews, against a target of 200 interviews (86% achieved). As outlined earlier, Research Resource conducted a telephone survey using a randomised sample of Techscaler members. Due to self-selection, the sample cannot be viewed as wholly representative, and the results cannot be generalised to all Techscaler members.

4.2 Members who responded to the surveys

Key points to note on the companies/individuals that responded to the engaged Techscaler members surveys included that:

- the vast majority (90%) of survey respondents were founders or co-founders.
- the vast majority (97%) of survey respondents run a startup with less than 10 employees – this included a significant proportion who said they were startup founders (with no other employees).
- sizeable proportions of Techscaler members who responded to the survey run female-led (41%), family-owned (34%) and/or minority ethnic group-led businesses (20%).

For the telephone survey (140 of the 173 interviews), CodeBase provided details of key company contacts' stage of development (from ideation to scaling) at the time of joining Techscaler.

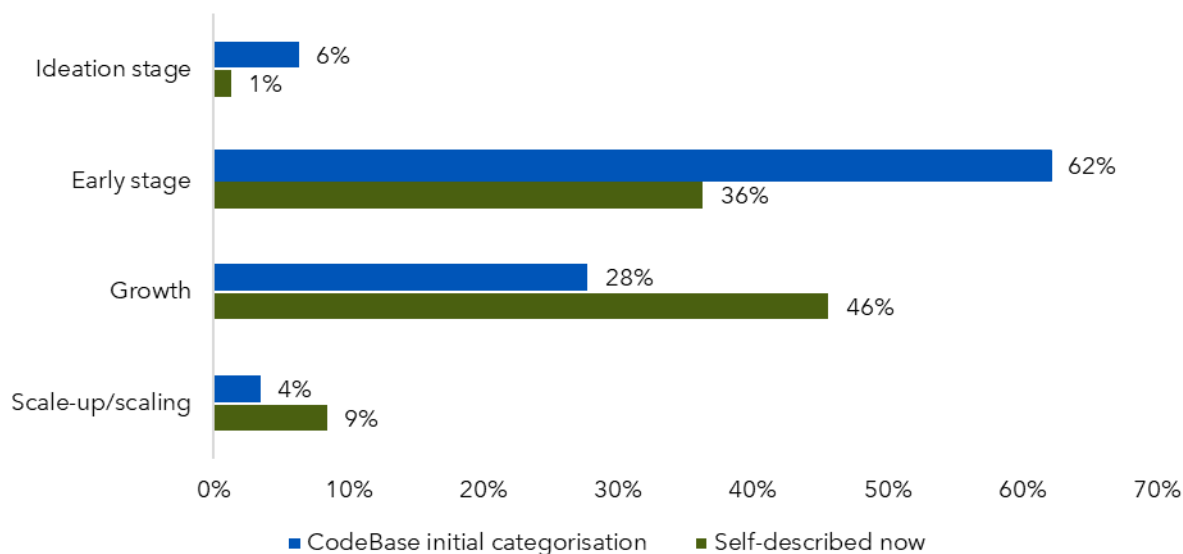
A majority (68%) of survey respondents were categorised by CodeBase as at an early-stage when they joined Techscaler (that is, either ideation or early-stage).

¹⁷ There is limited feedback from Techscaler members who have not yet engaged with the formal support offered by the programme. The survey findings are presented in the Supplementary report and are not covered in this chapter.

When these company contacts were asked in the survey where they see their company now, over half (54%) reported that their company was at the growth or scaling stage, **Figure 4.1**.

Based on the survey feedback, this suggests that the Techscaler Programme has supported some members to progress in their startup journey.

Figure 4.1: Which of the following stages best describes your/the company's situation? (CodeBase initial categories and self-described now)



Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=140 (telephone survey).

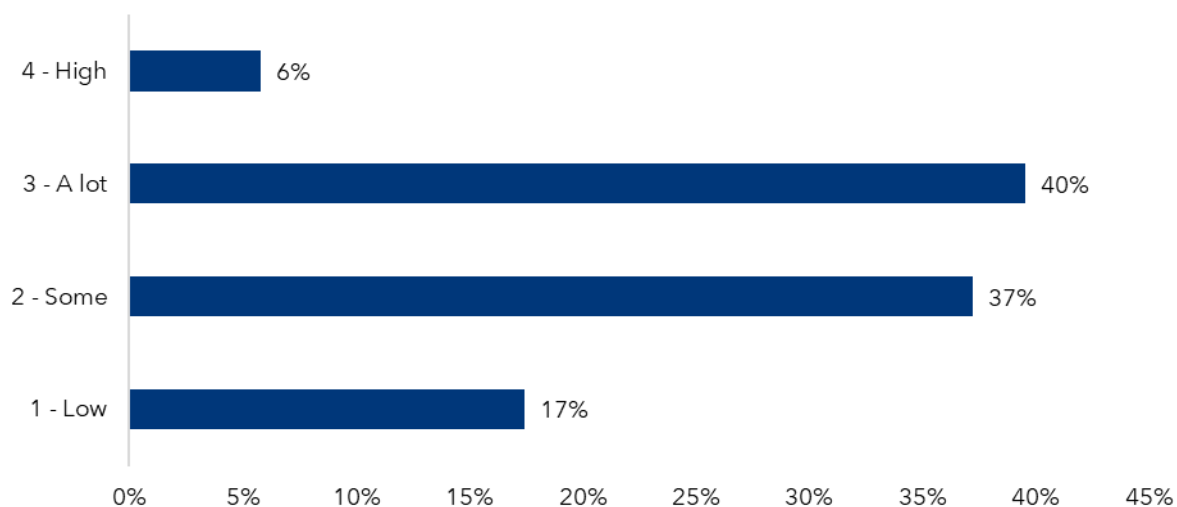
Note: Other responses include: decided not to start up the company; have since stopped trading; decided to start/are considering starting up a different business.

4.3 Engagement with the Techscaler Programme

Figure 4.2 shows that engagement with the Techscaler Programme has varied among members who responded to the surveys, for example:

- over half of survey respondents have been more engaged with the programme ('a lot' or 'high').
- while almost half have been less engaged ('some' or 'low').

Figure 4.2: Level of engagement with the Techscaler Programme



Source: EKOS Techscaler members surveys. Base=172.

Note: For the telephone survey sample, CodeBase provided details of its internal coding for level of service engagement for companies, while for the online survey members were asked to indicate their own level of engagement with the Techscaler Programme.

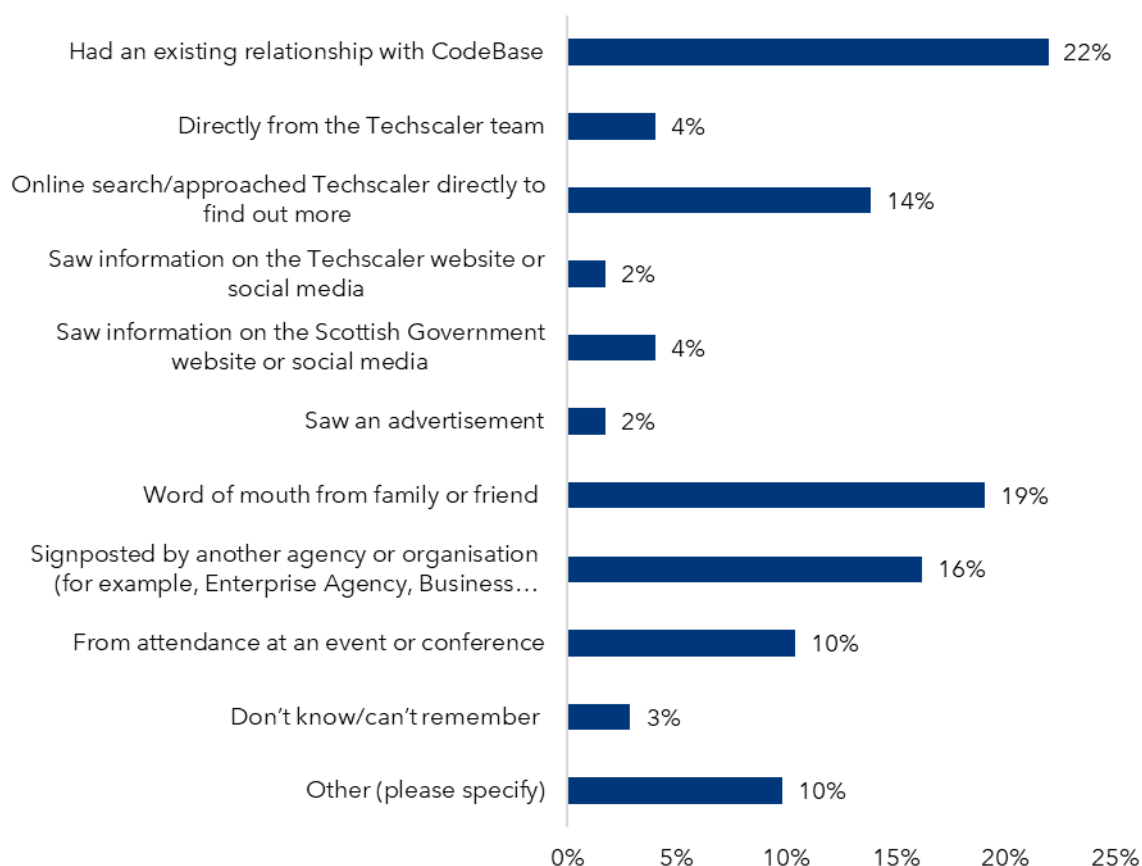
4.4 Prior to joining the Techscaler Programme

The surveys found that the main way members first heard about the Techscaler Programme was either through:

- an existing relationship with CodeBase (22% of survey respondents).
- via word of mouth from family or friends (19% of survey respondents), see **Figure 4.3**.

Based on the survey feedback, direct contact and/or promotional activity from CodeBase (or promotional activity by the Scottish Government) appears to have been much less of a feature.

Figure 4.3: How did you first find out about the Techscaler Programme?



Source: EKOS Techscaler members surveys. Base=173.

Note: 'Other' responses include: LinkedIn, through my employer; support teams; professional networks; and community events.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Main motivating factors for joining the Techscaler Programme

The main motivating factors for becoming a Techscaler member were reported by members who responded to the surveys as to:

- meet and connect with like-minded founders and peers (part of the 'community') (39% of survey respondents).
- access expert mentorship advice, guidance, and support (39% of survey respondents), **Table 4.1.**

Table 4.1: What were your main motivations for applying to the Techscaler Programme for support?

Reasons for applying	Number	Percentage
To meet and connect with like-minded founders and peers (part of the 'community')	68	39%
To access expert mentorship advice, guidance, and support	67	39%
To attend events to meet fellow founders, expand our network, and hear from industry experts	65	37%
To access resources and tools to help startup a business	62	36%
Wanted to access skills development support for myself/founder/co-founder	58	33%
To help access finance (for example, grants, self-funding/bootstrapping, fundraising – in exchange for equity or convertible debt, bank loans, crowdfunding, Series A, B, and C funding rounds)	50	29%
To test the viability of my business idea	36	21%
To increase our understanding of, and ability to navigate the tech support ecosystem in Scotland	26	15%
To increase our investor connectivity	19	11%
Wanted to access skills development support for our wider team	14	8%
To enhance our financial readiness	14	8%
To start/increase our internationalisation	11	6%

Source: EKOS Techscaler members surveys. Base=173.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Barriers faced at that time

The main barrier faced by members at the time of joining Techscaler was reported to be access to finance (61%). Other key barriers to startup, growth and scaling were reported by members as:

- a limited understanding of the tech support ecosystem (50% of survey respondents).
- a lack of wider ecosystem connections (48% of survey respondents).
- a lack of connections with founders and startup peers (48% of survey respondents).

A positive finding (as reported at **Chapter 4.6**) is that a majority of respondents reported that the Techscaler Programme support had helped them either 'very

much so' or 'to some extent' address the barriers they faced to startup, growth or scaleup.

Techscaler marketing and promotion

A majority of Techscaler member survey respondents said that they were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with aspects of the marketing and promotion of the Techscaler Programme. This ranged from 71% ('Ease of finding out about the support' and 'Clarity on how the Techscaler Programme could help them') to 73% ('clarity on eligibility'), full findings presented below:

- Clarity on eligibility (73%)
- Clarity on type of support Techscaler offers (72%)
- Ease of finding out about the support (71%)
- Clarity on how Techscaler could help you/your company (71%)

Source: EKOS Techscaler members surveys. Base=173.

A significant minority were either neutral or dissatisfied, mainly neutral.

While satisfaction with Techscaler Programme marketing and promotional activity was high, a majority of survey respondents also suggested ways for how this could be further improved.

"There are issues with how they are reaching founders across the central belt. Ayrshire falls in the South region and Glasgow in the West region and Ayrshire seems to be completely missed as we are not in the South although they class it as the South. There are not enough people in the CodeBase team to support the number of startups in Glasgow, so people are falling through the net."

"It was confusing regarding onboarding. I applied for a course but to do the course I had to apply to Techscaler. I was accepted by Techscaler but was unsure if I was also accepted onto the course, so this could be clearer."

"There is no distinct branding for Highlands and Islands, so sometimes I go onto Eventbrite and get excited about things coming up to then find out it is in Glasgow. There could be more distinctive branding for each area."

Thinking back to when members joined Techscaler these survey respondents said that:

- programme information was too 'generic' and 'wide-ranging' – and that they were unclear on whether the programme was for them.
- marketing and promotional activity was considered to have been central belt focussed – it was suggested that a greater use of social media channels and greater visibility of the Techscaler Programme brand at other events could have helped to raise early awareness of the programme.
- they were not sure of the difference between Techscaler (the programme) and CodeBase (the delivery partner).

A positive message is that a few members noted in their survey response that promotion of the Techscaler Programme has improved since they first joined.

4.5 Techscaler application process and initial engagement with CodeBase

The vast majority of Techscaler members who responded to the surveys expressed high levels of satisfaction with aspects of the Techscaler member application process and with their initial engagement with CodeBase. This ranged from 77% ('Ongoing communication from CodeBase') to 83% ('Online application process' and responsiveness from CodeBase once their application was submitted'). Full findings are presented below:

- Online application process (83%)
- Responsiveness of CodeBase once application was submitted (83%)
- Initial contact and communication with CodeBase (81%)
- Time taken for support to start (79%)
- Ongoing communication from CodeBase (77%)

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=173.

Qualitative survey feedback was also largely positive. Members who responded to the surveys appreciated the speed of onboarding and initial conversations with CodeBase who were considered knowledgeable and responsive and interested to find about more about their idea/company and support needs.

"They are good at checking in. The mentor they have paired me up with understood me."

"I found them fairly responsive once we applied. The process was clear from the application onwards. The initial call was also quite good."

"The challenges were around being able to draw down the full spectrum of what the Techscaler Programme can offer – I have not had the benefit from anything else other than the mentorship."

Another positive message was that over two-thirds (69%) of members who responded to the surveys rated CodeBase's relationship management as 'good' or 'very good.'

"Everyone is super friendly and welcoming. Feels like a community."

"They are always keen to help and promote the system."

"They are quite hands on and fixed any problems through the community hub."

Almost one-third (31%) of survey respondents said relationship management was average or poor.

"They are all nice people but there is not a lot of contact. They could reach out more often to check how we are doing, more personal contact."

“It started off well, and had heavy content, but the communication has not been good.”

“More targeted support would be good.”

Suggested areas for improvement (made by all respondents regardless of how they answered the question on relationship management) included:

- a more personalised and proactive approach to relationship management as some members considered CodeBase’s current arrangements to be ‘hands-off’ or overly reliant on ‘impersonal’ emails.
- calls for a single point of contact, regular check-ins, follow-ups after events, etc., as well as more in-person contact.

4.6 Techscaler Programme support accessed and satisfaction

Support accessed

Members who responded to the surveys reported that they have accessed a range of Techscaler Programme support – the main types of support received were reported as mentorship (78% of survey respondents) and participation in education courses (Startup Basics and First Steps, both 50% of survey respondents), **Table 4.2**.

Table 4.2: Which support have you accessed from the Techscaler Programme?

Support accessed	Number	Percentage
Mentorship	135	78%
Startup Basics	86	50%
First Steps	86	50%
Next Steps	44	25%
Attended community events, meetups, and networking opportunities	24	14%
International programmes	20	12%
Reforge	11	6%
Use of a Techscaler hub to work and meet from (for example, flexible hotdesking or coworking space, access to meeting space)	10	6%
Funding readiness	4	2%
Tenant of a Techscaler hub	3	2%
Other	1	1%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=172. Note: ‘Other’ response included: Discovery. Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Few members who responded to the surveys (8%) indicated that they were tenants of a Techscaler physical hub or have used them for hotdesking or co-working space.

This was largely due to members reporting that they had no requirement for this type of provision (for example, homeworking, already have premises, have a full-time job in addition to a business idea). A positive finding was that around two-thirds (68%) of members who responded to the surveys said that they would consider using a regional hub in the future, see **Table 4.3**.

Table 4.3: Would you consider using a regional hub in the future?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes, for flexible hotdesking or coworking space	78	47%
Yes, for accessing meeting space	61	37%
Yes, as a tenant	36	22%
No, unlikely	33	20%
No, definitely not	20	12%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey.
Base=166.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Some members mentioned they have had a positive prior experience of other hotdesking spaces and that they valued the networking opportunities hubs provided, or that they may need workspace as their company grows.

Satisfaction with Techscaler Programme support

The surveys found that member satisfaction with the Techscaler Programme support accessed was very high, most notably for:

- international programmes (100% of survey respondents who had accessed this type of support were very satisfied or satisfied with it).
- Reforge (100% of survey respondents).
- attending community events and meetups (88% of survey respondents).
- mentorship (86% of survey respondents).

The main exception was satisfaction with the 'use of a Techscaler hub to work and meet from' (50% of survey respondents who had accessed this type of support were satisfied), albeit absolute numbers were small.

Qualitative survey feedback from members highlighted aspects of the Techscaler Programme support which was considered to have worked well as well as aspects which were said to have worked less well.

This diversity of feedback reflects the largely subjective nature of members' personal experience of engagement with the Techscaler Programme:

- mentorship:
 - what worked well – this type of support was identified as the most valued by members who had accessed it; effective matching process; added value of one-to-one expert advice and support from someone who has been there and done it; and mentor input and commitment – this has helped to build mentees confidence and has been a useful sounding board.
 - what worked less well – some confusion about how to go about booking sessions and the number of mentoring sessions founders can access; a one-hour session was not considered sufficient in some cases; others reported delays in the matching process; some said that they had experienced inappropriate matches; and there was felt to be a lack of follow up from CodeBase.
- Reforge:
 - what worked well: members who had accessed this support considered it highly relevant provision – designed by those with direct knowledge and experience of scaleups.
- Startup Basics:
 - what worked well: this was considered an accessible online course and useful for those at a very early-stage.
 - what worked less well: some felt the course was too basic or generic – and was not as relevant as they had expected. Some said the self-paced online course felt impersonal because there was no direct interaction with CodeBase (or others).
- First Steps and Next Steps :
 - what worked well: hybrid delivery approaches were considered helpful. These courses were said to be well-designed and delivery was also said to be good. They helped to build a sense of community and peer support.
 - what worked less well: timing of education course delivery could be a barrier to access for members with, for example, other full-time jobs or caring responsibilities). Some felt that First Steps was too basic for their needs/stage, and that there was a lack of follow-up from CodeBase.
- International programmes:
 - what worked well: these were considered very valuable opportunities for founders. Helped to build confidence and provided useful networking opportunities. They also allowed founders to explore the international market.
 - what worked less well: some said that confirmation of their successful application was received late in the day – these members said they felt rushed and not as prepared as they could have been with more notice.
- hubs:
 - what worked less well: barriers to access – cost (considered prohibitive) and location (do not live near to a hub, particularly those in rural locations) were identified.

- investor readiness and connectivity
 - what worked less well: not as much of this type of activity as members had anticipated at the outset – viewed as vitally important to help them to grow and scale.

More generally, some members who responded to the surveys called for more targeted and tailored support aligned to their business stage and/or sector.

“Next Steps – overall it was a good course – was informative, well-structured and provided opportunity to meet other people. Mentorship – my mentor was very good at helping me address problems with investors and he invited me to Aberdeen to meet some of his connections.”

“Reforge – it was really relevant, and I gained knowledge I would not gain anywhere else. Mentorship – I only had one session, but it was really useful in speaking through a problem I had at the time and finding a resolution.”

“International programmes – the hands-off approach to it, so putting it on the founders to find the support they need was good. Mentorship – the availability of mentors was great; the choice of mentors was good.”

“The First Steps support could probably be improved by being slightly more tailored for specific sectors. Even though it had value and provided different perspectives, it focused on a too-wide/ generic guidance, with too much emphasis, in my opinion, on the 'fail fast' as this is heavily dependent on the product, sector and customers you have, given that on specific sectors/products we only get to fail once.”

Perceptions of the support offered by the Techscaler Programme

The surveys found that members were largely positive in terms of the extent to which support from the Techscaler Programme has met their expectations, met their/company's needs, and helped them address the barriers they faced to startup, growth or scaleup, see **Figure 4.4**. A majority of respondents reported either 'very much so' or 'to some extent' to each of these three statements (this ranged from 70% to 80%).

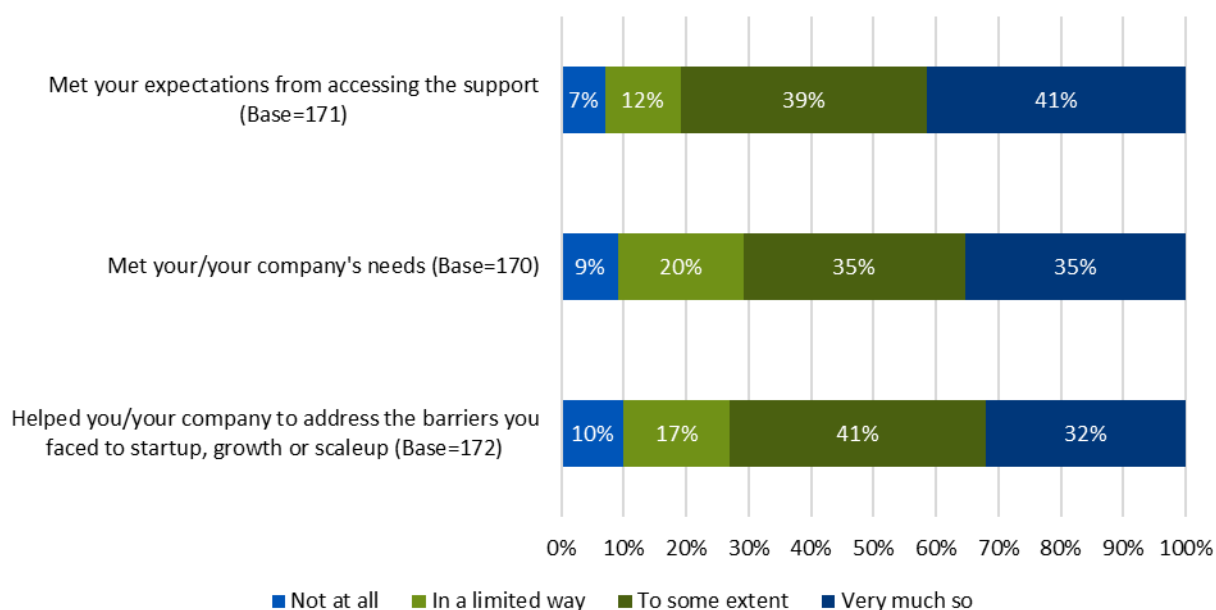
Wider qualitative survey feedback emphasised the quality and relevance of the support received, including specific praise for the mentorship programme, and that the programme support has helped to build knowledge, confidence, and skills as well as increased members understanding of the wider ecosystem.

“The networking aspect, the community aspect and meeting up with likeminded individuals worked really well. Communication and alerts to seminars and courses worked well.”

“I think overall, the access to really up-to-date information and how to go about applying for finance and being able to collaborate with other founders has been useful.”

“Filled in the gaps of the knowledge, solid foundation. Ongoing mentorship is invaluable.”

Figure 4.4: To what extent has the Techscaler Programme...?



Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey.

Note: Figure does not include those that responded 'don't know' (1% for each statement)

Between 12% and 20% of Techscaler members who responded to the surveys indicated 'in a limited way' or 'not at all' at these questions. Notably, around two-fifths of respondents with low engagement with the Techscaler Programme responded in this way.

These members said that they:

- continue to be a little unclear on Techscaler Programme processes and support.
- would like more in-person support and more direct follow-up/check-ins from CodeBase.
- had expected more signposting to, and connections made with, funders and investors.
- felt that more time was needed with mentors to have a greater impact.

"Accessibility and flexibility of the mentorship programme could be improved. More ability to have a better tailored experience. In person meetings work better for me. I would have engaged with Next Steps more if it was in-person rather than online."

"Because it is not an in-person accelerator, I think more frequent contact over the phone would be good to check how we are getting on and to keep us involved."

4.7 Benefits and impacts

The benefits and impacts questions were split in the survey into two categories – one for members at the ideation or early-stage at the time of joining the Techscaler Programme, and the other for members at the growth or scaling stages.

The survey found positive signs of emerging impacts, in particular softer outcomes and impacts. It is understood that it will take time for the Techscaler Programme to generate ‘harder’ outcomes and impacts – this recognises the lead-in time for genuine transformation in the companies supported and ecosystem will take years.

Ideation and early-stage

The vast majority (96%) of members at the ideation or early-stage at the time of joining the Techscaler Programme who responded to the survey said that they have achieved, or expected to achieve, personal benefits as a direct result of the support received from the Techscaler Programme.

The main personal benefits achieved by these members are:

- improved knowledge of startup fundamentals (77%).
- new relationships, contacts, and networks (74%)
- increased confidence (70%), see **Table 4.4**.

Table 4.4: Have you achieved to date any of the following personal benefits as a direct result of the support accessed or received from the Techscaler Programme? (ideation or early-stage)

Response	Number	Percentage
Improved knowledge of startup fundamentals	84	77%
New relationships, contacts, and networks	81	74%
Increased confidence	76	70%
Increased motivation	73	67%
Improved mindset	69	63%
Skills development	66	61%
Part of the Techscaler ‘community’	66	61%
Higher quality of pitches delivered	47	43%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member. Base=109.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Note: the main future personal benefits were reported as: new relationships, contacts, and networks developed (63%), skills development (58%), and improved knowledge of startup fundamentals (how to go about starting a business) (52%).

Similarly, the vast majority (95%) of members at the ideation and early-stage when they joined the Techscaler Programme who responded to the survey said that they have achieved, or expected to achieve, business benefits as a direct result of the Techscaler support.

The main business benefits achieved by these members are:

- it helped me to startup a business (43%).
- improved understanding of ecosystem support (41%)
- improved access to ecosystem support (39%), see **Table 4.5**.

Table 4.5: Have you achieved to date any of the following business benefits as a direct result of the support accessed or received from the Techscaler Programme? (ideation or early-stage)

Response	Number	Percentage
It helped me to startup a business	42	43%
Improved understanding of ecosystem support	40	41%
Improved access to ecosystem support	38	39%
Signposted to other ecosystem support	34	35%
Access to workspace and meeting space with like-minded people and founders	28	29%
Greater confidence in company resilience/sustainability	27	28%
Enhanced investor readiness	21	22%
New or improved products or services	19	20%
Funding raised/secured	9	9%
Increased number of funding/investment deals completed	5	5%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member. Base=97.

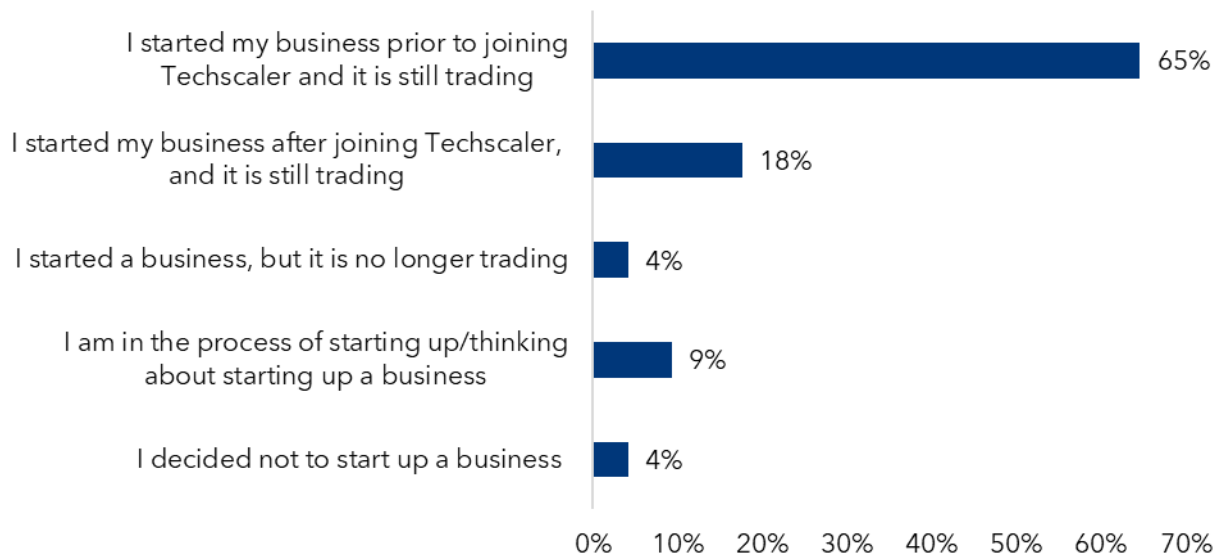
Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Note: the main future benefits were reported as enhanced investor readiness (39%) and improved understanding of ecosystem support (35%).

The majority of members (at the early-stage) who responded to the survey had started their business prior to joining the Techscaler Programme and are still trading (65%), see **Figure 4.5**.

Further positive findings include that almost one-fifth of those at the ideation or early-stage started their business since joining the programme and accessing support, and most of those who said they were in the process of starting up a business expect to do so in 2025.

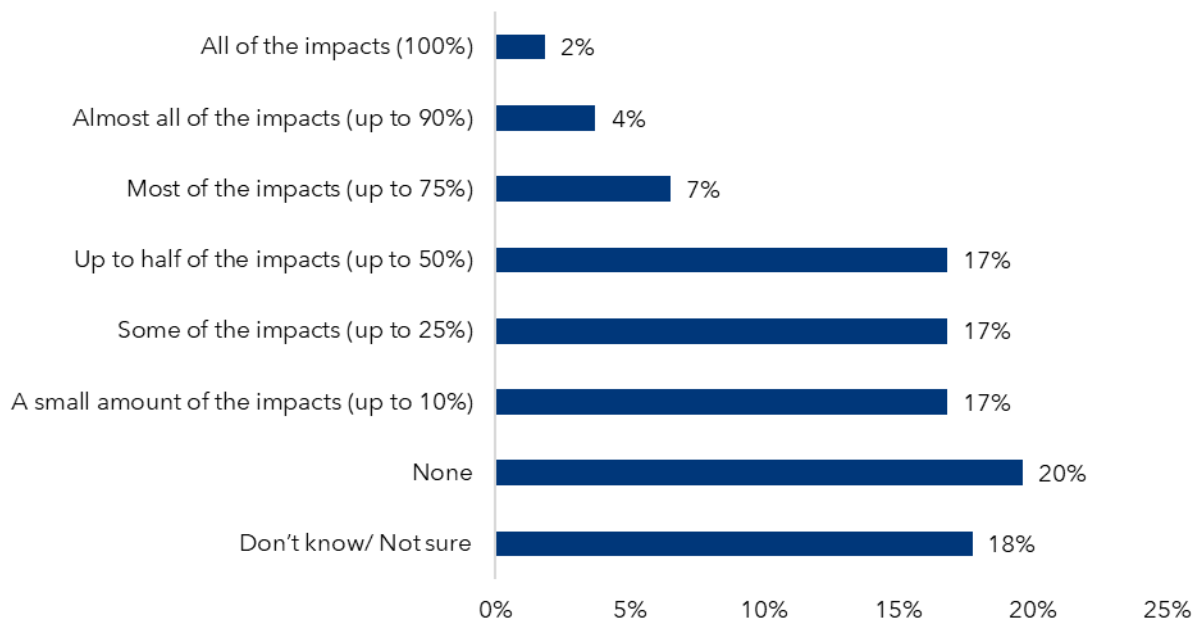
Figure 4.5: Which of the following statements best reflects your current situation? (ideation or early-stage)



Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=96.

The number of companies who responded to the survey at the ideation or early-stage when they joined the Techscaler Programme that reported the benefits and impacts achieved/forecast were either fully or mostly attributable to the Techscaler Programme was relatively low (13%), see **Figure 4.6**.

Figure 4.6: What proportion of the reported impacts do you think can be attributed to the Techscaler Programme support? (ideation or early-stage)



Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=107.

While most members (75%) at the ideation and early-stage when they joined the Techscaler Programme who responded to the survey said that they would have started their business in the absence of programme support, the qualitative survey feedback confirmed an element of timing (and to a lesser extent scale) additionality. That is, it would have taken longer for some members to have achieved the reported benefits and impacts without Techscaler Programme support (or benefits and impacts would have been smaller scale).

Table 4.6: What do you think would have happened if you had not received Techscaler Programme support?

Response	Number	Percentage
I would have started in business anyway, but it would have taken longer without this support	10	29%
I would have started in business anyway, but it would have been on a smaller scale without this support	10	29%
I would have started up a business anyway	6	17%
I would not have started in business without this support	5	14%
Don't know/ Not sure	4	11%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=35.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Growth-stage and scaling companies

The vast majority (95%) of members at the growth or scaling stages at the time of joining the Techscaler Programme who responded to the survey said they have achieved, or expected to achieve, personal benefits as a direct result of the Techscaler Programme support.

The main personal benefits achieved by these growth and scaling Techscaler members are:

- new relationships, contacts, and networks (82%).
- increased confidence (67%).
- skills development (64%)
- improved mindset (62%), see **Table 4.7**.

Table 4.7: Have you achieved to date any of the following personal benefits as a direct result of the Techscaler support accessed or received? (growth or scaling stages)

Response	Number	Percentage
New relationships, contacts, and networks	45	82%
Increased confidence	37	67%
Skills development	35	64%
Improved mindset	34	62%
Increased motivation	30	55%
Part of the Techscaler 'community'	30	55%
Higher quality of pitches delivered	24	44%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=55.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Note: the most commonly reported future personal benefits were new relationships, contacts, and networks developed (56%), and skills development (51%).

Similarly, the vast majority (95%) of growth or scaling stage Techscaler members who responded to the survey have achieved, or expected to achieve, business benefits as a direct result of the Techscaler Programme support.

The main business benefits achieved by these growth and scaling Techscaler members are:

- signposted/referred to other ecosystem support (44%).
- helped me to grow and/or scale the business (40%).
- improved understanding of ecosystem support (40%), see **Table 4.8**.

Table 4.8: Have you achieved to date any of the following business benefits as a direct result of the Techscaler support accessed or received? (growth or scaling stages)

Response	Number	Percentage
Signposted/referred to other ecosystem support	24	44%
Helped me to grow and/or scale the business	22	40%
Improved understanding of ecosystem support	22	40%
Skills development – wider team	20	36%
New or improved products or services	19	35%
Improved access to ecosystem support	17	31%
Access to workspace and meeting space with like-minded people and founders	15	27%
Enhanced investor readiness	13	24%
Increased inbound international inquiries	7	13%
Increased outbound international startup productivity (customers/suppliers)	6	11%
Funding raised/secured	5	9%
More inbound investor activity	4	7%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=55.

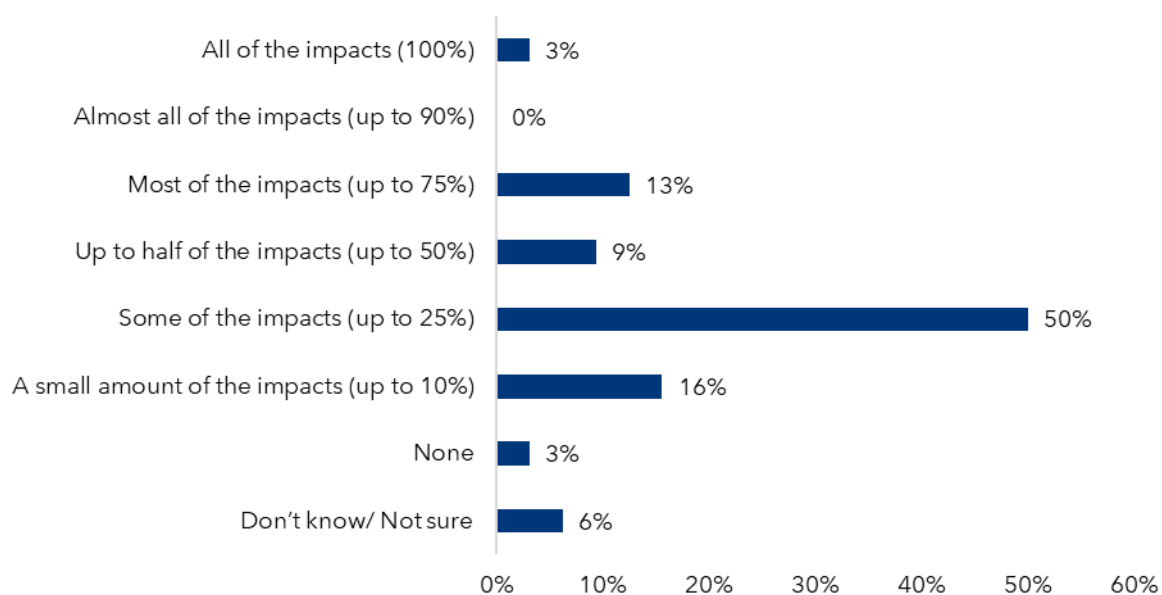
Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Note: the most commonly reported future business benefits reports were: helped me to grow and/or scale the business (44%), signposted/referred to other complementary partner activity (other ecosystem support) (40%) and increased outbound international startup productivity (customers/suppliers) (40%).

The number of companies at the growth or scaling stages when they joined the Techscaler Programme who responded to the survey reported that the benefits and impacts achieved/forecast were either fully or mostly attributable to the Techscaler Programme was relatively low (16%), see **Figure 4.7**.

The feedback from growth or scaling members also confirmed a significant element of timing (and to a lesser extent scale) additionality. That is, it would have taken longer for some members to have achieved the reported benefits and impacts without support from the Techscaler Programme (or benefits and impacts would have been smaller scale).

Figure 4.7: What proportion of the reported impacts do you think can be attributed to the Techscaler Programme support? (growth or scaling stages)



Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=32.

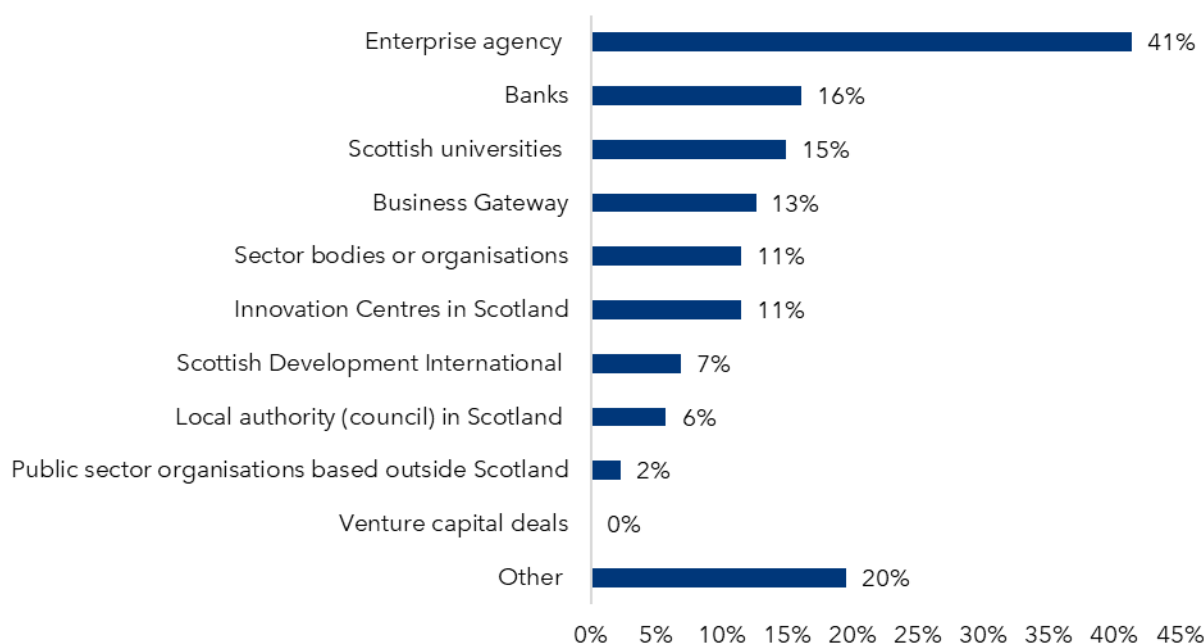
4.8 Any other support accessed at or around the same time as Techscaler support

Around half (51%) of Techscaler members who responded to the survey said they have received other support to help with business startup, growth or scaleup since joining the Techscaler Programme.

A positive finding was that 38% of these members said they had been signposted to other support providers by CodeBase or by their Techscaler mentor. Increasing awareness of other available support across the ecosystem is vitally important and CodeBase and its Techscaler mentors play an important connecting role in this regard.

Figure 4.8 shows where members reported having accessed other support from – and this was largely in the form of financial support.

Figure 4.8: Who did you receive this other support from?



Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=87.

Note: 'Other' responses included: publishers, female founders, previous employers.

Multiple response question where employers could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

4.9 Would you recommend the Techscaler Programme support to others

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) from the Techscaler engaged-members survey reflects strong satisfaction with the programme. As outlined earlier, NPS is a market-research metric based on a single question asking respondents how likely they are to recommend a company, product, or service to a friend or colleague. Techscaler members reported a high willingness to recommend the programme, resulting in an NPS of **42**, which is considered a "great" score.*

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=171.

Note *: A NPS of -100-0 (needs improvement), 1-29 (good); 30-69 (great); 70-100 (excellent). A detailed description of NPS is provided in **Chapter 3.5**.

4.10 Accessing Techscaler Programme support in the future

The vast majority (89%) of Techscaler members who responded to the survey said that they would likely access support from the Techscaler Programme in the future, see **Table 4.9**.

Table 4.9: Do you plan to access support from the Techscaler Programme in the future?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes, definitely	114	66%
Yes, maybe	39	23%
No	11	6%
Not sure	9	5%

Source: EKOS Techscaler member survey. Base=173.

Wider qualitative survey feedback from these members included that:

- the support received from the Techscaler Programme was considered helpful and valuable – members were happy with the support received to date (for example, quality and range of support) and their experience of engaging with the programme.
- continued support would be required to help these members gain additional knowledge, skills, capability, resources, tools and tips for startup, growth and scaling.
- some members may look at developing additional elements to their offering or develop a new business altogether and would look to the Techscaler Programme for support when doing this.

“My personal growth and business growth has been very good. They have helped alleviate some of my anxiety.”

“Because the mentor is great for us. Also, there are other Techscaler Programme support in the pipeline which will be good like the AI Accelerator course, this seems to be very appropriate for us.”

Over the short-term, mentorship, financial support and networking opportunities were most commonly mentioned in survey responses as support that would be required by these Techscaler members. Some similar types of support were identified as needed over the medium term (mentorship, funding/finance) as well as tailored support to grow and scale.

“We need support in reaching out more to potential investors. We need to work on improving our pitch. It is better to reach out to the investors through Techscaler, they take you more seriously.”

“Scaling my product will be very important – so support in marketing and sales. Also, at the same time trying to reach out to the right investors to raise funds.”

Members who responded to the survey (11%) who said that they did not plan to access Techscaler Programme support in the future, or who were not sure, said that the Techscaler Programme did not provide support that was relevant to their business/idea and/or that they thought the support was not geared sufficiently towards growth or scaling companies. This is something which is now being addressed by the Techscaler Programme.

"I understand it is only two years in. The content is good just not enough contact for me, but I think this will be rectified over the coming years."

"They need to update the resources and support, not quite there yet for what I need."

5 Mentors feedback

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides feedback received from mentors to an online survey (43 responses, 29% response rate) and 12 follow-up qualitative interviews. Where appropriate we have provided anonymised quotes from Techscaler Programme mentors to provide greater insights and to highlight the diversity of views. Mentors typically raised a wider set of points than outlined in their online survey response.

The research methodology is described in **Chapter 2** and **Appendix B**, and the survey tables are presented in the **supplementary report**. Due to self-selection, the sample cannot be viewed as wholly representative, and the results cannot be generalised to all Techscaler mentors.

5.2 About Techscaler mentors who participated in the research

Key messages from the mentor survey included that mentors who responded to the survey:

- have been involved in the Techscaler mentorship programme for varied lengths of time – the majority (65%) of these mentors have been a Techscaler mentor for over one year.
- have considerable previous and/or current mentoring experience outside of the Techscaler Programme – most of the mentors who responded to the survey are mentors for other programmes in Scotland and further afield.
- have a wealth of knowledge and expertise to offer Techscaler mentees, this includes mentors with direct experience of setting up, scaling, investing in, and selling tech companies.

Mentors who responded to the survey said that they first found out about the Techscaler mentorship programme directly from CodeBase, from another Techscaler mentor, or through an existing relationship with CodeBase. Together, these mechanisms accounted for over three-quarters (77%) of all survey responses.

Over half of mentors (54%) who responded to the survey have been matched with Techscaler mentees and have provided mentoring support many times through the Techscaler Programme. The remainder either said that they have been matched, but not often (37%) or have not yet been matched (7%) to provide mentoring support through the programme.

5.3 Motivating factors for involvement

Motivating factors

Mentors who responded to the survey said the main motivating factors for becoming involved in the Techscaler mentorship programme were to:

- share their skills, experience, and knowledge (86% of survey respondents).
- support the development of tech startup founders/senior leaders (86%).
- give something back to the tech community (74%), see **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1: Why were you interested in becoming a Techscaler mentor?

Response	Number	Percentage
As a way of sharing my skills, experience, and knowledge	37	86%
To support the development of tech startup founders and senior leaders	37	86%
To give something back to the tech community	32	74%
To support my own development and understanding of business	11	26%
To grow my own professional network	9	21%
To gain mentor training	2	5%
Other reason	2	5%

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=43.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Mentors emphasised that starting and running a startup could be a 'lonely place' or journey, that finding the 'right support network could be challenging', and that 'as a company grows and matures, they need a bigger, larger resource base and network.' Increased opportunities for founders (from early-stage onwards) to connect and talk with their peers and to access practical mentoring support from experienced founders was considered invaluable.

Mentors said opportunities for founders to be guided by and to learn from 'people who have been there and done it' was vitally important. They spoke of individuals who they had received mentoring from in the past, and they now mentor other people to 'pay it forward.'

"The mindset of people being with a group of other entrepreneurs who are in the same stage is incredibly valuable."

"To play a role, however small, in the establishment of a strong startup ecosystem/tech hub in Scotland."

“Having the right resources around you is critical. The right team. The right guidance. Being open to opportunities, knowing what your limitations are, and realising that you don't have to try to do everything yourself.”

Financial compensation

Almost all (93%) Techscaler mentors who responded to the survey welcomed and valued the financial compensation they received from CodeBase for their Techscaler mentoring services – and two-thirds said it was a material consideration in their decision to offer time to the Techscaler Programme.

Key points from the mentor feedback included that mentor remuneration:

- helped to cover some but not all the costs associated with the time spent preparing for sessions, delivering mentoring support, and in mentee follow-up – not least as mentors have their own company, other competing priorities, and/or other professional and personal responsibilities.
- was on a par with other organisations they provide mentorship with.
- demonstrated the CodeBase team valued and recognised the knowledge, experience, industry expertise, and skills mentors brought to nurturing and supporting founders and their contribution to the Techscaler Programme – they said nowadays mentees also expected mentors to be financially compensated as this demonstrated the value of the service to them both personally and professionally.
- made it easier for some mentors to free up or carve more time out of their busy schedules and other commitments to devote to the mentorship programme and to contribute to the Techscaler Programme effort – that is, some mentors said they might have been/be more selective regarding their involvement if they were not paid.

“Mentors are highly experienced, offer a wide variety of skills and experience that save founders a lot of time and money (especially the early-stage founders). As mentors we've made the mistakes and we've learnt. A one-hour session saves them months of work, heartache, confusion and more. Plus the network we can connect mentees with, it's hugely valuable.”

“It is actually more work than the hour as you tend to think about the business between meetings – so a form of compensation recognises this effort.”

“While my primary motivation for mentoring isn't financial, the financial compensation does allow me to commit more time to it. It means I can take on multiple sessions in a week knowing that my time is being valued both financially and through the personal satisfaction I get from mentoring. Like all mentors and mentees, my time is valuable, so this structure creates a win-win for everyone involved.”

“The focus to have in-business mentors is a great approach. In order to make that work, it helps if there is a financial incentive commensurate with consulting rates. Personally, I see this as a bonus, not an essential, but for others this may make a bigger impact.”

5.4 Mentor application process and initial engagement

The survey found that mentor satisfaction with the application process and with initial engagement with CodeBase was mixed. For example:

- 74% of mentors who responded to the survey were satisfied with the ‘Interview discussion with CodeBase’ following submission of the mentor form.
- 35% of mentors who responded to the survey were satisfied with ‘The online interest in becoming a mentor’ form.
- there were a lot of neutral responses.

This mixed level of satisfaction was further reflected in mentors’ qualitative feedback.

Some mentors said the application and onboarding process for Techscaler mentors worked well in practice – they said programme processes, communications, and the ability to shadow an experienced Techscaler mentor before undertaking their own mentoring session for the programme were effective. Others considered the time taken from submitting their online application form to discussion, or from mentor discussion to confirmation of onboarding, or from onboarding to delivering their first mentoring session prolonged.

Almost all (95%) mentors who responded to the survey rated CodeBase’s relationship management approach as either ‘good’ or ‘very good’. Survey feedback intimated that mentors were broadly happy with the contact they have with CodeBase, the team were approachable and easy to interact with, and things have improved over time.

“It felt well managed, and I felt well supported with the opportunity to shadow an existing mentor.”

“It was fluid and natural, easy to connect and onboard.”

“I was delighted to be able to get involved. It was a work in progress when I joined, and I can see it has really improved over time.”

“When I first started there were less materials setting expectations, these have since been developed.”

The follow-up interviews with mentors raised additional points that are worthy of further mention.

Mentors suggested that CodeBase’s customer or relationship management approach could be improved, and that a single point of contact could help mentors (and the founders/companies the programme supported) as:

- CodeBase is a large organisation – mentors said this has posed challenges for effective and efficient communications and for building supportive and trusted relationships.
- some mentors have not always felt their feedback to CodeBase has been listened to, reflected on, or acted upon – for example, mentor notes made in the Google Sheets, etc. They partly attributed this to CodeBase staff not having direct experience of starting and scaling tech companies, ineffective processes and mechanisms to learn and understand where companies were at, and a perception that CodeBase was not open to feedback.

“Some aspects of the on-boarding were a little opaque.”

“No response for a long time after application, then almost the opposite once engaged, so much information, just an overload.”

“Greater clarity and communication upfront about some of the expectations of timing and frequency would help. What mentors should or shouldn't expect. Without that you don't know what the internal limitations or parameters are.”

5.5 Mentor training and support

Around one-quarter of mentors who responded to the survey said they had received mentor training and/or other support since becoming a Techscaler mentor – all who had said the training and support has either been ‘useful’ or ‘extremely useful’. As noted above, the ability for new Techscaler mentors to shadow an experienced Techscaler mentor was welcomed and valued.

The vast majority of mentors (76%) who responded to the survey indicated they have not received any mentor training and/or other support since becoming a Techscaler mentor or were ‘unsure’.

Our experience from evaluating other mentoring programmes (for example, Mentoring Network in Ireland) is that effective mentoring projects and programmes in part rely on training and ongoing support for mentors such as regular check-ins, effective feedback mechanisms, and sufficient opportunities for peer learning and support.

That being said, around 60% of mentors who responded to the survey indicated they have attended/participated in the Techscaler Programme online ‘mentor meet-up’ and/or ‘mentor mixers’ get-togethers – and a positive finding was that all other mentors said that they ‘plan to do so in the future’. These mentors said that opportunities for bringing Techscaler Programme mentors together:

- were welcoming and friendly sessions that encouraged a good level of conversation and discussion among mentors.

- provided opportunities for Techscaler Programme mentors to meet, connect and network with their peers/other mentors, and helped to expand their professional networks.
- provided opportunities for mentors to share experiences, stories, ideas, and learning.

“The in-person events are great. Chance to share the wins and learnings, it's great to spend time with other mentors and learn how they deal with situations. There's something nicer about in-person but I also value online – just doesn't fit my schedule well so I've been missing them recently.”

“Putting a face to name, knowing who I should recommend to my mentees who are interested in mentorship outside my expertise.”

“Sharing and understanding other mentor's backgrounds and focus areas – some networking and often lively discussions.”

The follow-up interviews undertaken with mentors confirmed that mentor-to-mentor connections and networking also take place on a more informal basis initiated between the mentors themselves. Some mentors said they have signposted their mentees onto another Techscaler Programme mentor for advice and guidance if the specific issue or challenge was outside their own expertise.

Some of the mentors' suggested improvements to relationship management have been reflected in the narrative above – for example, a single point of contact (someone who has been through it), more effective communications, constructive two-way dialogue, feedback loops, regular check-ins, etc.

Wider feedback from mentors who took part in an interview included that CodeBase could look to:

- draw on and harness the wealth of knowledge, insights and learning mentors have to support the continuous improvement of the Techscaler Programme – both from their involvement in the mentorship programme and from their broader mentoring and other experience. They suggested that mentors could be proactively encouraged and supported to provide feedback and to share lessons learned.
- more proactively tap into mentors' experience to help identify people and companies with potential to grow and scale.
- schedule mentor meet-up sessions in the diary at the outset of the year rather than on a more ad hoc basis – to ensure mentors have sufficient notice of when these will take place.
- encourage increased participation in mentor meet-ups from across the Techscaler mentor network. Wider suggestions included more structured facilitation, topic based discussions, asking mentors for discussion topics, reporting back on how feedback shared by mentors has been reflected on/actioned.
- more proactively recognise, celebrate, and share mentorship successes.

“Engagement (across the extensive mentor cohort) seems low with commitment (appearances) from only a small, core group.”

“We could maybe do a bit more to learn from one another but that is on both mentors and CodeBase, neither one alone.”

“The dates for all the session are too last minute, often with only one or two weeks’ notice, needs to be much more than that, it’s one reason I’ve been unable to attend most.”

“The mentor meetups could benefit from facilitation. I attended a few and I felt that often a few strong voices dominate the conversation. This results in a lack of participation and limited perspectives on issues raised.”

5.6 The matching process

The majority (65%) of mentors who responded to the survey said the matching process worked well in terms of CodeBase connecting mentors with suitable and appropriate mentees, **Table 5.2**. This is reflected in feedback was said CodeBase has a good understanding of mentors’ backgrounds, strengths, areas of interest, expertise, and specialisms, and that matches with mentees have been relevant and appropriate.

“I’m getting the right sorts of individuals and companies to mentor. They have challenges that I can help and support with.”

“I always feel that mentees are aware of my skillset and roughly how I can help in advance of the meeting which makes for a constructive meeting.”

“I can always see where I can help and in what areas and have the option to turn down opportunities if I don’t see the right fit.”

Table 5.2: How do you feel the matching process works in terms of CodeBase connecting you with suitable and appropriate Techscaler mentees?

Response	Number	Percentage
The process works well	28	65%
The process is ok	10	23%
The process could be improved	5	12%

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=43.

Over one-third (35%) said the matching process ‘is ok’ or that it ‘could be improved’ in some way.

Other mentors who responded to the survey and who took part in a follow-up interview said their experience of the matching process has been more mixed.

“The founder/mentor matching might not work very well. I have had very few mentees so far. But it is hard for me to know where I am ‘losing’ potential mentees in the funnel.”

“Timing. Sometimes notice of mentee matches are a bit last minute.”

“I get a lot less matches than I used to and I’m not sure why.”

“The frequency of matching and opportunities could be improved.”

“Mentors or mentees choose to do different things, so it could be a case of I felt it was a great match and session but maybe the mentee didn't. Or maybe the mentee may have thought that someone else just fitted and suited them better. That’s all fine but again I don't know because that's not communicated”.

While mentors have had appropriate matches, they confirmed this has not always been the case – a common message from the interviews was that mentors have ‘not always had the right ones’ in front of them. These mentors talked about being matched with mentees:

- with barely formulated ideas.
- who did not know their product, market and/or customers.
- who did not like risk and who were not open to listening to constructive feedback.

“Pretty basic stuff from a business perspective – that doesn't need one to one mentoring.”

These mentors also felt that mentoring was not what these mentees needed at that time as their ideas were ‘at far too early a stage’ – mentors said they could tell very early on in the mentoring relationship:

- whether a mentee’s idea/product would ‘fly’ or not.
- whether the person has something special or exceptional about them, and has the necessary resilience, robustness, and appetite for risk to succeed.

Further, these mentors suggested the upfront filtering or ‘weeding’ process for the mentorship programme could be improved, and this could benefit from direct input from people/mentors who have been there and done it themselves (that is, started and scaleup companies, etc.).

Wider feedback from these mentors included that CodeBase could:

- offer group mentoring sessions where relevant and appropriate.
- review the mentor pool – it was suggested there may be too many Techscaler mentors and there could be a renewed focus on ensuring mentors have direct experience of starting and scaling companies to maintain high-quality mentorship.
- ensure mentees were clear on the role and purpose of mentoring support – some mentors suggested there might be a misunderstanding among some mentees that mentors would be an investor or unlock investment – when the reality was that they needed to do many other things first.
- share more information on the founders/companies involved in the programme so that mentors have good visibility of who has been supported and in what ways, etc. – to help mentors see where they could add most value through mentoring support.

“Follow-up discussions and meetings between CodeBase and mentors to ask mentors to feedback directly how they think it is going, give a review of the mentee, and discuss options, etc. That could then help mentors better understand the ‘kitbag’ that the Techscaler Programme has as it evolves.”

“Ways to improve the consistency of meeting new startups. I would be delighted to help with new cohorts, either onboarding or post onboarding, creating workshops, sessions, relevant sales and marketing support in line with the goals of the Techscaler Programme.”

“The one-to-one nature of mentoring is a beautiful thing, we have a direct view of the impact the programme is having, something I feel could and should be shared with the CodeBase team. You are genuinely changing people’s lives for the better, improving their businesses and products. It'd be great if this was shared as wide and loud as possible.”

5.7 Mentee benefits from Techscaler mentoring support

Survey feedback shows that mentors have helped mentees in a wide range of ways, see **Figure 5.1**. This has included listening and providing constructive challenge (93%), providing an independent perspective (88%), and helping mentees to focus on key issues and development opportunities (86%). Further, 44% of mentors who responded to the survey said they have signposted their mentees to other forms of Techscaler Programme support (this has largely been to education programmes).

Figure 5.1: How have you helped mentees in your role as mentor?



Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=43. Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Mentors who took part in a follow-up interview suggested the most effective and impactful mentoring relationships happen where:

- clear goals and expectations have been established and understood.
- supportive and trusted relationships have been developed between the mentor and mentee.
- mentees were proactive and actively engaged in the process (driven, inquisitive, attentive, etc.), and open to constructive and honest feedback from mentors and to hearing different viewpoints and perspectives.
- mentors have a good understanding of the other programme support accessed by mentees – so that they can encourage mentees to tap into other forms of support as appropriate.

These mentors also highlighted the importance of mentoring programmes, such as the Techscaler mentoring programme, having sufficient in-built flexibility:

- to ensure eligibility criteria for mentoring support was not overly rigid or prescriptive.
- to allow for regular mentor check-ins with mentees to maintain focus and momentum, to check in on progress, as well as to identify any pressing issues or challenges (as tech companies were said to be looking to move quickly, make decisions, and get stuff done).
- to recognise that some mentees might require monthly (or less frequent) mentoring sessions while others might benefit from more frequent sessions and/or check-ins, or that some might benefit from more than a one-hour session.

“An hour a month is not enough if you are a serious business and far too much if you are just a person with an idea. There's no distinction between those two companies because they have been defined at a particular stage.”

“If there was more of a feedback loop between mentor and CodeBase, I think that would help – using the mentors experience more.”

“There is a real underswell of need for people that to get actionable advice.”

Mentors who responded to the survey reported that mentees have derived a range of personal and professional/business benefits and impacts from their involvement in the mentorship programme, see **Table 5.3** and **Table 5.4**.

The main mentee benefits reported by mentors were:

- personal benefits:
 - improved knowledge of startup and/or scale up fundamentals (91%).
 - helps them to focus on key issues and prioritise actions/next steps (91%).
 - being challenged in a supportive manner/environment (81%).
- business benefits:
 - support with strategy development and implementation (90%).
 - greater confidence in company resilience/sustainability (83%).
 - enhanced investor readiness (71%).

Table 5.3: What do you consider the main personal benefits to mentees who are supported by the Techscaler mentor network?

Response	Number	Percentage
Improved knowledge of startup and/or scale up fundamentals	39	91%
Helps them to focus on key issues and prioritise actions/next steps	39	91%
Being challenged in a supportive manner/environment	35	81%
Increased confidence	34	79%
Access to an independent objective perspective on growth	33	77%
Improved mindset	31	72%
New relationships, contacts, and networks developed	29	67%
Increased motivation	21	49%
Higher quality pitches	20	47%
Other benefit	2	5%

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=43.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

Mentors also spoke of mentees having benefitted significantly from their extensive networks and from connections made, as well as from their 'actionable advice' and 'tricks of the trade.' These points are further reflected in the mentor quote below.

"You cannot buy that level of value. That doesn't come from a playbook. It comes from humans."

Table 5.4: What do you consider the main business benefits to mentees who are supported by the Techscaler mentor network?

Response	Number	Percentage
Support with strategy development and implementation	38	90%
Greater confidence in company resilience/sustainability	35	83%
Enhanced investor readiness	30	71%
Improved understanding of ecosystem support	22	52%
Improved access to ecosystem support	18	43%
Funding raised/secured	17	40%
Increased number of funding deals completed	14	33%
Other benefit	8	19%

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=42.

Multiple response question where respondents could select more than one option and all that applied. Percentages may total more than 100% as a result.

5.8 Additionality of the support

Circa half (47%) of mentors who responded to the survey reported that either all, almost all, or most of the benefits and impacts they reported above could be attributed to the Techscaler Programme mentor network.

5.9 Mentor benefits from involvement in the Techscaler Programme

Mentor benefits

Circa 90% of mentors who responded to the survey reported at least one personal or professional benefit as a direct result of being a Techscaler Programme mentor.

The main benefits reported through an open-ended survey question, were that mentors have:

- achieved a sense of satisfaction from helping to nurture and support startups and scaleups – from building trusted relationships and helping others to develop personally and professionally.
- achieved a sense of self-fulfilment from sharing their own knowledge and experiences with mentees – it was considered a rewarding thing to do.
- increased confidence among new mentors, as well as sharpened mentoring and interpersonal skills.

- strengthened their own knowledge – from connecting with their peers, sharing experiences, and learning from other Techscaler Programme mentors.
- been inspired and learned new things – including from listening to the different perspectives of their mentees.
- felt part of the wider tech ecosystem or community.
- further built upon and expanded their own professional network or enhanced their own profile.

“I love being part of the ecosystem and working with new founders and with scaling founders. I get a real sense of satisfaction.”

“Inspiration from every founder I meet. Huge satisfaction from helping achieve fundamental mindset changes and ‘light bulb’ moments.”

“I really enjoy working with the mentees. In almost all cases, they have challenges that I recognise (been there, made that mistake) and I can help. The feeling that I have relevance and can positively contribute to improving business outcomes in Scotland is very rewarding.”

“I enjoy working with a range of founders at different stages of their journey. It has grown my own confidence and ability to support leaders with a balance of asking questions and guiding them through key parts of the startup journey.”

“Increased professional network, improved awareness of the startups and wide range of products they have is very impressive. I personally enjoy talking to them and trying to help them think about something they might not of otherwise.”

Extent to which the mentorship programme has met mentors’ expectations of involvement

The vast majority (85%) of mentors who responded to the survey considered their involvement in the Techscaler mentorship programme has either met or exceeded their expectations. In further support of this positive rating, many mentors said that:

- they have been matched with a good range of interesting founders and companies who they have enjoyed working with and supporting.
- most mentees have been proactively engaged in the mentoring process and relationship.
- they have seen first-hand the positive and tangible impacts the mentoring support has had for some of their mentees – it has helped them to overcome challenges, progress in their career/journey, and helped to improve their businesses, products, market fit, etc.

- they attached value to being part of the Techscaler Programme and 'community' and have gained a lot from connecting with their peers/other mentors.

To what extent has the Techscaler mentorship programme met your expectations from becoming involved?

- It has exceeded my expectations (40%).
- It has met my expectations (45%).
- It has fallen short of my expectations (15%).

Source: EKOS mentor online survey. Base=42.

"This was the first programme I have been involved in and I wasn't sure of the impact I could have on the people involved. Having followed and supported businesses over many months now, I can see first-hand how they have progressed and how my mentorship has been key on their journey."

"Techscaler is a fantastic programme, and the mentorship team are amazing. I just expected more frequent Techscaler mentoring sessions."

Where involvement in the Techscaler mentorship programme has fallen short of mentors' expectations the main points raised have been reflected in the sections above. This includes, for example, limited flexibility in the mentorship programme's design and structure, inappropriate matches, feedback mechanisms and loops, etc.

Further, some mentors who took part in a follow-up interview felt that:

- there was a lack of meaningful metrics to monitor, evaluate and demonstrate the impact of the Techscaler mentoring programme – and that measures of success should go beyond capturing the number of mentors, the number of mentees, and the number of mentoring sessions delivered.
- Techscaler Programme processes and systems to capture and action insights and learning from mentors could be strengthened – including 'founders or companies to watch', lessons learned, areas for improvement, as well as ensuring stronger feedback loops with mentors more generally.

"There are no north star metrics. This is needed for everyone to understand and get behind."

"Has this company made any progress in the last six months? Has this business shown signals of change in the last three months? Is this founder an exceptional person who is going to overcome the extreme chaos and difficulty of building a company?"

5.10 The role of failure in entrepreneurship

Mentors who took part in an interview often said failure was an important and integral part of the entrepreneurship journey – in that it could provide valuable lessons, build resilience, and pave the way for ultimate success. Some emphasised that whether failure was viewed in this way could, however, 'depend on the founder, their background, their culture', and that 'in some places/countries entrepreneurship was seen as risky and failure frowned upon.'

"They'll jump back up, do something else and come back with something better."

A mentor suggested that there could be a programme workshop on failure.

"Failure can be really important. And there is such a fear of it. My mentor once said to me, failure is the first attempt in learning. If you are not failing in life, you're not learning, you're not progressing. I have used failure to push myself, to learn something new."

5.11 Mentor involvement in other aspects of the Techscaler Programme

A positive finding was that the majority (64%) of mentors who responded to the survey have been involved in other aspects of the Techscaler Programme over and above the mentorship programme.

Mentor survey feedback was largely positive, and wider programme involvement has ranged from mentors being a speaker or panellist at events (or similar) to running workshops as part of education courses and delivering workshops and webinars, and from running a pitch desk session to attending events and conferences.

The remainder of mentors (36%) who responded to the survey have not been involved in other aspects of the Techscaler Programme, and the main factors at play included that these mentors said they:

- faced time constraints which could affect their ability to be more involved in the wider Techscaler Programme effort.
- have not been approached by CodeBase and/or were not aware of opportunities to support other aspects of the Techscaler Programme.

5.12 Would mentors recommend the Techscaler mentorship programme

The Net Promoter Scores (NPS) relating to the mentorship programme are presented below.

- Mentors would recommend being a Techscaler mentor - NPS of 72 which is considered 'excellent'*
- Mentors would recommend being a Techscaler mentee - NPS of 46 which is considered 'great'*

Note *: A NPS of -100-0 (needs improvement), 1-29 (good); 30-69 (great); 70-100 (excellent). A detailed description of NPS is provided in **Chapter 3.5**.

5.13 Effectiveness of Techscaler Programme support

The mentor online survey asked mentors 'How effective or otherwise do you think the Techscaler Programme support is for tech startups and scaleups?'

Points to note from the survey feedback included that:

- a majority of mentors who responded to the survey considered the Techscaler Programme support effective for tech startups and scaleups – mentorship was considered the most effective support (100% rated it either 'effective or 'very effective'), followed by education courses (89%) and funding readiness support (89%).
- a majority of mentors who responded to the survey considered regional hubs and international programmes effective – however, 30% felt they were 'average' and a further 27% said they were 'not effective'.

Wider qualitative feedback from mentors has been presented below. The following themes emerged but were not necessarily unanimous.

The accessibility of Techscaler Programme support to founders and their teams in Scotland was considered a key strength of the programme, and mentors said the programme appears to have engaged with a large number of individuals and businesses across different stages of development.

The overall concept and intention of the programme was considered good, for example, widening the funnel was also explicitly mentioned.

"The proposition is fantastic – it really puts Scotland on the map for entrepreneurship support."

"Scotland has a great ecosystem for early stage founders. I think it's getting better for women, and I think it's getting better for people of colour."

"I wish I'd had access to this when I was starting out."

But there was also perception among some mentors that:

“Techscaler, which in my view, is now a generalist.”

Mentors said that helping founders to develop the necessary theory and basics of starting a business was vitally important for those at a very early-stage in their startup journey.

However, some considered theory/‘playbooks’ not the thing that would make the biggest difference to help accelerate the growth of startups or help Scotland have more growth and scaling businesses. There was also a perception that some founders might have accessed education courses simply to access the support they actually needed (mentoring) and suggested that different entry points into and through the Techscaler Programme could be helpful (see below).

While mentors agreed with the need for, and the original intent of, the Techscaler Programme they said that more focussed and targeted support alongside access to more practical advice and guidance from industry experts was needed to help achieve the best results/maximum impact – rather than a ‘one-size-fits all’ approach. These mentors emphasised the issues and challenges faced in practice were often very unique and specific to each founder’s business in support of this viewpoint. The new Catalyst Programme and Entrepreneurs in Residence (introduced in 2025) were considered helpful changes to the programme offer.

Mentors said that increased access to tailored one-to-one Techscaler Programme support for the ‘right’ people/founders/companies had the potential to add most value in the long-term as this would:

- connect founders to individuals who have direct experience of startup and scaleup – those who know the various issues, challenges, and pitfalls they might come up against, and who could provide practical advice, support, tools and tips to help them navigate challenges.
- ensure access to industry experts who could help founders/companies at the right time – and which recognised the fast-paced nature of growing and scaling companies.

Mentors felt that CodeBase could be more sophisticated in its approach to defining and segmenting businesses by stage – and that this could recognise two businesses of a similar size and scale could be totally different, operate in different markets, have different customer types, and face very different problems – and so should not be treated the same. Indeed, some felt the revised approach to defining business stage was ‘poorly defined’.

“You can have great companies pre revenue, you can have companies that have no revenue but have raised significant amounts of money, you can have companies that have raised money in the wrong way”.

Mentors said that the Techscaler Programme felt overly bureaucratic, structured or rigid at times – and that it could benefit from having greater flexibility in delivery as well as different entry points for individuals and companies. The point made was that not all founders need the same support at the same time.

“Two companies at the same stage might have very different needs, and some founders spend and waste time learning things that they may already know and do not need.”

Further, some mentors felt that CodeBase could do more to proactively engage and connect with funders and investors, including angel and investor networks in Scotland – suggestions included arranging more opportunities for funders and investors to be in the same room as founders/companies.

Feedback on the international programmes included that mentors were not always clear on how the application or assessment process worked in practice, and that there could be value in seeking mentor/others input (from those who have been there and done it) to these processes to ensure that founders/companies who would benefit the most were proactively targeted for involvement.

Mentors mentioned the Techscaler physical hubs have perhaps not created the ‘buzz/community’ throughout Scotland as anticipated at the outset – some questioned the continued relevance of the current approach.

Finally, mentors suggested that CodeBase could explore ways to improve its reporting on the impact attributable to the Techscaler Programme as a whole going forward – and that it would be important to measure the right kind of things.

6 Partner and stakeholder views

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the key themes and messages from the 47 scoping interviews and wider partner and stakeholder interviews undertaken as described in **Chapter 2**. Please also see **Appendix B** and **Appendix C**. Where appropriate we have provided quotes from stakeholders to provide greater insights and also highlight the wide diversity of views.

6.2 Interaction with CodeBase and awareness of the Techscaler Programme

All stakeholders had interacted with CodeBase since or before the Techscaler Programme was established. While some had partnered with CodeBase prior to the Techscaler Programme, others had developed their relationship with CodeBase as a direct result.

Engagement has been highest with those stakeholders that operate across the central belt, and most specifically those linked to the hub infrastructure which, as per the funding model, was funded by the partner.

Levels of awareness of the programme and its objectives were viewed as mixed across both the entrepreneurial support ecosystem and the tech business user community, however the vast majority of stakeholders saw this as improving. Most noted there was still room for improvement and saw the Techscaler Programme as on a journey, especially at a sectoral support level. Some felt that there was still limited awareness across potential beneficiaries (companies), noting the lack of clarity and mixed messages around support eligibility as a key reason.

6.3 What success for the Techscaler Programme looks like

Across stakeholders, how success for the programme was defined varied based on their background, organisation, and broader role in the ecosystem, as summarised below.

CodeBase – emphasis was placed on creating businesses that were both investable and sustainable – driving more investment into Scottish tech companies. As one stakeholder noted:

“Most Scottish companies don’t make it past Series A funding.”

Success was also linked to shifting behaviours and encouraging ambition in the ecosystem:

“We need to help normalise entrepreneurship as a career path.”

Scottish Government – the priority for government was on growth and scale, particularly in relation to investment and deal flows (risk capital, seed, angel). Demonstrating that companies could raise capital and positioning Scotland as attractive to venture capital and other funders was seen as key. Diversity and inclusion in the tech sector were also highlighted as an important outcome of the programme.

Other public stakeholders – emphasised a focus on enabling (and promoting) more startups to grow and scale, building a supportive ecosystem and community so that:

“Scotland is viewed as the place to start and grow a tech business,”
and

“Creation of a vibrant tech community to work across the sectors – supporting the startup and scaleup community.”

“To ensure Scotland has a vibrant and supportive scaleup environment – supporting new and existing companies with tech solutions that will help all sectors grow and develop. To help minimise failure rates and help make Scotland a good place to do business and an attractive investment proposition.”

Those in rural areas saw success as extending beyond the central belt.

Investors – stressed the importance of better educated entrepreneurs who understand the growth journey (and their options), with the need to generate genuine scaling companies valued at least £100 million to boost ambitions. Interestingly, some investors challenged the use of investment levels as the only measure of success for the Techscaler Programme. They noted that:

- many venture capital deals are unannounced or confidential, making them hard to track.
- while raising capital is positive, it does not in itself equate to success. True success is achieved when a company exits or becomes profitable and self-sustaining – generating lasting value for customers, employees, society, etc.

6.4 Strategic drivers

Stakeholders agreed that the key driver remains plugging a gap in the existing infrastructure to support and increase the number of tech startups in Scotland. This would widen the funnel and help create a pool of tech companies with high growth and scaling potential. Stakeholders believed the STER report remains a strong driver, albeit the focus on physical infrastructure had changed post-COVID.

“The STER report was well received and importantly gave Scottish Government the confidence to back the recommendations”.

The rise of AI and productivity challenges were seen as additional drivers to support the need for a vibrant tech community.

“AI and medtech will be a key focus for tech companies and the Techscaler Programme in the next few years”.

Despite the challenges around development and usage of physical hubs (with some questioning their sustainability in the current format), stakeholders viewed having some form of physical space as important in bringing people together, supporting peer-to-peer interaction and creating that critical mass and buzz to support the wider community broadening that funnel. This would help put Scotland on the map, being seen as a place to do tech business and an attractive place to start and grow a business. However, it was noted that the ‘communities’ that coalesce around the hubs were variable in terms of their tech maturity.

No one specifically noted new policies on the horizon, however, some cited uncertainty following the election planned for next year. A few mentioned the new digital and AI strategies as having an impact on the tech sector.

6.5 Barriers to tech start up

The barriers to tech startup, in general, were not viewed as specific to tech and as relevant to all startups and businesses of all sizes and locations. Stakeholders most frequently mentioned barriers such as:

- access to funding, specifically scaleup/late stage funding.
- skills shortages and gaps.
- Scottish culture – resistance to failure, and a lack of ambition and role models.
- inability to keep up with the pace of change.
- lack of commercial/business knowledge at the founder level.
- market awareness and route to market development.
- Scottish startups are good at developing products, processes and services, with less emphasis on markets and customers.

6.6 Techscaler Programme fit within the wider ecosystem

In general, the ecosystem was described by stakeholders as cluttered with many routes into accessing support. This resulted in mixed views on the fit with and uniqueness of the Techscaler Programme, with some viewing it as a niche offering and others seeing overlap with what was already on offer in Scotland.

It was also noted that the wider perception is that there has been an element of ‘scope creep’ with what the Techscaler Programme was initially intended to deliver and what has been delivered on the ground – with greater focus on ideation and early-stage founders and companies.

Where overlap was highlighted, stakeholders did not always view this as a concern for the business base, however, they did highlight potential challenges in developing and maintaining relationships. Those who saw the Techscaler Programme as unique at the outset noted its early focus on startups as driving the potential for overlap.

"It's a cluttered landscape – lots of programmes and challenging to understand what you need and at what stage of the journey. Still gaps in the commercial areas and the Techscaler Programme could do more here."

"Tech companies are a bit different and have different needs. There may be some duplication in some services offered (for example mentoring) but they do things differently as part of the Techscaler Programme. However, this landscape is quite mature and already cluttered with lots of support – so could this have been delivered in a different way using pre-existing infrastructure – time will tell."

Some stakeholders felt unable to comment on how the Techscaler Programme was regarded. For those able, views on uniqueness were mixed. Some cited the delivery model, including the international programmes and the fact that a private sector company who had "skin in the game" was delivering the support as a big positive.

Stakeholders felt that the Techscaler Programme was now better known, and perceptions had improved over time. They noted that there remains confusion over the difference between the Techscaler Programme and CodeBase, noting "blurred lines".

"CodeBase and the Techscaler Programme are well-known by startups, and they have a reputation for good early-stage education – if you're embedded in the ecosystem, you will know CodeBase, but if not then don't think it's well known or understood".

"How the Techscaler Programme is viewed will depend on the stage of the founder – if they are early-stage (and first-time founders) then they usually speak very highly of the programme as they experience the most tangible benefits....if it's a growth or scaling company, I'm not sure they will know of the Techscaler Programme."

6.7 Views on CodeBase as delivery partner

CodeBase was described as well-connected across the tech ecosystem in Scotland and the rest of the UK. They were also seen as a respected delivery provider, with an easy-to-work with motivated and knowledgeable team who were close to the market, specifically in support of early-stage and startups.

Some did however view them too techy and too rigid in their approach and noted the impact of the big jump in team size as having an impact on delivery – some questions were raised as to whether they had the right staff and mentor pool to deliver for growth and scaling companies.

While stakeholders acknowledged this had improved recently, there were early challenges with building stakeholder relationships, with this being undertaken on a more ad hoc basis.

“As an investor it would make sense to get together with CodeBase and the Techscaler Programme but initially had to make it work and chase them – didn’t know who to approach and what companies they were working with....Now have a better relationship and a named contact to coordinate events.”

“Known them for a long time and lot of respect but the Techscaler Programme reflects CodeBase in terms of informality and lack of structure...I am relatively close to the organisation, and I still struggle to know who to speak to and get any kind of insight into what’s coming up.”

Overall, having a private sector delivery partner was viewed favourably with many noting CodeBase as having more flexibility, agility, and an independence from the structures of the existing enterprise support ecosystem. CodeBase was viewed as well aligned with the original goals and purpose of the Techscaler Programme (as per the STER).

“A lot of CodeBase staff are previous founders so that gives them a level of respect in the community that public sector doesn’t always have”.

“CodeBase had a good base to grow and were close to the market. Strong delivery partner who had lots of accelerator experience. They were however a small player, so the size of the Techscaler Programme is quite a jump for them as is the pan-Scotland delivery model.”

Some stakeholders raised concerns that the ‘coolness’ of CodeBase was being eroded as they now needed to work on the governance and scrutiny aligned to public funding. Other concerns included the spending on staff costs which was viewed by some stakeholders as very high.

6.8 Views on reach and support provided

Reaching and engaging tech startups and scaleups in Scotland

Stakeholders were generally of the opinion that the Techscaler Programme was reaching and engaging very early-stage tech startups in Scotland but not as effective at penetrating the market for growth-orientated and scaling companies.

It was viewed as having built strong community reach and awareness, with a broad sign-up base of mostly micro businesses and smaller SMEs. They saw it as reaching pre-start and early-stage startups and as beginning to extend beyond the core tech community into wider sectors.

However, some questioned whether it is adding to what could have been done already with existing infrastructure. Recent international activity (for example, taking games companies to Japan) was considered to show promising outward engagement. However, stakeholders felt that more could still be done to fill the funnel, especially in attracting later-stage companies that had more potential to scale and targeting growth sectors with lots of spinouts (for example, health technologies and clinicians).

“They are moving the dial – but these things take time – we need at least three years. Hard to tell what would have been achieved without the Techscaler Programme.”

“They are reaching a lot of prestart and startups, seem to have focused on this area – less on scaleup but understand this is changing.”

“Based on numbers it certainly seems to be making more than a dent but should they be doing more? This is a huge market which is still to be segmented in a meaningful way – seems to be a bit scattergun to date. The programme annual reports are very colourful and full of big numbers but what is additional and attributable to the Techscaler Programme?”

Right type of support

Some stakeholders could not comment on whether the Techscaler Programme was providing the right type/range of support at different stages of the journey for tech startups and scaleups. For others, they believed that the programme has strengths, particularly in mentoring and early-stage support stating that they are:

“Strong at the early-stage but there are gaps in the pre-scale and true scaleup phases”.

Stakeholders felt there was a need to find the balance of support between the new and those ready for scaling now that the latent demand is part of the funnel. Furthermore, Deep tech companies and certain sectors (for example, medical and life sciences) were viewed as not well supported with specialist support lacking.

“The programme offers support that can bring real value to companies – mentoring and international programme are real points of difference”.

“We know what the support requirements are, what we don’t know until we try is the mix and balance of the support – will work until it doesn’t then we need to reevaluate”.

“Not sure – there are clear support gaps in terms of sector and stages of development – at the top end of scaling is an issue and the middle bit pre-scale is a gap.”

“There needs to be more sector specific support – recognising the development hurdles for say medical technologies and other sector technologies – they have a different trajectory.”

Is CodeBase evolving the support the Techscaler Programme provides

Stakeholders believed that the Techscaler Programme support was evolving based on the recent annual report and anecdotal feedback. They are starting to see a shift in focus to growth and scaling and condensing early-stages with changing language being used, merging together the skills programmes, and introducing more ways to access mentors.

With that said, many stakeholders noted that there was more to do in both the startup and scaling agenda. There is a need to move people through and out of the funnel (particularly if they lack the ambition and potential to grow/scale) to support more new and existing businesses to develop and scale. There also needs to be more bespoke and sectoral support to help scale – and a need to support leadership development and system leadership within these businesses.

“Techscaler has evolved and changed. It is possibly moving further up the funnel because supporting those in the early-stage is too early for internationalisation (that is, where the company can truly scale). Techscaler has also changed their language with a focus on scaling. I suspect it’s because those companies that are further up the funnel are better funded and therefore better able to take advantage of the support.”

“The early years were always going to focus on widening the funnel and bringing more companies through and then pivot in later years.”

“They seem to have started to evolve the support – but we need more bespoke and sectoral support to help scale – need to support leadership development and system leadership.”

Contribution to the tech ecosystem in Scotland

Views on whether the Techscaler Programme could ‘widen the funnel’ and enable the realisation of more viable startups and scaleups was mixed with many saying it has the potential too, but it is unclear at this stage whether it has – there is limited data available other than the annual report.

This was partially due to some stakeholders’ lack of real knowledge and visibility of performance with many relying on what’s in the annual report. To date the perceived focus has been on prestart/early-stage but stakeholders are seeing a move towards more scaleup support.

There was also an element of timing (this takes time) and metrics, in order to widen the funnel you can't solely rely on producing more businesses year-on-year, they need to be supported to sustain and grow. There were questions about whether the current metrics captured this adequately.

"CodeBase is contributing to the development of startups and widening the funnel but not sure to what extent over and above what it says in the annual report – we don't get any further information and we have not seen many of those in the funnel."

"Yes, supporting the ecosystem but not sure on the attribution as company will receive lots of different support."

"The journey for true scaleups is 10+ years and most will fail so we won't see any change in the wider ecosystem in the short term."

"We shouldn't underestimate how hard it is to do ecosystem building, as soon as you start the need and demand of the company base shifts due to market dynamicsthe blueprint was the STER report but the ecosystem will be different in five years."

"Wider challenges in the ecosystem are driven by more macro-economic factors, not sure how realistic it is for one programme to have a notable influence."

Physical delivery hubs

Stakeholders were asked whether the current Techscaler Programme physical hub delivery model was the right approach. It was generally agreed that having some physical locations/space at a regional level was positive and hubs seemed like a good approach, however, some questioned the extent to which they are currently being used and the resource cost to operate them (that is, staffing).

They were seen to work well in 'busy' regions as there is more critical mass of tech companies in these geographies, however, were deemed harder to establish in more rural locations – where do you put it and how do you achieve critical mass to make it viable? There were suggestions that an accelerator and hub hybridisation could be a better alternative and also digital or pop-up models.

"A hub is only as strong as its weakest members – regions where there are less talent and the companies are not as mature will not deliver the same benefits."

"The hub model is important – when it works it works well. The CodeBase hub in Edinburgh works really well, strong community, lots of events, encouraged a wide range of people into one location. Places like Aberdeen and Dundee less so. It has to be predicated on the spaces being open and accessible and supplemented by virtual spaces that support the connections between the hubs."

“The hubs are a great resource. Not been without its challenges as Scotland is so geographically spread. Seeing people in Inverness and Stirling hubs that might not have been engaged if no central place to go to.”

6.9 Outcomes

Some stakeholders felt they had little insight into the outcomes being delivered other than what was published in the programme annual report or what they were hearing anecdotally. There was a view that the Techscaler Programme needed to do more in terms of communicating its successes and achievements both at a Scotland level and internationally. For others they were starting to see outcomes, but it was still early days and more focused on activities.

Many noted attribution challenges with the Techscaler Programme being part of a bigger support offering. There was also a view that different strategies and metrics were required for each hub based on the maturity of each local community in order to better support regional gaps.

When asked about the type of **‘soft’** outcomes and impacts they would expect to see from the Techscaler Programme, stakeholders noted the following:

- reputational recognition of the programme.
- signposting to new and existing support.
- collaborative events/range of events.
- building a community of practice.
- increasing skills and confidence.
- increased training available.

‘Hard’ outcomes and impacts included:

- businesses created.
- improved business survival rate.
- business growth – both turnover and jobs (including those not on the payroll and part time).
- investment (series A onwards).
- product development.
- market entry – national and international.
- percentage of members that are from wider diverse backgrounds.
- customer satisfaction, that is Net Promoter Score (NPS).

“We have lots of members – but how many are really active? Are all sectors represented? We need KPIs to enable us to track and keep the paymasters happy, we need to show ROI. Overall, now sure what has occurred beyond what is in the programme annual report. The journey has been fast and now we need to deliver more outputs and outcomes rather than activities and we need to be capturing what they are.”

“The outcomes will come, probably delayed slightly due to the development that the Techscaler Programme needed. Companies will get impact and no doubt aligned to economic indicators, but it will be difficult to attribute to the programme due to the range of supports companies’ access.”

Views were mixed on the impact the Techscaler Programme has had to date on equalities groups.

Some stakeholders had no visibility of this, while others were aware that CodeBase, via the Techscaler Programme, was working with females and female focused partner organisations, for example, AccelerateHER but were not aware of other diversity groups being engaged. Others noted the links to partners to broaden interaction with groups such as black professionals and migrants. Some had seen diversity through showcasing work or grant applications. Many noted the challenges in reaching these groups.

“We are better than other places, doesn’t mean we are good as we could be. Need to think about economic diversity as well as neurodivergence.”

“Still early days on the equality angle – still a bit generic – but partners can provide the non-specialist support – for example, for immigrants, we need to work together and maximise the resources we jointly have.”

6.10 Successes, achievements, and enabling factors

Stakeholders listed a range of Techscaler Programme successes including:

- strong progress in scaling-up the team with the right people in key roles, including many former founders who bring real-world experience – their presence is helping to establish a meaningful regional footprint and enabling trusted one-to-one relationships with founders and entrepreneurs.
- the Techscaler Programme is a flagship Scottish Government funded intervention – this highlights a national commitment to innovation and entrepreneurship and signals strong government backing.
- effective engagement with key partners – such as Enterprise Agencies, the NHS, etc has been good – while the scale and visibility of the contract naturally creates some tension and overlap, there is a clear need to invest more effort in strengthening stakeholder relationships (for example, with universities), building trust, and aligning goals to ensure collaborative success.
- boosting awareness of the entrepreneurial sector across Scotland, engaging more founders, and strengthening the startup pipeline.
- providing broad and inclusive support, initially focused on startups and now expanding into scaleup support, with evolving offerings and strong delivery partnerships that encourage knowledge sharing.

- building valuable networks and creating a sense of community by linking people to a broader ecosystem of support and advice - not just direct assistance.
- the programme is delivered by a private sector company which brings practical, real-time experience to participants.

Key enabling factors identified by stakeholders included: financial investment; backing from the public sector; supportive policies and government alignment; and the prior involvement of Professor Mark Logan – an experienced leader with a clear vision and firsthand entrepreneurial insight, rather than a political figure.

6.11 Challenges

Some of the key challenges experienced by CodeBase and the Techscaler Programme noted by stakeholders included:

- branding – confusion between the Scottish Government, CodeBase, and the Techscaler Programme – should have had these discussions earlier on.
- ecosystem development – it took time for partners to understand “what the Techscaler Programme is” – wider ecosystem buy-in was considered essential but still lacking, some organisations remain resistant – possibly due to funding perceptions or lack of clarity in mission.
- poor communication – has led to confusion around goals and priorities, alienating parts of the ecosystem; the Techscaler Programme was seen as too narrow, limiting engagement to pure tech ventures; the niche focus may have unintentionally limited the pipeline from certain regions or sectors.
- duplication of support – the Techscaler Programme was seen in some cases to be re-inventing the wheel (for example, overseas visits/learning journeys) rather than building on learning.
- support for emerging and scaling businesses – stakeholders said that many early-stage businesses have been engaged, but now need expert guidance to grow and scale; the focus should shift to developing high-potential individuals while managing resource use by not over-supporting those who aren’t progressing. However, stakeholders recognised that there was only so much the Techscaler Programme could do and that other ecosystem partners have a role to play. They see the Techscaler Programme as having a key role but need to map out what the process looks like.
- organisational growth and management – stakeholders said that CodeBase was required to scale rapidly and is now facing internal challenges (for example, staffing, governance, housekeeping); resource distribution was considered to lack transparency and regional equity; and there was felt to have been limited performance measures/KPIs but improvements were said to being made here.

6.12 Lessons learned

Lesson learned from the Techscaler Programme to inform its future delivery and to maximise impact for the tech sector were identified by stakeholders as:

- collaboration – co-creation with industry is essential – actively engaging sector participants and making people feel involved/learning from others.
- move to scaling – early stage vagueness about offerings can be beneficial to build broad initial appeal, creating a welcoming, “club-like” atmosphere but now need to focus on scaling/scaleups; while certain sectors show real scale potential, this is often concentrated in specific regions. To drive meaningful growth, CodeBase may be a need to adopt a more selective, 'back the winners' approach; however, it's unclear how this aligns with broader policy objectives around inclusivity and balanced regional development.
- communication and visibility – purpose and offering need to be clearer and more visible, especially in a competitive landscape; the customer journey should be well defined, with a clear sense of 'what's next' for participants.
- hub model and accessibility – physical hubs are catalysts for bringing people together however they must be open, accessible, and regionally grounded; currently, there's no clear marketplace effect – connections between stakeholders remain weak.
- focus and specialisation – need to avoid trying to be all things to all people – concentrate on areas where real value can be delivered; greater emphasis on commercial leadership – tech businesses often lack this in-house; recognise that tech companies often have small footprints unless they scale massively – support models must reflect this.

6.13 What could the Techscaler Programme do more of, less of, or do differently

When asked what stakeholders would like to see more of, less of or done differently, the majority focused on what they would like to see more of and this was wide and varied, including:

Process-related

- clarity on offer – what's available, who it's for, and how to access it.
- formal relationship manager structure to drive value with the real propositions.
- collaborative delivery models by working closely with existing partners and leveraging their expertise.
- more focus on stakeholder management going forward – looking to segment partners to dedicate resources and approaches, governance is important here – paperwork, regular meetings, etc.

Delivery

- more focus on the growth and demonstrable benefits and impacts for the level of investment committed.
- sector-specific support tailored to the needs and maturity of each industry.
- investment-readiness focus, supporting businesses to access and secure funding.
- regular networking events (for example, monthly breakfasts, fireside chats, etc.), with consistency and occasional variation or additions to maintain momentum and reach.
- targeted support for commercial and system leadership development to strengthen executive and strategic capabilities.
- guidance to help founders navigate public sector engagement, procurement, and collaboration.
- bespoke approach for rural areas, acknowledging their unique challenges and opportunities.
- flexibility in support models including access to mentors to meet varied business needs and stages.
- targeted, in-depth mentoring, rather than a flat allocation (for example, four hours for all).
- focus on scaleup support for growth and scaling companies.

Duplication of offering was the main area some stakeholders mentioned that they would like to see less of.

“Always potential for overlap and duplication – the landscape is very busy, it’s a massively congested area – last count around 160 organisations in the Scottish ecosystem – this is so confusing for the company.”

“Bit of duplication but not a bad thing as one-size doesn’t fit all. Some go to Smart Things Accelerator Centre (STAC) – telecoms tech – maybe be a bit of overlap here. Overlap with some accelerators given the pervasiveness of tech across other sectors – no reason why can’t have both as long as the market doesn’t become too saturated.”

“There may be some duplication in some areas (for example, some of the services offered – mentoring and the support from some Business Gateways – but they do things differently through the Techscaler Programme. However, this landscape is quite mature and already cluttered with lots of support – so could this have been delivered in a different way?”

6.14 Suggestions to improve the management and delivery of the Techscaler Programme

Stakeholders who were able to comment noted a wide range of areas to improve the management, delivery and monitoring of the Techscaler Programme (beyond 2024) including:

- data sharing agreements with partners to ensure reciprocal sharing of outputs and impacts resulting from support.
- provision of increased technical advice.
- approach that extends beyond the central belt.
- improved governance and management processes and systems to support branding, marketing, stakeholder relationships, evaluation/measurement and communication across partners and the wider ecosystem.
- refreshed branding and communication plans.
- new approach to stakeholder engagement.
- increased flexibility in the service offering to support the needs of the changing membership base.
- more clarity on the differentiation between the Techscaler Programme and CodeBase.
- staffing and recruitment - ensure CodeBase has the right staff and mentor pool to deliver the growth and scaling support required.
- creation of an outcome focussed KPI framework to measure and assess progress against.
- sector specific delivery – tailored as appropriate.

“More visibility and accountability – set goals and deliver them and make the process more visible, who are the team, how do you contact them, make sure CodeBase is visible from the outside and the goals and KPIs are there for everyone to see.”

“Too many staff – they are now a bit top heavy, and this has an impact of spend and returns.”

“KPIs and really demonstrate VFM – this is key for this next phase – if they are going to get funding beyond the initial five years this needs to be demonstrated.”

“Improved partnership agreements and data sharing agreements should have been agreed at the outset. Need to plan with their partners and share what they are doing to ensure there is a coordinated approach and businesses are not bombarded.”

“There are over 2,000 scaleup businesses in Scotland – and 1,000 in the pipeline. There are plenty of businesses in the pipeline. Healthy ecosystem requires a mix of things to be part of it, everyone has a role to play. Need to frame who the target audience is.”

6.15 Gaps in the entrepreneurship and enterprise landscape

There were mixed views among stakeholders on the extent to which gaps still existed in the entrepreneurship and enterprise landscape for startups and scaleups. The following points were mentioned:

- events for pre-founders including those aligned to academic institutions.
- accessible technical expertise including Deep tech support.
- lack of Deep tech investors in Scotland, those who want to invest £20 million plus.
- sectoral support.
- skills gaps.
- geographic support across rural Scotland.
- promoting entrepreneurship at school and Further/Higher education.
- accessible technical expertise including deep tech support.
- need for coordination across providers rather than more support.
- funding/investment support for scaleup – better linkages between companies and investors.
- knowledge of what support is available.
- team and leadership development.

Some stakeholders were unable to comment, others said there were no major gaps.

“Funding remains the biggest issue and gap – how do we get smart capital into Scotland?”

“Commercial development to support the ability to scaleup – we need more leadership capabilities in this space. We need to recognise where scaling companies fit in. What size do companies need get too to be ready to scale and when do they need to have a commercial CEO rather than just a technical one.”

“There are still gaps in sectoral related support – supporting the companies that use and develop tech to deliver their business e.g. food and drink, creative, etc they are not tech companies but need it.”

“No, the landscape is already cluttered, we need to make sure it’s more seamless for businesses and help them to access the right support for them.”

“Definitely – lots of gaps, not found the right way to connect investors and founders, very reliant on pitches, we have been experimenting with more collaborative ways of bringing them together.”

6.16 Importance of evaluation

Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the Techscaler Programme was viewed by most as 'essential', primarily to understand:

- how the programme has performed against targets and objectives.
- what is the return from the Scottish Government investment.
- how benefits and impacts were distributed across Scotland and the impact at a regional level.
- what the attribution of the Techscaler Programme is over and above what would have happened anyway.
- how the Techscaler Programme has leveraged the existing support.

It was noted that for monitoring and evaluation to be successful the right impact measurement framework needed to be in place as well as time to demonstrate successes and failures. Using the current programme logic model to better define interim and longer-term outputs and outcomes was highlighted.

At the same time there was recognition that it is hard to evidence causality at the ecosystem level, with lots of other support/funding and companies going through different iterations. Evaluating one part of the system in isolation and out of context was seen as challenging.

Stakeholders stated that monitoring and evaluation would also inform how the model could flex and change as the Techscaler Programme develops – this ability to adapt was highlighted as one of the benefits of the programme being delivered by a private sector company. For stakeholders it was about the balance between managing the relationship more closely and allowing sufficient flexibility.

7 Early indicative impact assessment

7.1 Introduction

In line with the evaluation objectives, this chapter provides an initial overview of the impact of the Techscaler Programme. This includes consideration of softer outcomes, with some early hard impacts, to help indicate whether the programme is on track to deliver longer-term results.

An independent early indicative Economic Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken as part of the evaluation which sought to quantify the economic benefits and impacts achieved as a direct result of supported members' engagement with the Techscaler Programme. In line with the stated objective of this evaluation, the EIA presented in this chapter focuses on impacts that have been achieved to date. An additional EIA including forecasted impacts and benefits as well as a detailed technical note are included in **Appendix H**.

The Techscaler Programme contract was awarded in the financial year 2022-2023 with much of this first (financial) year of operation dedicated to set up and mobilisation. It was then in the following two financial years when member support activity commenced. Therefore, the EIA considers programme costs from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 and benefits from the start of 2023-2024 to the end of 2024-2025.

7.2 Softer impacts

As reported earlier, the feedback captured from engaged members of the Techscaler Programme highlighted high levels of satisfaction with the support accessed. This is further reflected in the wide range of softer impacts achieved as a direct result of engaging with the programme and accessing Techscaler support.

Confidence and motivation

Survey participants reported increased confidence and motivation through Techscaler Programme engagement.

Mentorship was also highlighted as valued programme support, providing reassurance, constructive challenge, and a trusted sounding board. While international programmes and peer interactions were seen as confidence-building, broadening ambition and mindset.

Skills development

Survey participants reported that Techscaler's education programmes (Startup Basics, First Steps, Next Steps) and mentorship helped founders improve knowledge of startup fundamentals, business models, and growth strategies.

Founders reported that skills development extended beyond technical know-how to include leadership, investor readiness, and organisational design.

Further, Techscaler Programme mentors who responded to the mentor survey confirmed mentees gained sharper focus on priorities and improved strategic thinking from the mentoring support they received.

Building networks and community and cultural and mindset shifts

The Techscaler members survey also found early signs of a shift toward a more entrepreneurial mindset, with founders reporting improved resilience and openness to learning. As an example, satisfaction with international programmes was high and the primary research intimates that exposure to global ecosystems (for example, Silicon Valley, Singapore) can encourage founders to think bigger and adopt best practices.

Partnership and ecosystem connectivity

The Techscaler members survey also found that engagement in the programme had helped founders to develop new working relationships, contacts, and networks. Being part of a 'community' was also valued (for members and mentors alike). Other impacts reported by members includes improved understanding of, and access to, ecosystem support. The primary research found that mentors play an important role in helping to connect mentees into other Techscaler Programme and wider ecosystem support.

7.3 Note on EIA methodological limitations

The analysis presented in this chapter and in **Appendix H** is based on a standard economic impacts assessment model using a mix of data collected directly from supported beneficiaries and economic coefficient and metrics sourced from official government databases.

We note that while this method is well suited to assess impacts and benefits over a short to medium term, an assessment over a longer time horizon relying only on this methodology may fail to capture or not accurately reflect the specific nature of tech ecosystem growth.

Specially, power-law dynamics of typical of start-up ecosystems, agglomeration, and spillover effects such as talent recycling, investment attraction and secondary entrepreneurship.

This has the following implications for the results presented in this chapter and in the appendix:

- "to date" analysis: over a two-year period (start 2023-2024 to end 2024-2025), it is unlikely that these innovation ecosystem specific dynamics and spillover impacts would have already begun to occur.

- “forecast analysis” (**Appendix H**) projecting up to 10-years from the first instance of support, it becomes more likely that innovation ecosystem dynamics and spillover effects begin to accrue. As the model does not fully capture these potential effects, it is possible that the forecast analysis may underestimate economic impacts.

We would note that these types of impacts are difficult to quantify, and a mixed methods approach supplemented by case studies may be an appropriate way to capture agglomeration and spillover impacts.

Please note that we were unable to specify the analysis to uniquely assess ideation/early-stage companies and growth/scaling stage supported members due to the sample size. This would have resulted in a confidence interval above 20% for growth and scaling members – degrading the accuracy of the analysis. Therefore, the sample of supported Techscaler members is analysed as a single cohort.

The economic impacts and benefits are considered as turnover, full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs and GVA.

7.4 Gross economic impacts

The analysis relies on primary data collected through telephone interviews of supported Techscaler members. In total, 69 of 140 of those surveyed provided responses to the economic impact specific questions within the survey. The survey was open to all supported members and as such the sample has been effectively randomised through voluntary participation.

Therefore, for the purposes of this analysis the sample is considered as 69. As shown in **Table 7.1**, this represents a 10% response rate and allows for a 11% confidence interval at a 95% confidence level. Good practice suggests that a confidence interval of plus or minus 10% should be achieved. A confidence interval of plus/minus 11% is therefore, just beyond the ideal range, though still represents a level of precision which support reliable and meaningful analysis. Overall, given the randomisation of the sample and the sample size, statistically, the sample is representative of the population of supported members.

A summary of the population and sample of supported members is provided in **Table 7.1**.

Table 7.1: Population and sample summary

Response	Population	Sample	Response rate	Grossing up factor	Confidence interval
Initial sample	648	69	10%	9.4	11%
With outliers removed	647	68	10%	9.5	11%

Note that we have also removed one outlier from the sample based on reported impacts which were more than two standard deviations away from the mean average reported impact. Removing the outlier from the sample has a negligible impact on the grossing up factor and confidence interval. The impacts associated with the outlier are then added back after the “grossing up” process.

The gross impacts generated to date (2023-2024 to the end of 2024-2025) represent the overall change in economic metrics reported by supported companies since their initial engagement with the Techscaler Programme and are presented in **Table 7.2**.

These sample impacts that have been “grossed up” to the population. They are also the “midpoint estimate” in that no margin of error has been applied.

Table 7.2: Gross impacts – to date

Turnover (£m)	GVA £(m)	FTE jobs	Job years
£140	£110	760	1,530

Source: Survey Data

Note: Jobs rounded to nearest 10. Turnover and GVA rounded to the nearest £1 million.

Within the sample 44 of 69 supported members (64%) reported gross impacts within the first two years of the programme. Though, gross impacts are heavily concentrated, with three supported companies accounting for nearly three-quarters of the total reported impacts to date. The remaining companies reported significantly lower levels of turnover during 2023-2024 and 2024-2025.

Given the early stage of the Techscaler Programme and the diverse nature of the companies supported, it is not unusual for the benefits stream at this point to be driven primarily by a small number of higher-performing businesses.

7.5 Gross Impacts – Supplemental Analysis

While it is good practice to remove outliers from samples when “grossing up” as to remove any distortions in our population level estimates, given the nature of the innovation ecosystem and power-law dynamics where a single company can often outgrow the rest of the field by a wide margin (for example, tech unicorns) a supplemental analysis where the outlier is not removed has been included. These findings are presented in **Appendix H**.

7.6 Net additional economic impacts

The net additional economic impacts consider the additionality factors of deadweight/attribution, leakage, displacement, and economic multipliers. These are described below. **Appendix H** describes how these factors are applied to move from gross to net additional economic impacts.

Attribution and additionality

The following section provides further details on adjusting the gross impact to generate a net additional impact.

The assessment of additionality has been informed directly by the feedback obtained through the supported member survey and assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Deadweight

The survey sought to gather views on the level of impacts and benefit that could be attributed to the Techscaler Programme. Specifically, awardees were asked to estimate the level of attribution at year N+1 (the year following initial engagement), N+3 and N+5.

In terms of the role that the Techscaler Programme has had in generating economic impact, **Table 7.3** provides a summary showing the average level of attribution reported by surveyed companies.

Note that this analysis includes data provided by responders who were not able to fully quantify or failed to report quantitative impacts but could comment on the relative impact that the Techscaler Programme has had.

Table 7.3: Summary of additionality of support

Company stage	0% (no additionality)	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%	100% (fully additional)
Ideation/Early-stage	20	17	13	11	6	5	2
Growth/Scaleup	0	2	10	1	2	0	1
All	20	19	23	12	8	5	3

Source: Survey Data. N=90

As illustrated above, most of the surveyed members reported some attribution of economic impact to the Techscaler Programme (that is, attribution 1% or greater).

However, the overall level of attribution varies, with 54 of the 90 (or 60%) respondents reporting between 10%-25% attribution and far fewer reporting higher levels of attribution, with 28 of 90 respondents (or 20%) reporting attribution 50% or above.

There is some variation between company stage with ideation and early-stage companies more incline to report lower attribution levels than growth and scaling companies. The average reported attribution for ideation and early-stage was 29% compared to 36% for growth and scaling members.

There are several methodological challenges in assessing accurate attribution of support. This includes the respondent's own ability to assign attribution correctly, disentangle the additionality of Techscaler Programme support from support from other programmes, or assess the importance of this support compared to any financial/investment support they may have received over this same time period.

To strengthen our assessment of attribution, the EIA also considers two additional data points from the survey feedback:

- **previous support received from other organisations or programmes.** High levels of prior support may dilute the extent to which outcomes can be attributed to the Techscaler Programme.

Most supported members have received little support from other programmes with just under 50% reporting no other support at all and a further 40% receiving support from only one other programme or organisation.

- **intensity of engagement with the Techscaler Programme.** Higher levels of engagement are more likely to result in impacts that can be attributed directly to the programme.

In terms of intensity of support from the Techscaler Programme, the majority of supported members were classified as level 2 (some engagement) or 3 (a lot of engagement), accounting for 110 of the 140 respondents (79%).

Displacement

Displacement considers both product market¹⁸ and labour market¹⁹ displacement and is based on analysis of primary data collected through the beneficiary survey. **Table 7.4** summarises the location of product markets showing the number of supported members who have indicated what percentage of their sales occur in each geographic region.

¹⁸ Product market displacement is the extent to which a new product or service introduced into the marketplace replaces or competes with existing products. In an economic development context, the new economic activity associated with a new product or services (company turnover, profit, employment) is to some extent replacing existing economic activity associated with existing products on the marketplace.

¹⁹ Labour market displacement is the extent to which new and/or growing companies compete with existing employers for the same labour. In an economic development context, newly created jobs may be filled by those who are already employed elsewhere in the economy.

Table 7.4: Location of key markets

% of sales	Scotland	Rest of UK	Europe	Rest of world
0	20	15	45	33
1-25	25	15	13	14
26-50	18	30	27	15
51-75	16	25	12	24
76-100	12	20	2	9

Source: Survey Data. N=102

Note: Survey respondents were able to select more than one geographic region and therefore the totals do not sum to 102.

Supported members were also asked to identify the geographic location of competitors.

Table 7.5 summarises the results showing the number of supported members who have indicated what percentage of their competitors are based in each geographic region.

Table 7.5: Geographic location of competitors

% of competition	Scotland	Rest of UK	Europe	Rest of world
0	36	18	41	23
1-25	25	18	9	4
26-50	14	23	20	8
51-75	7	20	16	29
76-100	3	5	2	13

Source: Survey Data. N=92

Note: Survey respondents were able to select more than one geographic region and therefore the totals do not sum to 92.

The responses suggest that companies expect some but limited competition with other businesses within Scotland. In general, competition is based in the rest of the UK, Europe and the rest of the world.

Further the location of sales suggests a varied product market spread across Scotland, the UK, Europe, and the rest of the world with the rest of the UK being the biggest market.

Taken together, the overall displacement effect at the Scotland level is estimated to be low at 25%.

Leakage

The level of leakage (that is, economic activity that is anticipated to be generated outside of the UK (the target region) is based on reported employment increases that are expected to be located outside of Scotland.

Leakage is assessed as the percentage of all reported employment increases that will be located outside of Scotland.

Of the 69 respondents who reported impacts, 19 indicated that some of the new jobs generated would be located outside of Scotland. However, of those reporting impacts to date this falls to just 8 respondents. Further, the scale of this employment activity is small with the overall number of jobs being 24 FTEs meaning that those employing staff outside of Scotland are employing just 1 or 2 FTEs while maintaining most activity within Scotland. Therefore, leakage has been assessed as very low at 12%.

Economic multipliers

Multipliers – the additional rounds of spend/impact from supplier purchases and wages/salaries – have been assessed using Type 2 multipliers sourced from the Scotland Input/Output Tables.

Turnover, GVA and employment multipliers have been applied on a case-by-case basis, mapping against 2-digit Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) for each supported member based on Companies House filings.

Net additional economic impacts

Table 7.6 reports on the net additional impacts generated by the Techscaler Programme at the Scotland level and are presented as:

- **net direct impacts** are the immediate economic activity generated by the Techscaler Programme – the outturn of adjusting the gross impacts for displacement and leakage.
- **indirect impacts** are the economic activity generated in the supply chain as a result of the direct activity.
- **induced impacts** are the additional economic activity resulting from the spending of wages earned through the direct and indirect effects.

Table 7.6 Net additional economic impacts

Response	Turnover (£m)	GVA (£m)	FTE jobs	Job years
Net direct	£19	£12	80	160
Indirect (supply chain effects)	£5	£3	20	40
Induced (spend effects)	£6	£3	20	30
Total net additional impact	£30	£18	120	230

Source: Survey Data

Note: Jobs rounded to nearest 10 and GVA and turnover to nearest £1million.

It is important to highlight the context in which these economic impacts have been generated. Firstly, this economic analysis represents impacts generated only over a two-year period and represents early findings. Particularly, within an innovation ecosystem, where companies are developing new technologies, processes, products, are engaged in research and development activities the impact time horizon is expected to be in the medium to long term. Therefore, these early-stage impacts are a positive indication of the scale of impacts that could be achieved as the programme continues.

To add further sensitivity and robustness to the analysis, we present two scenarios: representing the lower and upper bounds of the sample margin of error (plus/minus 11%), See **Table 7.7**.

Table 7.7 Net additional economic impacts – sensitivity

Lower	Turnover (£m)	GVA £(m)	FTE jobs	Job years
Net direct	£17	£10	70	140
Indirect (supply chain effects)	£4	£2	20	40
Induced (spend effects)	£5	£3	20	30
Total net additional impact	£27	£16	100	210

Upper	Turnover (£m)	GVA £(m)	FTE jobs	Job years
Net direct	£21	£13	90	170
Indirect (supply chain effects)	£5	£3	20	50
Induced (spend effects)	£6	£4	20	40
Total net additional impact	£33	£20	130	260

Source: Survey Data

Note: Jobs rounded to nearest 10 and GVA and turnover to nearest £1million.

To date, the Techscaler Programme is estimated to support net additional economic activity, estimated at between 100 and 130 FTEs per annum on average (210 to 260 annual job years), company turnover between £27m and £33m and GVA between £16 million and £20 million.

The overall additionality delivered by the Techscaler Programme to date (considered as the net additional impact set against the gross impacts) is 23%. This is considered a low level, with the main driver being a relatively low level of reported impacts which can be directly attributed to the Techscaler Programme support at this stage.

It is also important to note that we would not typically expect a programme of this nature to demonstrate a high level of direct attribution. Given its longer-term ambitions in driving market adjustment and supporting growth and scaling companies, it is expected that these businesses will engage with a range of support providers and funding sources over time. This is a natural feature of the growth and scaling journey.

Therefore, while attribution to the Techscaler Programme alone may be modest, the programme is designed to be an important and contributory element in the wider success of the ecosystem.

7.7 Scaling companies supported

The EIA also sought to identify the number of scaling companies supported by the Techscaler Programme. A scaling company is identified using the [Scottish National Investment Bank](#) (SNIB) definition which defines scaleups as companies that are achieving average annual growth of 20% or more in turnover and/or employees over three years, with at least 10 employees at the beginning of the observation period.

In order to assess the number of scaleups, we rely on both to date and forecast (up to 10 years after initial engagement with the Techscaler Programme) impacts in order to capture the longer-term nature of scaling up.

After accounting for optimism bias in forecasts, there are 15 supported Techscaler members within the sample of 69 who are forecasted to employ at least 10 FTEs at some point. Of these 15, 12 meet the average annual growth requirement and thus can be classified as scaleup companies. This represents 17% of the sample.

Grossing up to the population of supported Techscaler members and applying the plus or minus 11% margin of error, it is estimated that between 100 and 125 companies could meet the criteria for a scaleup company within 10-years of receiving Techscaler Programme support.

7.8 Forecast impacts

Given the nature of the Techscaler Programme and the profile of the companies it supports, impacts are expected to be realised over a long-term lead in time.

Participating companies in the survey were asked to estimate the economic impact they anticipate over a ten-year period from the date of their first engagement with the programme (n+10). Data is presented in **Table 7.8**.

The estimates presented below have been adjusted for sensitivity, considering factors such as company growth stage, the level of other support received, investment secured, and industry-standard failure rates. These adjustments help account for potential optimism bias in projections and ensure a robust analysis. Further detail on the sensitivity applied and technical adjustments are presented in **Appendix H**.

Table 7.8: Net additional forecast impacts

Additional forecast impacts	Turnover (£m)	GVA (£m)	Job years	FTE jobs
Low	£230	£132	2,230	220
Baseline	£253	£145	2,460	250
High	£276	£158	2,690	270

Source: Survey Data

Note: Jobs rounded to nearest 10 and GVA and turnover to nearest £1million.

8 Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

This chapter brings together the key findings and evidence presented throughout this evaluation report. It sets out our main observations and conclusions against the research objectives and acts as a lead-in to the recommendations outlined in the next chapter.

The overall aim of the early evaluation was to assess and evidence whether the Techscaler Programme has been delivered as intended and to measure its outcomes and impact over the period, July 2022 to December 2024.

Specifically, the objectives for the early evaluation of the Techscaler Programme were to:

- undertake a process evaluation of the Techscaler Programme to explore how the programme was designed and is being delivered and administered.
- undertake an early indicative impact assessment in relation to emerging and early outcomes achieved by the Techscaler Programme – and to demonstrate whether the programme is on the right trajectory to contribute to longer-term outcomes and impacts.
- identify areas for improvement and lessons learned of the programme's delivery experience to date to inform future delivery.
- provide recommendations to the Scottish Government for consideration.

8.2 Main observations and reflections

Before presenting our conclusions against the evaluation objectives, we set the scene with our overarching assessment of the Techscaler Programme's progress to date, and in recognition that the programme was only two years into delivery of an initial five-year contract.

We would also restate, as highlighted in the STER report, a key challenge lies in demonstrating causality at the ecosystem level – particularly when attempting to evaluate one part of the system in isolation and without considering its broader context.

Successes

Overall, the evaluation findings reveal a broadly positive picture. The Techscaler Programme has shown clear strengths particularly during its setup and mobilisation phase (July to November 2022).

CodeBase has successfully developed a comprehensive programme of activity that reflected the key recommendations of the STER report (for example, education and regional hubs to strengthen the sense of 'community'), recruited effectively at pace, and demonstrated flexibility by adapting to shifting market dynamics. As a result of the flexible approach to procurement and programme management, CodeBase has also expanded and evolved the Techscaler Programme offer in response to need and learning.

The CodeBase team has also engaged actively with ideation, early-stage, growth, and scaling companies through the 'community square' approach to secure circa 1,400 members (as at December 2024) and to create an 'energetic community of early-stage tech founders'.

Specifically, we would identify the early success of the programme in identifying and engaging with a large cohort of ideation and early-stage tech companies and founders, which may partly reflect CodeBase's established reputation for working with early-stage companies through previous initiatives.

Survey feedback from supported businesses indicates high levels of satisfaction with the CodeBase team and the support provided, with over 80% of respondents rating their experience as either "very satisfied" or "satisfied". Notably, mentorship support was consistently highlighted in survey responses as the most valuable element of the programme. Mentorship is also the most frequent reason people/founders apply to CodeBase to become a Techscaler member.

Almost three-quarters of businesses (73%) who responded to the survey reported that the Techscaler Programme had helped them address key barriers to startup, growth, or scaling. Encouragingly, the programme is beginning to demonstrate success in less tangible but equally important areas such as capacity building. Our survey found that between 60% and 70% of both ideation and early-stage and growth and scaling companies reported increased confidence, motivation, and entrepreneurial mindset because of their engagement.

While it is still early in the programme's lifecycle to draw definitive conclusions around 'hard' quantifiable outcomes, there are emerging signs of positive impact. Some 40% of businesses surveyed indicated that Techscaler Programme support had directly contributed to them starting their business and similar proportions reported the support had helped support business growth.

In addition, if future growth forecasts (as reported in the member survey) are realised within the next ten years, the Techscaler Programme could support (net additional) turnover growth within the tech sector of circa £250 million.

Areas for improvement

There have been challenges that have impacted the Techscaler Programme's overall effectiveness to date in achieving its intended outcomes and impacts.

While the STER report clearly set out the rationale for intervention – identifying key problems and barriers – the evaluation findings would point to a degree of ambiguity around what success looks like, both for the Techscaler Programme and the wider tech ecosystem.

As a result, external stakeholders felt this has led to a broad and sometimes confusing offer with regards the focus and balance of activity within the Techscaler Programme across ideation and early-stage companies and growth and scaling companies, respectively.

While some early 'teething' issues are expected in a large-scale and complex programme, feedback from stakeholders, mentors, and supported businesses was consistent – the core activities of the programme were not always clearly understood, and external communications were often seen as unclear or overly complex.

Specifically, one of the key issues raised about the programme's focus and core activities relates to the types of businesses receiving support. Techscaler has made strong progress in serving ideation and early-stage companies, reflecting current market demand but its engagement with growth-stage startups has, so far, been more limited than expected by some stakeholders.

While this emphasis and balance of activity and resources in supporting early-stage businesses to 'widen the funnel' is common in developing less mature ecosystems, it has not always matched stakeholder expectations, which leaned more toward supporting growth-stage and scaling businesses.

Operationally, several additional challenges have affected progress in the first two years of programme delivery. These are summarised below:

- engagement with partners – approach to engagement seems to have been somewhat reactive with unclear roles and touchpoints.
- monitoring and evaluation – limited intelligence, evidence, and data shared with partners on success and progress. A recurring theme among stakeholders was around monitoring and reporting. While CodeBase's annual reports offer high-level metrics – such as membership numbers, investment raised, and general case studies – these do not fully capture what is being delivered or achieved. Stakeholders want clearer data on impact and more visible celebration of success stories from across the ecosystem – where, anecdotally at least, there is much worth celebrating.
- data sharing agreements – inconsistencies between delivery partners, along with delays and elapsed time, meant some relationships had a staggered start.
- marketing and branding – a fragmented identity and mixed messaging have caused confusion. For example, overlapping branding between the Scottish Government, CodeBase, and the Techscaler Programme has blurred lines of ownership, accountability, and purpose.

While these challenges are not unusual and are relatively straightforward to fix, they do require focused effort and coordination.

That said, there are positive signs at the individual company level based on feedback and wider intelligence. According to the 2024 Annual Report, Techscaler member companies have raised £118 million in capital investment across 147 businesses. This suggests a solid foundation and early traction, which is explored further in the lessons learned and recommendations that follow. However, it is not clear to what extent these impacts are fully or partially attributable to the programme.

8.3 Review against detailed objectives

The following section provides a review of progress against the detailed evaluation objectives to:

- undertake a process evaluation of the Techscaler Programme to explore how the programme was designed and is being delivered and administered.
- undertake an early indicative impact assessment in relation to emerging and early outcomes achieved by the Techscaler Programme – and to demonstrate whether the programme is on the right trajectory to contribute to longer-term outcomes and impacts.

The following objectives are considered within the next chapter:

- identify areas for improvement and lessons learned of the Techscaler Programme's delivery experience to date to inform future delivery.
- provide recommendations to the Scottish Government for consideration.

Process evaluation

As noted in the Magenta Book, the key areas for consideration within a process evaluation are:

- implementation fidelity: was the policy or programme delivered in the way it was originally planned? If not, what changed and why?
- reach and coverage: who received (or did not receive) the intervention and to what extent? were certain populations missed?
- delivery mechanisms: which delivery mechanisms or processes were most and least effective?
- contextual factors: how did external factors (for example, socioeconomic context, political environment, staffing, stakeholder engagement) influence delivery?
- resource use and efficiency: were resources (time, personnel, funds) used effectively in implementing the intervention?

These points are considered below.

Implementation

Overall, the Techscaler Programme is largely being delivered as intended, with no major shifts in policy or context that would require a change in direction.

The challenges highlighted in the STER report both at the ecosystem level and within individual companies persist, reinforcing the continued need for targeted intervention.

Techscaler member survey findings confirmed the top three barriers as:

- limited access to finance.
- weak professional networks.

- poor understanding of available support.

These issues underline the importance of sustained and focused support for Scotland's tech sector.

Looking more broadly, recent market intelligence, including but not limited to Beauhurst's [The State of Investment in Scotland](#) (May 2025), shows that the country is performing well in startup creation and attracting equity investment. The tech sector, particularly in application software and data services – accounts for about one-third of all equity deals. While this is below the UK average (where tech makes up half of all deals), it is still a strong showing.

Taken together, these signals continue to justify a dedicated, high-impact support programme to grow and accelerate Scotland's tech sector.

The Techscaler Programme was developed to provide an agile end-to-end service for tech businesses, that importantly, would be responsive to demand. As such, within the first two years the Techscaler Programme has engaged a larger proportion of ideation and early-stage founders/companies – with the split (based on membership), approximately 60% ideation and startup and 40% growth and scaling²⁰.

It is worth noting that, while the programme did not have intermediate measures/metrics (such as defined targets) to assess progress and performance against (that is, metrics beyond activity and output measures) it was designed to be agile and responsive to evolving market demand. The Scottish Government and CodeBase reported that the profile of participating businesses was broadly in line with expectations. This focus was seen as a deliberate strategy to widen the funnel, pump-prime future demand, and build a healthier long-term pipeline of scale-ready businesses.

For the period up to December 2024, there was no data available to determine what proportion of the programme's resources or budget was allocated to each cohort.

Focusing resources and responding to the high (and sustained) level of demand from the ideation and early stages companies is a reasonable strategy in the early years of the programme, however, it has led to unintended consequences that have impacted programme delivery, namely:

- increased demand and resource pressure. Support for ideation and early-stage founders/companies has been well received with the Techscaler Programme having a well-known and positive profile. This has created ongoing high demand and the programme has responded to meet this.
- there has been a narrowing perception of the programme's purpose, amongst some tech businesses and stakeholders within the wider ecosystem. The high demand from ideation and early-stage support has reinforced a perception that the Techscaler Programme is less suitable for more advanced startups and scaleups.

²⁰ If we consider the split by company/key company contact, which may be a more accurate representation of engagement then this is 68% / 32%, respectively.

- a sense that there is an element of duplication/overlap with current provision – while not always viewed as negative, it adds to the wider confusion.
- the programme’s promotional narrative on the website and in marketing materials have leaned heavily toward ideation and early-stage support.

That said, while there has been a focus on ideation and early stages companies during the initial years, it is important to acknowledge that growth and scaling companies are widely recognised as difficult to engage across the ecosystem. Several stakeholders and mentors noted that other support providers face similar challenges, suggesting this issue is not unique to the Techscaler Programme.

Changes in activity

It is also important to consider how specific activities and deliverables have evolved and adapted since the programme’s inception and over its first two years of delivery.

The programme was originally built around three core pillars: building core startup and scaleup skills, fostering social infrastructure development, and increasing investor connectivity and internationalisation. Points to note include that:

- education programmes have been revised and updated since programme launch. Some of the original courses have stopped and been replaced with revamped or new courses as the programme moved into year three of delivery – in part to offer guided progression aligned to founder stage, pace, and ambition. Further, existing modules have also been updated to incorporate newer developments (the impact of AI would be a good example).
- the programme has supported and funded participation for 35 unique companies in international visits, including to San Francisco and Japan. These visits aim to expose companies to global ecosystems and opportunities.
- a mentor network has been further developed to offer more one-to-one mentoring support – CodeBase now has a pool of 150 mentors (up from 25 when the programme launched) who can support Techscaler Programme members.

By and large, these changes were made in response to a changing demand and need within the founder/company base, and they appear to be both well-positioned and well-received. It is to the credit of both CodeBase and the programme that they have maintained a flexible and agile approach to delivery.

It was noted by several stakeholders that this agility is one of the key benefits of engaging a private sector supplier to deliver the Techscaler Programme.

One area of delivery that has seen mixed success and which the programme is now beginning to address relates to the physical regional hubs.

Establishing these hubs and adopting a pan-Scotland approach was a key recommendation of the STER report and a core contract deliverable. However, these recommendations were made during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, major macroeconomic shifts, particularly in the rise of flexible and remote working have fundamentally changed how people engage with workspaces.

While regional hubs remain a valuable part of the ecosystem (peer to peer engagement and networking, etc.), full-time, dedicated incubation spaces may no longer be the most appropriate or effective model.²¹ Additionally, as discussed below, regional hubs can be relatively resource-intensive to manage and deliver.

Reach and coverage

CodeBase monitoring data identifies that as a headline figure, the Techscaler Programme has 1,411 individual members (this includes 978 key company contacts).²² Further analysis shows that:

- while 648 (66%) of the 978 key company contacts have formally engaged with the programme to varying degrees, 330 (34%) have not.²³
- many of the wider individual membership are a mix of additional employees from the 978 companies, or ideation or very early-stage members with most of this latter group unengaged, either because they are too early in their journey to access Techscaler Programme formal services and support, or their interaction has been minimal to date.

Geographic distribution²⁴:

The main points to note include that:

- over two-thirds (69%) of the 1,411 Techscaler membership are based in the central belt – this is unsurprising as this is where the main population and business bases are located, and tech businesses typically coalesce alongside the R&D and university base.
- there has been strong growth in Techscaler Programme membership across all regions in Scotland since year 1 (2023) – the highest growth has been in Glasgow and West, followed by Dundee and Tayside. The regional events (both hosted and attended by the CodeBase team) are a key driver for new memberships.

²¹ It should be noted that as most hubs are managed and operated by external partners, CodeBase do not hold data on occupancy levels. For the two hubs managed/operated centrally, Edinburgh and Stirling, Techscaler members represent 43% and 57% of total occupancy, respectively.

²² The 978 company contacts are included in the 1,411 individual membership number. This does not include the wider digital community membership.

²³ This is not to say that no benefits have been accrued to these businesses through membership, just that they have not formally accessed support. They could have, for example, attended partner events, etc which suggests a need for improved data collection on Techscaler membership.

²⁴ The remaining 8% of Techscaler members representing non-regionally allocated memberships, including Reforge memberships that do not have a designated home region.

Wider memberships data shows that:

- 36% of Techscaler members are female – this is a positive outcome and somewhat higher than the industry average where 20% of SME employers in Scotland are women-led.
- medtech and edtech businesses are the main sectors represented in the Techscaler membership base – combined 24% of total membership (each account for 12%).

As considered in the recommendations, while the Techscaler Programme is designed to be sector agnostic and some partnerships exist with, for example medtech, gaming, creative industries, there is perhaps an opportunity to either recruit, or partner, with other organisations that have sector expertise and track record/ credibility in certain sectors.

Segmentation

Data on segmentation shows that:

- there is variation at a regional level with Edinburgh and Lothians and Glasgow and the West having larger concentrations of members at the growth and scaling stages.
- most of the membership typically have annual revenue of less than £500,000 (this includes those members located in regions with larger concentrations of members at the growth and scaling stages).

Our general observations include:

- the membership remains weighted toward the ideation and early-stages.
- the programme demonstrates reasonable geographic coverage, though there is a noticeable central belt bias – this is expected given the business base distribution and location of Higher Education Institutions.
- Techscaler Programme engagement with under-represented groups:
 - female founder members of the Techscaler Programme has shown strong progress – the 2024 annual report notes that this now stands at circa 36% of total membership.
 - Techscaler Programme applicants who identified as from an ethnic minority background was reported as 37% in the 2024 annual report – however, data is not currently available on the proportion of Techscaler Programme founders who are from an ethnic minority background.²⁵

²⁵ CodeBase has advised that they have recently changed diversity, equality and inclusion data collection processes, and this information will be available for attribution to successful/unsuccessful applicants going forward.

Delivery mechanisms

In terms of the delivery mechanisms that have been most and least effective, survey feedback from Techscaler member companies and individuals indicates high levels of satisfaction with the overall support received – over 80% of survey respondents said that they were either “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with their experience.

However, a more nuanced finding emerged regarding the effectiveness of the delivery model: 43% that had accessed more than one form of support felt that the overall package of support had been valuable. The majority reported that only a single type of support had been beneficial to their needs. This suggests the potential value of a more effective screening and triage process to ensure businesses are matched with the right level and type of support as they move through the pipeline.

Among the various support activities, mentoring was identified as the most valuable component by Techscaler members who responded to the survey (and is further reflected in stakeholder and mentor feedback). This is an area where CodeBase has scaled up significantly from a relatively limited pool of mentors to 150.

In addition to company feedback, stakeholders also shared their views on the programme, albeit many were less directly involved in day-to-day delivery:

- **education:** members/stakeholders recognised the broad reach and high quality of the education offer, in particular access to prestigious resources such as Reforge membership. However, not all stakeholders considered the other education courses as adding most value, in particular for scaling companies due to the level of maturity of these companies.
- **regional hubs:** there was a consensus that while maintaining a regional presence remains important, the current model, particularly the pan-Scotland approach for the hubs is misaligned with evolving market dynamics – flexible and home working. Stakeholders suggested alternative delivery models, such as more flexible digital or pop-up models, which could better meet the needs of the target audience.
- **mentorship:** mentoring was considered valuable and helps ensure a ‘founder centric’ approach. Nonetheless, some points were raised about the mentor matching process, the need to ensure high quality across the mentor pool, and in particular recruiting mentors with startup and scaleup experience, and how to foster ongoing relationships between mentors and mentees to add more value.

- **international programmes:** this was one of the most positively received elements of the programme. Stakeholders supported the value of immersing companies in other 'entrepreneurial cultures' and international tech ecosystems, noting its potential to raise ambition and shift entrepreneurial mindsets. That said, given the cost and profile of the international programmes offer, some called for more transparency and scrutiny in selecting companies, so that those with the most to gain were prioritised. As well as stronger coordination and shared learning between partners (which is now taking place).

Contextual factors

Policy environment

At the time of the Techscaler Programme's initial implementation, the policy environment was highly supportive, and it remains so.

Key strategic frameworks such as the NSET and the Programmes for Government 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 placed strong emphasis on entrepreneurship, R&D, and innovation, boosting productivity, and attracting inward investment to Scotland. In addition, inward investment activity to Scotland has been positive and remains the second highest performing region, outside of London.

This provides a strong foundation for the Techscaler Programme.

The STER report provided the blueprint for the Techscaler Programme. From a theoretical standpoint, (for the first time) it mapped out the wider tech ecosystem in Scotland, identified key constraints, and proposed how to address gaps through structured pathways and linkages to reach the "tipping point". The rationale for intervention was well established and defined and the document remains a valuable and strategic reference point.

However, some feedback captured through the evaluation process suggests that while the STER report was timely and influential, it may have leaned too heavily on theoretical models and international case studies without fully accounting for the nuances of the 'local' Scottish context and culture.

As a result, certain recommendations were adopted wholesale by the Scottish Government but have since proven less suited to 'local' conditions. For example, as noted above, the implementation of regional hubs have faced practical challenges in delivery and alignment with local need. In several cases, the local ecosystems lack the critical mass of successful peers or visible entrepreneurial champions to inspire others.

Engagement with partners

To date, CodeBase has forged over 60 partnerships related to the Techscaler Programme, including with universities, innovation centres, local authorities, support providers, sector bodies, and organisations from the investment community.

Some of these relationships have been particularly valuable in raising the organisation's profile, driving referrals, supporting signposting, enabling knowledge transfer, and expanding networks. For example, the partnership with the NHS/Chief Scientist Office, and universities with active business development and technology transfer teams. While some of these partnerships are still in early stages and not fully scoped, their existence is nonetheless a positive indicator of potential.

However, stakeholder engagement and relationship management have been a challenge for the CodeBase team at times. Especially during the early stages of programme delivery, engagement was largely reactive. In hindsight, the process would have benefitted from upfront relationship mapping – identifying key stakeholders, understanding the nature of those relationships, and determining how best to engage. In addition, in putting place partnership agreements that outline the purpose, aims, and outputs.

CodeBase acknowledged that they may have underestimated the level of resource and ongoing input required to maintain and service these partnerships. Without a defined engagement strategy, initial outreach primarily focused on organisations already known to the organisation, rather than targeting those that were most strategically important (although this is not to say that no strategically important stakeholders were engaged). As a result, relationships can be more person-centric rather than strategically or organisationally driven, which limits consistency and long-term value.

The main drivers for these partner engagement challenges can be summarised as follows:

- there is currently no consistent view among stakeholders about the Techscaler Programme's role or core activities. Its position within the broader ecosystem is not well understood or clearly communicated – leading to "categorisation error".
- the wider support landscape in Scotland is crowded, with many organisations delivering overlapping interventions, projects, and programmes. This creates confusion for stakeholders and companies, who often do not know where to turn.
- there is a degree of tension between agencies, especially where there is perceived duplication or competition. This is not unique to the Techscaler Programme - it reflects a wider culture in the public and publicly funded sector, where organisations often compete for a limited pool of companies and increasingly constrained funding.
- while there were initial challenges in establishing relationships with partners, it was noted that some are now functioning more effectively. However, this is not consistent across the board. Feedback has highlighted that referrals and signposting often remain one-way – primarily directed toward the Techscaler Programme – with little reciprocal engagement, even though data sharing agreements are already in place.

- the absence of a data sharing agreement with key agencies in the early stages limited opportunities for collaboration and cross-referral. This has made it harder for CodeBase to identify companies with growth and scaling potential. As a result, they have relied heavily on outbound one-to-one outreach and Beauhurst data, both of which are resource intensive.

Staffing

As highlighted throughout the evaluation, one of the early successes of the Techscaler Programme was the speed and effectiveness of the mobilisation and setup phase. CodeBase successfully recruited and onboarded a significant number of new staff within a short timeframe, and feedback from supported founders/businesses has largely been positive regarding the quality of both staff and mentors.

Looking ahead, feedback suggests that five-years post STER, that demand is shifting and while the evaluation team is not in a position to directly assess the current staffing or mentor pool, feedback from a wide range of stakeholders raised questions about whether the existing team has the necessary capacity and capabilities to support businesses aiming to grow and scaleup, rather than just startup.

Importantly, there are distinct differences between supporting entrepreneurs at the ideation or early-stage and providing effective support for growth and scaling. Founders further along the pipeline are less likely to engage with mentors or advisors who lack real-world experience in scaling, trading, or operating in the private sector. Ensuring the team includes individuals with credible, hands-on experience will be critical to engaging and delivering value to this cohort.

Resource use and efficiency

The Scottish Government has committed £42.4 million (excluding VAT) over the initial five-year contract for delivery of the Techscaler Programme – a significant investment that reflects a clear short- to medium-term commitment to supporting entrepreneurship.

This makes the Techscaler Programme's investment a significant investment for entrepreneurship support in the innovation/tech startup space, particularly notable in the current fiscal climate, where many economic development services face real-terms reductions and delivery challenges.

To date, total programme delivery costs stand at £22.8 million (excluding VAT)²⁶, including £1.8 million (excluding VAT) (4% of the total budget) allocated to mobilisation and setup. Of the operational budget, £20.5 million (excluding VAT) (49%) has been spent or drawn down.

This is in line with expectations, although typically programme spend ramps up in later years (with demand) and is not a flat annual profile – see earlier comments regarding higher levels of demand from ideation and early-stage companies which may explain the profile.

²⁶ Covering the period July 2022 to March 2025.

While this evaluation is not an audit of expenditure, we note the following caveats on our conclusions:

- there are no formal targets for expenditure. Instead, financial outlooks, budget updates, and variation proposals are reviewed quarterly by the Scottish Government. This remains, in our view, an effective approach – allowing for flexibility without imposing arbitrary annual spending targets.
- both the Scottish Government and CodeBase have strengthened financial reporting and oversight processes (for example, regarding eligible spend) since programme inception. However, in looking at the period to December 2024 we consider that there is still room for improvement, particularly around clarity and granularity of reporting as this would support both Scottish Government and CodeBase to better understand where expenditure was occurring in terms of market segmentation.

The Scottish Government is leading changes to financial reporting to strengthen contract management, improve transparency, and enable more detailed evaluation.

Nonetheless, based on the available data, we offer the following observations on resource allocation and efficiency:

- a significant portion of funding, £13 million (excluding VAT) or 63% of total spend has gone toward 'staff costs'²⁷ – a more detailed breakdown would be useful to enable further interrogation.
- there is limited capital expenditure for regional hubs, with the accommodation costs totalling around £660,000 (excluding VAT) (3% of spend), most of which supports CodeBase's Edinburgh HQ. CodeBase's proposal to absorb major accommodation costs was a key differentiator in its contract bid and has enabled redirection of funds toward other delivery areas. However, regional hub operations remain resource intensive, with 26 staff involved, not including central management or administrative support, or costs for delivering and marketing regional events and meet-ups.
- delivery of the education programme has cost £1.65 million (excluding VAT) (although this also includes 'event space, speaker costs and marketing'). As much of the content focused on ideation and early-stage support and is now online, we would expect costs associated with this to reduce going forward, with only periodic updates and refreshes required. While also recognising that there may be a requirement for new/refreshed courses that better reflect founder intent.
- the daily and hourly rates for mentors are relatively high, so it is essential that the CodeBase team ensures two things:
 - the mentor pool is made up of high-quality individuals with relevant experience and credibility.
 - mentor support is targeted toward companies that stand to gain the most from it.

²⁷ Please note that this excludes staff costs for the period FY 2022-2023 November to March, which were reported under a different budget line for that reporting period (capital management fee).

- external stakeholders felt that the international visits are a valuable part of the programme's offer, but the perception is that they are expensive to deliver²⁸ which underscores a need to ensure these are targeted toward companies where it will add the most value.

8.4 Assessing outcomes and impacts

In a process evaluation, the focus is on how the programme is implemented, rather than quantifying outcomes and impacts. Nonetheless, a process evaluation can still capture a range of hard (quantifiable) and soft (qualitative or perceptual) impacts to assess the effectiveness of delivery and help us better understand whether the programme is on the right trajectory to contribute to longer-term outcomes and impacts.

Outcomes

Feedback on outcomes achieved has been provided by both supported companies and stakeholders.

It is important to reiterate that this early-stage evaluation was not expected to produce significant "hard" outcomes such as major revenue growth or job creation.

While emerging economic outcomes have been captured and reported, the primary purpose of this evaluation was to assess whether the programme is on track to deliver these in the longer-term.

Accordingly, the focus here in this section on the "softer" impacts such as increased skills, stronger networks, improved confidence, and other indicators of early-stage progress.

We would note the following key findings.

Motivation and confidence building:

- survey participants reported increased confidence and motivation through the programme.
- peer engagement is valued.
- visibility of success stories could be better promoted to help individuals aspire to more than just a 'lifestyle business'.

Peer-to-peer mentoring and community building:

- strong peer networks are forming across the regions and across some subsectors.
- a sense of community is a major strength, especially across ideation and early-stage founders/companies.

²⁸ The Scottish Government provided data which shows that the average total cost (that is, flights and accommodation) for six international programmes (note some of these were undertaken in 2025) was circa £45,500 per trip.

- growing and scaling companies can also get a lot from connections with their peers (other founders).
- regular events, meet-ups, and informal gatherings are key drivers of this community feel.

Culture and mindset shift:

- shifting culture and mindset is difficult, but there are early anecdotal signs of progress.
- more focus is needed on celebrating wins and amplifying internal success to inspire others.

Value perception and stakeholder clarity:

- companies value the support, though perceptions of where and how the Techscaler Programme adds value vary.
- the majority of stakeholders are unclear on the full impact or benefits - more communication and alignment is needed.

Partnerships and strategic thinking:

- new partnerships have been formed, which is leading to more collaborative working and referrals, albeit this could be improved by developing cross-referral models.
- there is growing awareness of the need for more strategic collaboration to scale impact.

Impacts

The impact assessment identifies that the Techscaler Programme has generated the following impacts and benefits to date against a real term cost (uprated to 2025) of £23.6 million:

Net additional economic impacts²⁹:

- FTE jobs: 100 – 130.
- GVA: £16 million – £19 million.
- Turnover: £27 million – £33 million.

From the data, we would also note the following observations:

- additionality (considered as the net additional impact set against the gross impacts) is 23%. This is relatively low and reflects the early stage of the programme – not many companies have generated an impact so the absolute attribution to the Techscaler Programme is limited.
- level of engagement with the programme – almost four of every five companies (80%) in the survey sample were classified as engagement level 2 (some) or 3 (a lot). Only 2% of the sample were classified as level 4 (most engaged).

²⁹ Please see Chapter 7 which notes the methodological limitations of Cost Benefit Analysis in the appraisal of similar interventions.

- stage of company – 69% were ideation/early-stage companies, which broadly reflects the membership base.

In recognition of the longer lead in times for support programmes of this nature to generate quantifiable benefits, using the SNIB definition of a 'scaleup' company a) at least 10 employees initially, and b) growth in staff or turnover of $\geq 20\%$ per annum, on average. A total of 12 companies (17% of the survey sample) would meet the criteria for scaleup over the next ten years if they were to deliver against their forecast performance.

If future forecasts are realised, over ten years the support delivered to date could help raise (net additional) turnover in the tech sector by £250 million.³⁰

³⁰ Note methodological and sample size limitations outlined in Chapter 7.

9 Recommendations

9.1 Introduction

The recommendations and actions are informed by the EKOS evaluation findings, including stakeholder and end-beneficiary feedback and the conclusions. We have offered guidance as to the future focus, targeting and positioning of the Techscaler Programme, alongside a set of practical actions to support and improve delivery.

The recommendations for consideration have been thematically grouped to consider:

- strategic focus and direction.
- operations and delivery.
- management, governance, and administration.

Under each theme, we have provided a notional prioritisation of recommendations, indicating where attention and resources may be most effectively focused, albeit there is strong evidence and justification for all recommendations and areas of action.

Note 1: at the request of the Scottish Government, EKOS has presented only the high-level recommendations in this chapter. The suggested specific actions that underpin the recommendations which emerged from the supporting evidence base are presented separately in **Appendix A** for the Scottish Government's consideration

Note 2: due to the time elapsed since the evaluation was commissioned in January 2025 and the reporting period (which covers activity up to the end of 2024 only), Scottish Government policy colleagues are currently engaged in 'live conversations' regarding the Techscaler Programme. Some of the recommendations and actions may have already been addressed, be in progress or may be under active consideration. See **Appendix I** for some examples.

9.2 Strategic focus and direction

The original rationale for intervention to develop a targeted (end-to-end) responsive programme that supports entrepreneurship as a driver of more companies with scalable potential remains relevant and valid.

As the ecosystem starts to evolve (partly as a result of the Techscaler Programme intervention) and demand shifts towards growth and scaling businesses, it is timely to pose a set of strategic questions to the Scottish Government regarding the future direction and focus of the Techscaler Programme:

- given the breadth and complex nature of the ecosystem, should the Techscaler Programme continue operating across the spectrum, or is there a need to narrow the focus and prioritise resources?
- what is the appropriate role of other actors in the ecosystem in:
 - stimulating ideation and early-stage entrepreneurship.
 - driving high-volume, high-quality throughput into the funnel by identifying and attracting founders and companies looking to grow and scale at the right stage for support.
 - ensuring appropriate capital funding and other support is available for companies as they progress through and beyond the Techscaler Programme (access to the right support, at the right time, etc.)?

Our assessment is that the Techscaler Programme should continue to adapt and evolve to ensure that resources are deployed in the right way to focus more deliberately on:

- how they identify and select potential in early-stage companies and founders.
- the latter stages of the pipeline (the growth and scaling opportunities) that will have been catalysed through activities delivered during the initial two years of Techscaler Programme.

While supporting a broad portfolio of ideation and (very) early-stage support has played a role in building the pipeline and should continue to form part of the Techscaler offer, we would note two points.

While a larger pipeline might produce more opportunities in absolute terms, a sharper triage process³¹ is what reveals the real growth and scaling potential. The programme's true value lies in accelerating founders and companies that are genuinely positioned for growth and scale. This is where direct economic impact is most likely and where longer-term spillover and agglomeration effects can be seen. It is also where a clear gap in the current ecosystem remains.

With that in mind, many of the recommendations that follow are designed to realign focus and ensure the Techscaler Programme's delivers on its core purpose of creating, developing, and scaling tech startups within the Scottish ecosystem.

³¹ This includes onward referral and signposting to other support providers that might be more appropriate.

1. Priority recommendation: Targeting of support and resources

Given the scale of system change required to reach the ‘tipping point’ identified in the STER report, it is timely to ask whether an approach that supports a broad cross section of the ecosystem is realistic at this stage, or does it risk spreading resources too thin.

To maximise impact and better serve growth and scaling companies, CodeBase could sharpen how the Techscaler Programme identifies and supports these businesses and include factors such as leadership strength, team composition, investment readiness, and market potential as guiding factors. The programme should ensure focus, including financial and people resources on those that offer the greatest potential to deliver the systematic step change required.

If this is the approach the Scottish Government and CodeBase plan to adopt in later years of delivery, it will be important to understand how we define a “growth” or “scaling” company in the context of public sector support. We also need clarity on the level of risk, flexibility, and experimentation the public sector is willing to accept in order to enable success.

2. Priority recommendation: Realign the Techscaler Programme brand and marketing strategy to support growth and scalable businesses

To reflect the shift toward supporting growth and scalable businesses, the Techscaler Programme’s branding and messaging should evolve.

9.3 Operations and delivery

3. Priority recommendation: Develop the offer

As the Techscaler Programme shifts its focus toward supporting growth and scaling companies, the offer should continue to evolve to meet the specific needs of companies at these stages, who are often “time poor” and must-see tangible value from their engagement. These could be delivered either by partners or through CodeBase, however, it should be integrated into the existing programme, ensuring tailored support that accurately reflects each company's stage and trajectory.

4. Priority recommendation: Align staffing and recruitment with growth and scaling focus

To support the strategic shift toward growth and scaling support, staffing and mentor capacity should evolve accordingly.

5. Priority recommendation: Redesign the regional hub model

Feedback suggests the existing regional hub approach is not delivering as intended and changes in market dynamics means it is unlikely to be successful in its current form. A more flexible, user-centric model is needed (the specific recommended actions in the appendix highlights two key options for consideration).

6. Recommendation: Establish a Curation Board to identify and promote emerging talent

Identifying growth and scaling companies often hinges on intangibles – the founder’s mindset, ambition, capability, and the team that powers them. While standard metrics are helpful, they do not tell the full story.

7. Recommendation: Establish a formal relationship or customer management structure

To deliver greater value and impact to high-potential companies and individuals, we recommend introducing dedicated relationship or customer managers to enable coordination across Techscaler and partners.

9.4 Management, governance, and administration

8. Priority recommendation: Stakeholder mapping and engagement

To improve reach, coordination/collaboration, and impact, CodeBase should adopt a more strategic and consistent approach to stakeholder engagement as part of the Techscaler Programme.

9. Recommendation: Clarify current logic model and theory of change

To strengthen alignment, the Techscaler Programme’s current logic model and theory of change should be clearly defined – building on the work of Scottish Government and CodeBase. A well-articulated theory of change supports clearer messaging and better coordination across partners.

10. Priority recommendation: Develop a robust monitoring and evaluation framework

To support the refined logic model and ensure ongoing effectiveness, the Techscaler Programme needs a strengthened monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework which will give the Scottish Government better visibility to: manage the contract more effectively; intervene early if performance drifts off course; and identify synergies or gaps with other initiatives.

11. Recommendation: Strengthen financial reporting

To improve transparency and oversight and to support informed decision-making, CodeBase should provide more detailed financial reporting on the Techscaler Programme to the Scottish Government.

Appendix A: Recommended actions from this evaluation

Strategic focus and direction

Priority recommendation: Targeting of support and resources

Key actions for consideration include:

- the Techscaler Programme could adopt a more selective, “picking winners” strategy that concentrates support in sectors, regions, or founder profiles with the greatest potential to scale and generate broader economic returns. For example:
 - emerging thematic and sectoral (and sub sector) opportunities and horizon scanning – identifying where Scotland can lead and backing sectors where IP is hard to replicate (a key criteria for investors) and USPs can be built.
 - diversity-focused human capital development by increasing outreach and tailored support for founder profiles, where untapped potential remains under-supported.

Priority recommendation: Realign the Techscaler Programme brand and marketing strategy to support growth and scalable businesses

Key actions for consideration include:

- update branding and messaging – refresh the Techscaler Programme’s brand narrative and marketing materials to align with the new focus on growth and scalable businesses. The messaging should emphasise the longer term impacts and outcomes of the programme, growth pathways, and availability of tailored support for growth and scaling companies.
- leverage champions and community – harness successful founders, mentors, and community figures as brand ambassadors, particularly those involved in the growth and scaling cohorts (direct experience of starting and scaling businesses). Involve them in events, content, and outreach to raise visibility and credibility of the offer.
- clarify the distinction between CodeBase and the Techscaler Programme – define the Techscaler Programme as the government-funded support programme, and CodeBase as the delivery partner. While CodeBase currently use wording such as 'Techscaler is a Scottish Government programme delivered by CodeBase' or 'delivered in partnership with CodeBase' across its materials the evaluation feedback suggests there remains an element of confusion in some quarters.

Operations and delivery

Priority recommendation: Develop the offer

Key actions for consideration include:

- investment readiness – provide more targeted support on how to pitch for investment, and how to meet investor expectations around risk.
- team building and organisational design – help founders understand how to build out leadership teams, recruit for scale, and design staffing structures that support sustainable growth.
- market and customer development – support companies in identifying scalable market opportunities, refining market strategies, and deepening customer engagement to drive revenue growth – domestically and internationally.

Priority recommendation: Align staffing and recruitment with growth and scaling focus

Key actions for consideration include:

- conduct a staffing and mentor audit – CodeBase should carry out a comprehensive review of current staff and its mentor pool to assess fit for the renewed focus on growth and scaling companies.
- targeted recruitment strategy – undertake a recruitment plan aimed at attracting high-calibre candidates with real-world scaleup experience – including founders, operators, and growth specialists.
- relationship managers – see recommendation below.

Priority recommendation: Redesign the regional hub model

A more flexible, user-centric model is needed. There are two key options for consideration:

- revise the user model to drive engagement – continue operating physical hubs but shift to a subsidised or free-to-use model to lower barriers and encourage higher usage.
- revise the delivery format – explore agile alternatives such as pop-up spaces, rotating locations, mobile units, or virtual hubs to better meet regional needs and drive participation.

Both options could be piloted/tested regionally, and a hybrid approach may be appropriate. Of critical importance, under both models there should be a continued focus on building community and networking opportunities, especially for underrepresented groups.

Recommendation: Establish a Curation Board to identify and promote emerging talent

Key actions for consideration include:

- creating a 'Curation Board' to enhance the 'Ones to Watch' initiative. The board would act as a strategic panel that applies judgment beyond the numbers to identify founders and ventures with the greatest scaling potential, helping focus resources where impact is most likely. This board should include experienced operators (for example, enterprise agencies, industry bodies, innovation centres, universities, mentors, investors) and ecosystem leaders.
- introducing a 'People to Watch' category – investor and mentor feedback underscores the importance of backing individuals, not just companies. A 'People to Watch' category would highlight emerging founders (at both ideation/early stage and beyond) and future leaders within the tech ecosystem.
- strategic engagement – the board can also advise on which companies and individuals are best positioned for targeted investor engagement, international opportunities, and government-backed support – improving transparency, aligning efforts, and deepening ecosystem trust.

Recommendation: Establish a formal relationship or customer management structure

Key actions for consideration includes:

- appoint relationship managers for the high-potential cohort – assign experienced relationship managers to proactively support a defined group of growth and scaling companies and emerging leaders (see recommendation above regrading 'Ones to Watch' and 'People to Watch'). The role will include coordinating engagement, outreach, and connecting them with relevant opportunities, partners, and support.

Management, governance, and administration

Priority recommendation: Stakeholder mapping and engagement

Key actions for consideration include:

- mapping the ecosystem – undertake a mapping of relevant stakeholders/partners, including public sector agencies, investors, industry bodies, academic institutions, and ecosystem partners to identify existing relationships, gaps, and opportunities.
- defining engagement metrics – develop metrics to assess the strength and value of stakeholder relationships. This will help prioritise stakeholder engagement efforts and resources (strategic, collaborative, opportunistic, and transactional).

- allocating dedicated resource – appoint a dedicated stakeholder engagement lead or team to manage relationships and ensure continuity.
- develop processes for cross referral and ongoing communication to update partners on progress of referred companies/founders.

Recommendation: Clarify current logic model and theory of change

Key actions for consideration include:

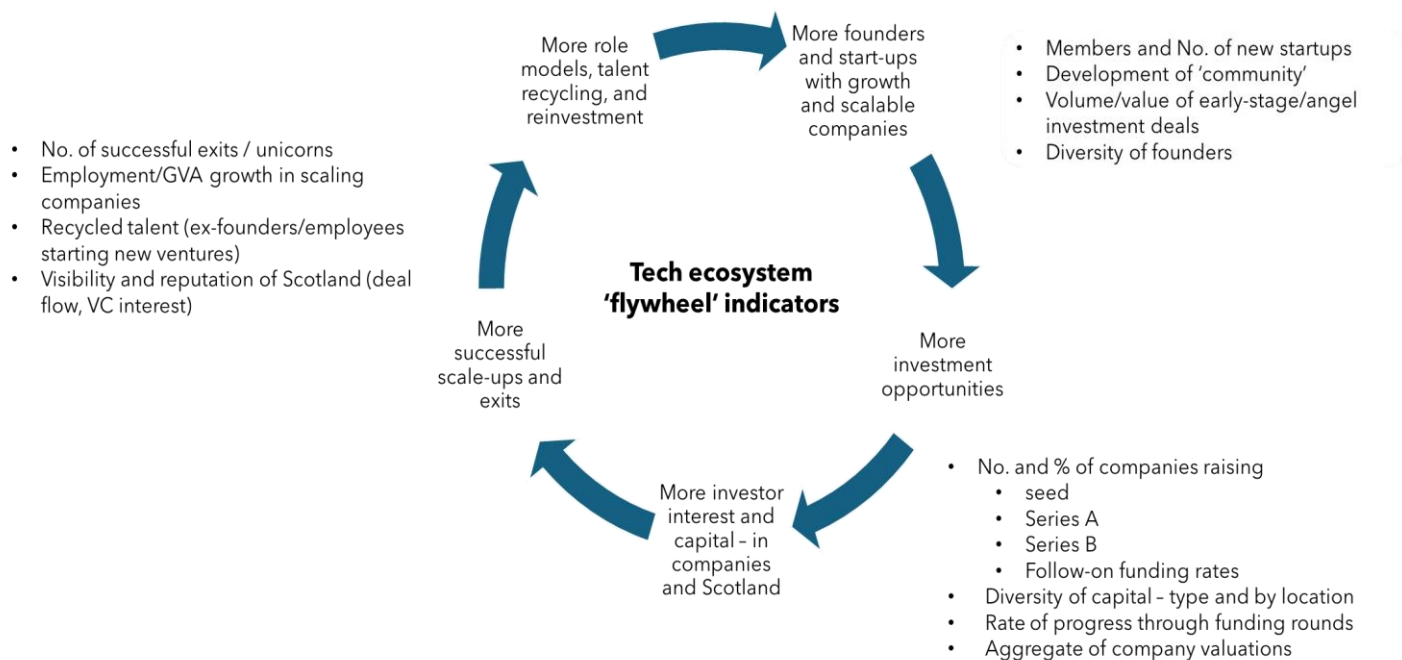
- define what success looks like – Scottish Government and CodeBase should more clearly articulate the core objective of the Techscaler Programme – including the long-term economic impact and the specific change it aims to drive in the ecosystem.
- set SMART objectives – ensure that goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. These should guide programme design, delivery, and evaluation, and provide a benchmark for impact.
- further clarity on the boundaries for the Techscaler Programme and linkages to other parts of the ecosystem – what the programme is, but importantly what it is not.

Priority recommendation: Develop a robust monitoring and evaluation framework

Key actions for consideration include:

- develop outcome-focused indicator metrics – define a clear set of indicators aligned with outcomes and economic impact as detailed in the logic model. These should complement existing service-level data and track progress meaningfully – but not be used as rigid KPIs or targets. Instead, they should serve as directional tools (thresholds and RAG assessments) that evidence progress but safeguards the Techscaler Programme’s flexible delivery model.
- as noted by some stakeholders, an appropriate approach might be the inclusion of so called ‘flywheel’ indicators as an approach to describing and evidencing self-reinforcing cycles of growth. Where the flywheel effect describes how small, consistent pushes show whether the reinforcing loop is working – eventually building momentum and reaching the “tipping point”. An example is provided below, however, these should be developed and refined by partners and with reference to the logic model.

Figure A.1: Summary of flywheel indicators



- other indicators of progress – strengthen qualitative data and storytelling – the Techscaler Programme should:
 - collect richer qualitative data through interviews, testimonials, and deep dives.
 - identify and support “Techscaler Champions” – participants who can credibly share their experiences and serve as voices of the community.
 - use these stories for evaluation, marketing, and to reinforce the sense of community and ‘giving back’.

Recommendation: Strengthen financial reporting

A key action for consideration includes:

- enhance clarity on resource allocation and expenditure – break down financial reports to show how and where resources are being deployed across programme areas, regions, and delivery activities.

Appendix B: Study methodology

Introduction

This appendix provides detail that is not covered in the study methodology chapter. See also the Fieldwork Materials supplementary report which has been prepared as a separate document.

Inception and set-up

Following the inception meeting the evaluation team had introductory and follow-up discussions and correspondence with representatives from CodeBase on data sharing and work was undertaken to agree a Data Sharing Agreement for the purpose of this evaluation. The data sharing agreement was finalised on 30th January 2025.

Desk review

The secondary desk research element included a wide-ranging review of existing information and data, including documentation and data provided by both the Scottish Government and CodeBase. This included:

- a review of Techscaler Programme documentation and data, including the:
 - specification for the Techscaler Programme contract.
 - bid document CodeBase submitted as part of the procurement exercise.
 - the contract between the Scottish Government and CodeBase (and contract variations).
 - mobilisation plan.
 - programme theory of change.
 - service blueprint overview.
 - 2023 and 2024 annual reports.
 - quarterly meeting packs.
- a review of published strategy and research documents, relevant Scottish Government Economy and Fair Work Committee minutes/papers, and other Scottish entrepreneurial ecosystem information (for example, Scottish entrepreneurial ecosystem guide).

Primary research

Techscaler Members

Member companies who have engaged with Techscaler activities and support – the intention was that a telephone survey would be undertaken with 200 companies identified as ‘highly engaged’³² with Techscaler Programme formal activities and support.

Based on our review of information provided by CodeBase on the 978 company members who have joined the Techscaler Programme since its launch³³, it became clear that the extent of engagement between Techscaler members has varied considerably. The total population for the telephone survey reduced from 978 to 648 contacts when members who had not yet accessed Techscaler formal support were removed from the list.

The 648 remaining contacts (66% of all company members) were used as the basis for the telephone survey sample. A total of 38 email bounce backs³⁴ were received reducing the total sample to 610 contacts. This list included a cross-section of companies with varying levels of engagement with Techscaler Programme support (that is, the telephone sample was not limited to ‘highly engaged’ companies). Rather the final list reflected the varying degrees to which companies have engaged with the Techscaler Programme (from highly engaged to least engaged), and this also helped to maximise the number of telephone interviews completed.

The telephone survey, which was undertaken by our study partner Research Resource, started in late March and was extended to 14th May 2025. A follow-up email communication was issued by CodeBase on 16th April 2025 to those companies who have been more/highly engaged with the Techscaler Programme to help boost engagement in the survey among this cohort in the sample.

A total of 140 telephone interviews were completed.

Other online survey aimed at companies and individual Techscaler members – EKOS asked CodeBase to issue an online survey to those company founders in the telephone sample (see above) who did not take part in an interview, as well as to a sample of other individual members of the programme. This typically included employees of companies supported by the Techscaler Programme (for example, who may also have accessed an education course or attended an event, etc.) and other individuals at the ideation stage.

³² CodeBase categorised the 978 company members who have joined the Techscaler Programme since its launch by level of service engagement from 0 (no engagement) to 4 (highly/most engaged) based on their engagement with Techscaler Programme activities and support.

³³ [Techscaler Annual Report 2024](#) (Page 10).

³⁴ This includes undeliverable/ email address not found/ automated left this organisation or no longer operational.

While this online survey did ask questions relating to benefits and impacts derived as a result of engagement with the Techscaler Programme, these were not asked to be quantified in any way, unlike the telephone survey described above.

This survey also had routing which was based on whether the person has accessed Techscaler Programme support or not.

This online survey was issued to around 870 contacts on 19th May 2025 and the survey closed on the 6th June 2025. A total of 34 responses were received – 33 (engaged) and one (non-engaged) members responded, and these responses have been analysed as part of the larger engaged telephone survey or through analysis on the non-engaged online survey.

Stakeholder interviews

The starting point for pulling together a long-list of potential consultees for partner and stakeholder interviews was via CodeBase and the organisation's thoughts on potential interviewees from the Techscaler Programme's [63 startup partners](#) across the tech ecosystem. The list was then reviewed by the Scottish Government and the evaluators to fill gaps – for example, based on organisation type (for example, startup and scaleup investors) as well as identifying any additional individuals/organisations who could provide an informed view on startups, investment, Techscaler Programme and the programme's fit within the tech ecosystem. The list was longer than required to complete 30 target interviews and the Scottish Government helped to prioritise these.

Techscaler mentors

CodeBase issued an online survey to 150 active Techscaler mentors on 21st March 2025 and email reminders on 7th and 22nd April 2025. The survey timescale was extended to help further boost participation, and the survey closed on 2nd May 2025. The survey also asked mentors whether they would be interested in taking part in a follow-up interview with the evaluators to provide more qualitative feedback on their experiences of engagement with the Techscaler Programme – these were followed up in June and July 2025.

Appendix C: Stakeholder organisations interviewed

Table C.1: Organisations consulted

Organisation	
AccelerateHER	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Archangel Investors Ltd	InnoScot Health
Barclays Eagle Labs	Opportunity North East
Black Professionals UK	Scale up Institute
CodeBase	ScotlandIS
Ceteris	Scottish Development International
CivTech Scotland	Scottish EDGE
CoSTAR	Scottish Enterprise
Creative Future	Scottish Games Network
Digital Dairy Chain	Scottish Government
Digital Health & Care Innovation Centre	South of Scotland Enterprise
Dundee City Council	Sustainable Ventures
Ecosystem Builders Network	Techstart Ventures
Equity Gap	University of the Highlands and Islands
Focused for Business	University of Glasgow
Glasgow City Council	University of Strathclyde
Glasgow City Innovation District	WASPS
Hometown Hub	West of Scotland NHS Innovation Hub (CSO/NHS Partnership)

Note: multiple individuals from the same organisation were interviewed in some cases.

Appendix D: Lessons learned from undertaking the early evaluation

The main challenges encountered in the design and delivery of the early evaluation of the Techscaler Programme, and which will provide useful learning for the Scottish Government in commissioning future evaluations of the programme, can be clustered under the following themes.

Some other internal lessons have also been shared directly with the Scottish Government client team.

The Techscaler Programme does not operate in a vacuum – rather it is one part of the wider Scottish entrepreneurial ecosystem

The STER was clear that ‘the value of interventions should be assessed only with respect to their impact on the overall ecosystem’s output, rather than being limited to the scope of that part of the ecosystem in which they are applied.’ The Techscaler Programme does not operate in a vacuum – for example, Scotland’s enterprise agencies support businesses to innovate and scale, and Scotland’s universities play a key role in nurturing talent in the tech sector and creating spinouts.

It is also worth noting that while Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) is a recognised good practice approach for economic appraisal, it will underplay/value some of the wider (tangible and intangible) benefits we would anticipate being generated from a programme of this nature in future years, such as positive spillovers, recycling entrepreneurial talent and agglomeration effects.

External economic, social and political factors, for example shifting policy priorities, availability of funding (both public sector and private sector investment), regulation and legislation might also positively and/or negatively affect the Techscaler Programme’s ability to deliver on its stated objectives.

Techscaler information and data

What success looks like for the Techscaler Programme was not explicitly defined within the Services Contract

Rather, by design the Scottish Government procured the delivery of the Techscaler Programme to CodeBase as an innovative contract and set out seven high level objectives to allow for flexibility in design and guide delivery. While this has helped to encourage a flexible and agile approach to delivery it does present some challenges such as varied stakeholder views on what Techscaler is (and is not).

Quarterly delivery plans/reports are agreed between CodeBase and Scottish Government that set out what has been delivered in the previous quarter and what the upcoming delivery phase looks like. Scottish Government also has monthly meetings where policy colleagues discuss delivery and progress, including what has been achieved and what is upcoming.

It has been challenging to robustly evaluate the Techscaler Programme as there is no clear definition of success (or what a successful end point looks like) and there are no intermediate measures/metrics (such as defined targets) to assess progress and performance against. That is, metrics beyond activity and output measures. This potentially under-represents the wider impact of the programme.

Key information and data should be available at the start of the commission where possible

Scottish Government analysts and policy should endeavour to have key information, including financial information, available at the start of the commission and for policy colleagues to be clear about parameters. This could help to minimise any delays in providing information and data. Briefings could set the evaluation in context and explain the difference between evaluation and audit.

The Scottish Government has recently established a Centre of Expertise in Appraisal and Evaluation to provide advice and training to analytical and policy colleagues on conducting appraisals and evaluations. The centre aims to ensure government policies and interventions offer value for money and to learn what does and does not work. It has responsibility for delivering the Scottish Government [Evaluation Action Plan](#) (August 2024) and is jointly led by the Scottish Government's Chief Economist and Chief Social Researcher.

Appendix E: Techscaler Programme context and rationale

Introduction

This appendix sets the scene for the strategic context and rationale for the development of the Techscaler Programme, its fit within the wider ecosystem, and the programme's continuing strategic rationale.

Strategic drivers

STER

The Techscaler Programme's origins stem from the recommendations within the STER (August 2020) authored by Professor Mark Logan, former Chief Operating Officer at Skyscanner. Subsequently, Professor Mark Logan was appointed as Chief Entrepreneur to act as a senior adviser to the programme to deliver the remaining recommendations of STER. Professor Mark Logan left this role in 2024 and Ana Stewart was appointed the Scottish Government's new Chief Entrepreneur in April 2025.

The purpose of the STER was to undertake an independent review of Scotland's technology ecosystem and provide recommendations to stimulate and accelerate the maturity of Scotland's 'technology ecosystem'. Throughout the STER, the 'technology ecosystem' refers to the ecosystem in its widest sense, that supports and nurtures technology businesses in Scotland, from the early startup phase through to fully scaled maturity. The STER further asserts that the output of this ecosystem should be a stream of startups that reach sustained profitability, including a significant proportion that do so at scale.

To this end, the key output of the STER was 34 recommendations to help increase the rate of profitable, scaled tech businesses, and reduce the average time taken for viable individual startups to reach scale – the thinking is that building startups is teachable, and that being playbook-literate can help communicate and build ideas better, and faster.

STER further emphasised the importance of implementing the recommendations in their entirety – not least as the interventions identified are mutually reinforcing, and in order to evolve the ecosystem at pace and achieve transformational change.

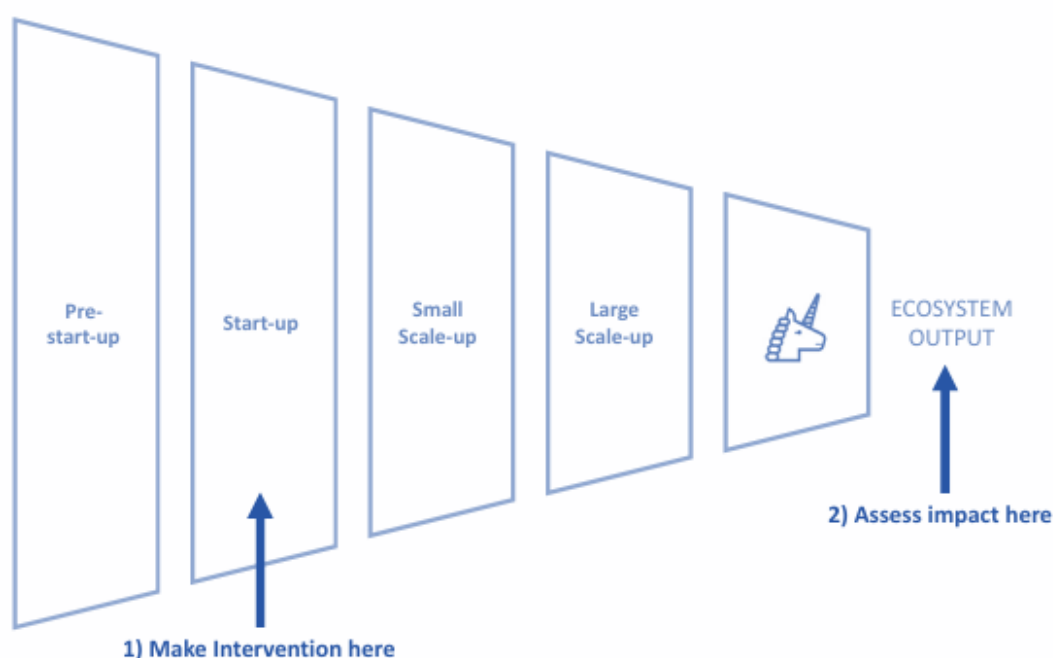
The Scottish Government accepted all 34 of STER's recommendations and subsequently announced a multi-million-pound national implementation programme overseen by Professor Mark Logan and supported by an Advisory Board composed of some of Scotland's most successful technology entrepreneurs and co-chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy.

STER's centrepiece recommendation was that Scotland should seek the Creation of a Tech-Scaler National Backbone "whose capabilities build upon and extend beyond traditional incubation programmes. Tech-Scalers combine best practice in incubation, intensive founder education in Internet Economy best practice, ecosystem social infrastructure, and integrated funding. Access to all services would be provided both physically and in a fully-virtualised form, enabling country-wide participation in Scotland's high-technology economy." STER recommended that these tech-scalers are initially created in six cities nationwide (for example, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, Stirling, and Inverness).

Current state of the technology ecosystem

STER describes the ecosystem model as a funnel, see **Figure E.1**.

Figure E.1: STER funnel model of the technology ecosystem



Source: STER, August 2020.

There is a relatively large number of potential founders considering starting a tech company, or in the very earliest stages of running a startup, then proceeding through various stages of scaling until companies reach 'unicorn' size or larger (that is, £1 billion valuation and hundreds or thousands of employees).

The recommendations in STER seek to optimise the rate at which large scaleup and unicorns are achieved, as well as to create other successful companies of scale along the way.

STER's key observation was that technology ecosystems exist in either the 'post-tipping point' (the preferred state) or 'pre-tipping point' state.

While Scotland's technology ecosystem is the strongest it has ever been, it remains in a pre-tipping point state. The 'post-tipping point' state is characterised by a critical mass of viable startups and scaleups which perpetuate several virtuous network effects and begin to spontaneously operate which makes the ecosystem anti-fragile, continually strengthening it without requirement for state intervention.

Some of these virtuous effects include:

- **recycling of executive and technical talent from successful later stage companies into a critical mass of viable early-stage companies** – significantly improving the experience level in those businesses and increasing the likelihood of them being successful. These businesses in turn recycle others into the ecosystem.
- **external talent is attracted into the ecosystem** – this leads to the creation of more startups and more successful businesses, and in turn attracts more talent and a virtuous cycle again establishes itself.
- **investment firms start to pay greater attention to the ecosystem and spend more time within it** – this brings more capital and expertise into the ecosystem, which leads to more and stronger businesses, again attracting more investors, entrepreneurs, and talent.

The STER asserted that Scotland has not yet passed the 'pre-tipping point' and is not yet benefiting from these virtuous effects. The review also suggested that the following types of interventions would be critical and could help boost Scotland to overcome this inertia and become internationally competitive.

The STER recommendations further comprised a mix of interventions that focus on:

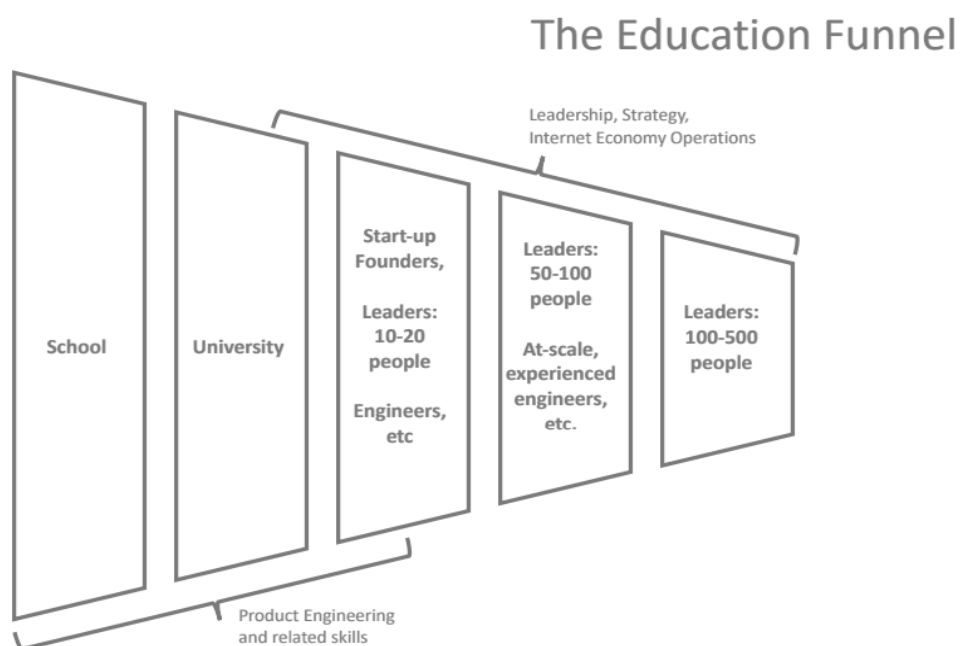
- **education** – across all stages of the education system from school education onwards, including startup founder-team education in the Silicon Valley playbook, and interventions to increase the size of the overall talent pool accessing pathways into technology.
- **social infrastructure/international market square** – interventions to strengthen the social infrastructure, including those aimed at facilitating startup education, the learning and sharing of best practice, networking, peer-support and hiring.
- **integrated ecosystem grant funding** – interventions to better align public grant funding support to the specific needs of technology startups and those of the ecosystem as a whole.
- **investment funding** – interventions to address problem areas for Scottish startups looking to access venture funding, including a partnership approach between government and Scotland's venture capital community to better support the flow of investment funding to worthy startups.

Techscaler has been largely, but not only, concerned with delivering certain aspects along the education system and creating the tech ecosystem infrastructure.

Education

The education funnel, as depicted in **Figure E.2**, begins with (1) nurturing foundational software skills at school level, followed by (2) significantly enhanced raw engineering skills and rudimentary business and leadership skills at university. After this are the educational needs of (3) early-stage and then (4) later stage startups, and beyond.

Figure E2: STER education funnel



Source: STER, August 2020.

At these stages of the education funnel, STER noted that it is key to grow the base of people with skills in Internet Economy business operations, people leadership, technical leadership, and technology strategy development. It is at these stages, particularly Stage 3 and to a lesser extent Stage 4 where Techscaler has been designed to fill the gap and to provide the educational services needed to support the startup ecosystem where the STER concluded that there was a general lack of skills needed to scaleup companies at pace.

In addition to providing long-term, affordable, high-quality incubation space, STER recommended that the network of tech-scalers should provide free, high-quality foundational startup education in the following areas:

- Silicon Valley business models – for example, network effects, platforms, growth models and techniques, compounding growth mechanisms, and commercial models and techniques.
- Internet-Economy working practices – for example, lean startup techniques, speed of iteration, experimentation, and bottleneck constraint analysis.
- fundamentals of team and people management – for example, staff development, communications, performance management, and conflict management.

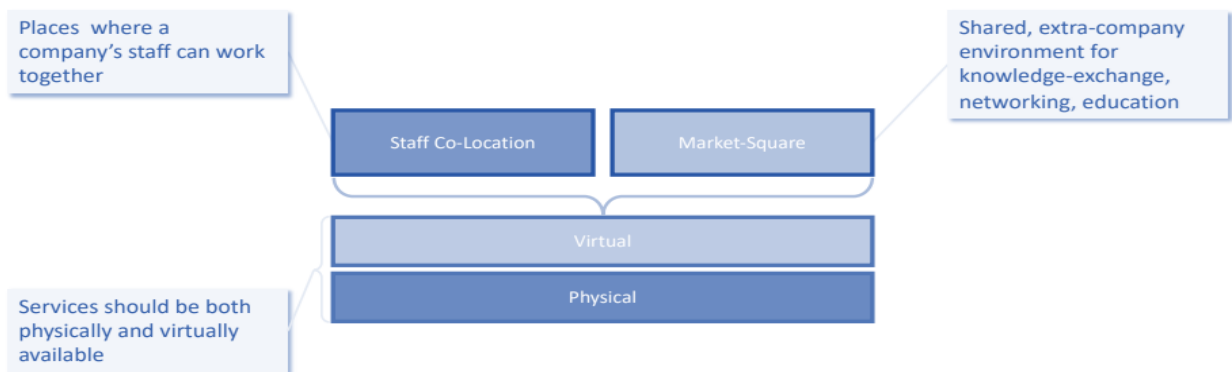
- fundamentals of funding models – for example, explanation of investment stages and terms, building relationships with venture capitalists, pitching skills, and alternatives to venture.
- basic operating hygiene, including legal compliance, Intellectual Property (IP) management and Human Resource (HR) sufficiency.

STER also recommended that targeted coaching and mentorship should be integrated into the overall programme design.

Infrastructure

The infrastructure requirements to support the technology ecosystem are depicted in **Figure E.3**.

Figure E.3: STER ecosystem infrastructure



Source: STER, August 2020.

STER recommended that these infrastructure elements should be available across all five stages of the ecosystem funnel.

Co-location and the market square elements were considered key to developing the desirable attributes of:

- **a strong sense of identity and confidence** – startups believe that they can be successful in their chosen location and that there is a peer-support network around them.
- **a well-known place** where ecosystem participants can meet, attend talks, share ideas, be efficiently introduced to prospective companies and future employees, and feel part of a thriving community.
- **a place where investors can access multiple businesses easily** – having a single meeting point where investors can assess several interesting candidates in one visit can be helpful.

The STER recommended that there was a strong case for the network of tech-scalers to deliver both physical and virtual infrastructure to support a development of a well functional technology ecosystem and support Scotland to reach the 'tipping point'.

Post-COVID this recommendation may not be as clear cut.

Funding

The STER concluded that helping Scottish startups secure investment remains critically important, including at all stages of the company journey. From early-stage funding such as proof of concept, seed funding, and angel investment, to Series A, B, and C funding rounds that typically follow seed funding and angel investing (this provides investors the opportunity to invest cash in a growing company in exchange for equity or partial ownership).

Techscaler has sought to connect founders with fundraising opportunities, and specific initiatives such as the one-off [Funding Accelerator](#) (in partnership with Focused for Business), have been designed to help Scottish startups access early-stage funding. During year two delivery, Techscaler, in line with STER recommendations, introduced other joint initiatives to provide grant funding opportunities for tech startups and scaleups based in Scotland. This includes:

- [Techscaler Minimum Viable Product \(MVP\) Small R&D Grant](#), offered in collaboration with Scottish Enterprise and South of Scotland Enterprise, was launched in September 2024. This grant scheme provided awards of between £5,000 and £50,000³⁵ for tech startups and scaleups who have been mentored through Techscaler and has helped them introduce new products, processes, or services.
- [Techscaler Kickstart grant scheme](#), offered in partnership with Highlands and Islands Enterprise – the grant scheme ran from September 2024 to March 2025, and offered grants of £5,000 to £10,000 to help tech founders and entrepreneurs develop their ideas for business applications.

STER: Towards the Tipping Point

Two years on from the publication of STER, the [STER: Towards the Tipping Point](#) (Scottish Government, November 2022) provided a brief examination of the technology ecosystem as Scotland and the rest of the world emerged from the COVID-19 global pandemic.

While the updated report highlighted some areas of progress made since 2020, it reasserted that Scotland is still in the “pre-tipping point” stage.

The report concluded that most of the progress made against STER objectives and recommendations (at that time) were within the education domain with a series of key interventions primarily focused on equipping secondary and to a lesser extent primary school teachers with the skills and training they needed to deliver high quality computer science education and providing the funding for the procurement of hardware, software, and teaching tools across Scotland’s school.

Underpinned by the Scottish Government’s [global capital investment plan](#) (March 2021), STER’s investment recommendations targeted two particular investment challenges faced by Scotland’s tech startups.

³⁵ Project costs were supported up to 45% for smaller companies (with fewer than 50 employees) and 35% for medium-sized enterprises (with 50 to 250 employees).

These challenges relate to raising growth capital specifically at the early seed fund and Series A funding stages. Progress has included: the establishment of a new Series A fund, supported by the Scottish Government through the Scottish National Investment Bank (SNIB); work to develop a new £150 million fund for Scottish businesses in partnership with the British Business Bank (BBB); a new fund for female-founded companies in Scotland; and a strategic review of funding available to Scottish businesses.

While Techscaler had not yet officially launched at this time, the STER: Towards the Tipping Point report intimated that Techscaler would become the cornerstone of the technology ecosystem's infrastructure and reaffirmed its importance in supporting the overall technology ecosystem past the tipping point.

Specifically, this report made the distinction between two elements of this infrastructure including physical and social elements and how Techscaler should drive these areas – and that physical infrastructure would be underpinned by the regional technology hubs which would offer colocation, collaboration, and educational space for tech startups across Scotland.

The report asserted that Scotland's tech startups were generally lacking in startup skills, known as 'the Silicon Valley playbook' and that developing this capacity would be a key part of Techscaler programme (access to cutting edge education on the key principles of successfully scaling up internet economy businesses to any and all tech startups in Scotland that want it). In tandem with the physical infrastructure, it noted that Techscaler would actively support the development of the social infrastructure or the ecosystem's 'market square' – meaning physical, in-person or online spaces in which communities, founders and entrepreneurs can come together, to learn from each other while enjoying meet-ups, events, and other activities.

Continuing context for Techscaler Programme delivery

The continuing context for Techscaler has been more recently distilled through:

- the Scottish Government [Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation](#) (NSET) (March 2022).
- the Scottish Government, [National Innovation Strategy 2023 to 2033](#) (June 2023).
- the Scottish Government annual Programme for Government documents.
- [The Pathways Report: A New Approach for Women in Entrepreneurship](#) (February 2023) – an Independent Review Commissioned by the Scottish Government and undertaken by Ana Stewart and Professor Mark Logan, and in the Scottish Government [response to The Pathways Report](#) (June 2023).

NSET

First, NSET sets out Scottish Government's vision to 2032 and actions to develop:

"A Wellbeing Economy: Thriving across economic, social and environmental dimensions" – that is, a focus on boosting economic performance (for example, productivity, innovation) and tackling structural economic inequalities." Source: NSET, 2022

The NSET vision is set within the context of three ambitions – a fairer, wealthier, and greener Scotland, and five policy programmes, as summarised below:

- **Entrepreneurial people and culture** – Establish Scotland as a world-class entrepreneurial nation founded on a culture that encourages, promotes, and celebrates entrepreneurial activity in every sector of our economy.
- **New market opportunities** – Strengthen Scotland's position in new markets and industries, generating new, well-paid jobs from a just transition to net zero.
- **Productive businesses and regions** – Make Scotland's businesses, industries, regions, communities, and public services more productive and innovative.
- **Skilled workforce** – Ensure that people have the skills they need at every stage of life to have rewarding careers and meet the demands of an ever-changing economy and society, and that employers invest in the skilled employees they need to grow their businesses.
- **A fairer and more equal society** – Reorient our economy towards wellbeing and fair work, to deliver higher rates of employment and wage growth, to significantly reduce structural poverty, particularly child poverty, and improve health, cultural and social outcomes for disadvantaged families and communities.

NSET recognises the important role that high growth startups and scaleups play in creating skilled jobs, paying higher wages, and driving increased productivity and innovation across the economy. Entrepreneurial thinking and mindset are seen as critical in this regard to improve services, increase efficiency, as well as to develop new products and services that can be exported internationally.

"Perhaps more than any other domain of the economy, it is in the creation of new companies, and the scaling up of successful companies, where data shows the greatest gap between current performance and Scotland's potential....Scotland currently lags most OECD countries in indicators of entrepreneurial dynamism, with a total rate of early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) of 7.3% in 2019, compared with 10.5% in England, and 12.4% in Ireland. Scotland would need another 60,000 businesses to match the equivalent rate for England. Scotland like other countries also suffers from a gender gap with regards to business startup rates with the TEA for women, at 5.3%, consistently below that of men, which was 9.3% in 2020. The TEA for ethnic minorities, at 12.3%, is significantly higher than that of the general population, showing the value of diversity to the Scottish economy." Source: NSET, 2022

NSET sets out actions across several fronts to support its ambition that entrepreneurship is encouraged, supported, and celebrated, and where Scotland is recognised as one of the best countries in the world to start and grow a business. This spans continued efforts to:

- dramatically increase the total number of new businesses created in Scotland – of all sizes and across all sectors.
- achieve a step change in the percentage of Scottish startups and existing mid-sized businesses that grow to scale.
- build entrepreneurial mindsets right across the economy – in startups, scaleups, SMEs, large corporates, and government.

“Scotland has taken the first steps towards the creation of a network of tech-scalers, as recommended in the STER. These tech-scalers will form a national network of institutions dedicated to the intensive schooling of tech entrepreneurs in the best available leadership, commercial and scaling techniques and will, for the first time, provide our best tech startups with a truly world-class developmental environment.” Source: NSET, 2022

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) is an Annual Population Survey (APS) undertaken in several participant countries globally. Headline results from the [Scotland 2023-2024 report](#) indicate that:

- the Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) Rate returned a small increase from 8.8% in 2022 to 9.1% in 2023 – overall, TEA rates in Scotland remain broadly similar in the last three years since COVID-19.
- major developments in 2023 are that minority ethnic (Non-White) TEA reached a new high at 24.1% while female TEA also hit a significant new record level of 8.6% in 2023, from 7.2% in 2022.
- female TEA in Scotland appears to have all but closed the gap with male TEA which has itself been steadily declining since 2021 from 11.4% to 10.5% in 2022, to 9.8% in 2023. Effectively, in 2023, the difference between male TEA and female TEA is not statistically significant, suggesting that statistical parity between male and female TEA was attained in Scotland in 2023 – a landmark moment of significant consequence for female entrepreneurship discourse and policy in this country.
- regional differences and other contextual issues remain key concerns in female entrepreneurship in Scotland. While Southern Scotland returns a female TEA at 8% is higher than male TEA (6.5%), with the Highlands and Islands, West Central, and Eastern Scotland returning relative gender parity in TEA, male TEA in Northern Eastern Scotland at 18.6% was virtually double the female TEA of 9.6%.
- a panel of entrepreneurship experts judged the context for entrepreneurship in Scotland to be generally ‘mediocre’, with the level of support for women’s entrepreneurship worryingly evaluated as less than satisfactory, scoring under three out of ten.

National Innovation Strategy

The National Innovation Strategy 2023 to 2033 sets out the following vision for Scotland.

“Our vision is for Scotland to rank alongside Denmark, Norway, and Finland in being recognised as one of the most innovative small countries in the world.” Source: National Innovation Strategy 2023 to 2033

Four broad innovation themes are identified as areas of focus – this includes supporting more SMEs to innovate to increase their productivity – increasing in the number of businesses who are ‘innovation-active’. The strategy also recognises the important role that the ecosystem of businesses, organisations, universities, and talent (people) play in innovation and as key drivers of economic growth and success.

Programme for Government

The first reference to Techscaler was in the Scottish Government [Programme for Government 2022-2023](#) – as part of government efforts to transform the economy by helping build a more productive, internationally competitive economy, growing prosperity for all of Scotland’s people and places.

“This work will include boosting entrepreneurship by opening six tech-scalers across the country within the next 12 months, to provide ground-breaking support for tech founders to scale up their businesses and create new jobs across the country.”

Within the [Programme for Government 2023-2024](#) Techscaler was identified as one of several critical activities to continue to help transform and grow Scotland’s economy in support of government’s ambitions around entrepreneurship and innovation, and to create and scale more successful and internationally competitive businesses.

“Increase our backing for the development of Scotland’s universities as entrepreneurial campuses and ensure that the new Techscaler network offers high quality education programmes to entrepreneurs.”

Techscaler contributed to the Scottish Government Growing the Economy priority within the [Programme for Government 2024-2025](#). This document acknowledged that private and third-sector businesses, large and small alike, laid the foundations for future economic success and growth in Scotland – they helped to sustain communities, provide employment, and innovators and entrepreneurs could also help to deliver the solutions to transform productivity and tackle the climate emergency. In line with NSET, the 2024-2025 Programme for Government also highlighted the crucial role of entrepreneurs and innovators in ensuring Scotland’s economic future – both in terms of supporting Scotland’s ambition to become a startup nation and cementing Scotland’s international reputation for home grown innovation.

“This year we will maximise the impact of our £42 million Techscaler programme, Scotland’s national network of startup support – extending access for Scottish entrepreneurs to some of the world’s best start-up development programmes. We will integrate the Techscaler’s with other centres of innovation, creating opportunities for Scottish companies to raise capital, learn from world leading peers, and access new markets.”

Pathways Review

As reflected in NSET, the under-representation of women in entrepreneurship was identified as the main driver of the Pathways Report.

“Despite more than half of Scotland’s population being female, currently one in five of Scotland’s entrepreneurs are women, while startups founded by women in Scotland receive only 2% of overall investment capital. This is despite copious evidence that the entrepreneurial and related capabilities of women are equal to those of men. This state of affairs represents both an enormous loss of talent from Scotland’s startup economy and a denial of opportunity on, literally, an industrial scale. At the same time, it also presents a compelling case for Scotland to leverage this untapped pool of talent to drive and grow the entrepreneurial economy.”

The Pathways Review identified five major root causes of female under-participation in entrepreneurship, namely that:

- relative to men, women were often more logistically constrained, making participation in entrepreneurship difficult – society commonly assigns the primary carer role and the home-manager role to women and then does not provide sufficient balancing support.
- women frequently have a sense of “not belonging” in entrepreneurship, which affects their confidence and self-belief – the lack of women founders in entrepreneurship establishes a vicious circle leading others to think that entrepreneurship is not for them.
- formally-defined pathways into entrepreneurship were unclear, while informal pathways and networks underserve women – developing an understanding of how to become involved in entrepreneurship and how to successfully move through its various stages largely relied on informal networks which were heavily orientated towards men.
- general education and normalisation of entrepreneurship as a valid career path was largely not present in the education system – this affected all demographics, but its impact was greater for women.
- women received far less investment than men at all stages of the entrepreneurial journey from venture capital firms and related sources – for example, of the companies that received external investment in 2022, 12% were female-led and 73% were male-led, and as noted above, over the past five years only 2% of institutional investment went to female-led businesses.

While the independent review was specifically commissioned to consider the under-participation of women in entrepreneurship, its recommendations to increase the participation level of women in the entrepreneurial economy to help increase Scotland's entrepreneurial capacity and improve its economic performance, have much wider applicability. This is largely because the root-cause issues which affect the participation of women in entrepreneurship affect other under-represented groups (that, intersectionality – inequalities shape one another and are inseparable).

The Pathways Review presented 31 specific and directly actionable recommendations, under the themes of:

- bringing startup incubation, education, and support to where primary carers are.
- supporting under-represented founders through the Concept and Journey Funds.
- encouraging better representation during 'selection events' within the entrepreneurial journey.
- integrating entrepreneurial education within Scotland's education system.
- establishing Scotland as a leading nation in Femtech.
- addressing the underlying sexism at the heart of under-participation.
- clarifying access pathways into entrepreneurship.
- establishing a comprehensive database for tracking progress towards full representation in entrepreneurship.

The Scottish Government, in its response to the Pathways Report, accepted the independent review findings, and efforts continue to implement its key recommendations to support greater diversity amongst entrepreneurs in Scotland. The 2024-2025 Programme for Government outlined the government's commitment to investing £50 million over the lifetime of this Parliament to support more women into entrepreneurship.

CodeBase, via the Techscaler Programme, is one of several organisations who has signed up to the Pathways Pledge (a light touch, collaborative initiative where organisations implement their own actions, using the Pathways Report as the 'manifesto' for change). These actions are shared with other Pledgers and are tracked and reported over a 12-month period to help organisations consolidate their efforts to drive change through collective ownership.

Pledge 1: CodeBase committed to raising the participation rates of women founders in Techscaler, who have an early stage product in market and are looking to grow their business. To undertake this work, CodeBase appointed an internal lead to coordinate and prioritise this area of work across teams. Among other positive results, Techscaler reported that the programme has increased the number of women founders in Techscaler 2.6 fold from 184 to 475 members over the past year, representing 34.7% of total membership.

Pledge 2: CodeBase also committed to actively increasing the percentage of women mentors and facilitators in its network. They prioritised the onboarding of 28 women and non-binary mentors which increased the percentage from 23% to 31% in 2024. Techscaler also achieved an average of 50% women facilitators for their Techscaler education programmes in 2024. Source: [CodeBase – Pathways Forward](#)

The Tech Nation Report 2025: Unlocking the UK's Growth Potential

Tech Nation is a UK network for tech entrepreneurs, and its 2025 report provides information regarding the status of the UK tech sector, barrier to growth and how to overcome these barriers to unlock the sector's growth potential. Key messages include that:

- the UK tech sector has reached a combined market valuation of \$1.2 trillion in 2025, cementing its place as the number one tech ecosystem in Europe.
- UK tech startups have raised more than \$7 billion in venture capital investment in H1 2025, including the biggest first quarter fundraise of the past three years.
- UK founders said that access to capital, the tax environment, and availability of top talent are their biggest barriers to growth in the UK.
- to overcome these barriers, founders call for government intervention in funding markets, enhanced R&D tax credits to hire the best talent, digital infrastructure funding, and regulatory sandboxes to test new technologies.

Investing in Ambition – Scotland Risk Capital Market: Benchmark Analysis 2024

Scottish Enterprise has published a risk capital market report annually since 2003. The [2024 report](#) highlights announced and unannounced equity investment rounds into high growth, private UK companies of any size, between 2014 and 2024.

“While much of the observed trends in Scotland in 2024 are encouraging and illustrate the attractiveness of Scottish investment opportunities, the market, in common with the rest of the UK, is not without challenges. Changes in investor risk-appetite have perpetuated the drift towards later stage opportunities, with early-stage below £10 million and new to equity investment being the most challenging areas. A further area of concern is the representation of women and other under-represented groups amongst investors, entrepreneurs, and founders.” Source: Scotland Risk Capital Market: Benchmark Analysis, 2024

Scottish Enterprise reported that in 2024 a total of £17.16 billion was raised across 5,359 deals across the UK, a reduction of 14% and 22% respectively in 2023. This was largely attributed to reduced market sentiment due to high interest rate, high inflation, lower valuations, and a sluggish exit market.

The position in Scotland was said to be more promising with £704 million raised in 2024, an increase of 19% from 2023. The total number of deals, however fell by 13% to 318. Strengths in the Scottish market were identified as:

- high quality research outputs from Scottish universities with £176 million raised from 52 spin-outs.
- an increase in investment value from all investor types in 2024, with venture capital and private equity the top investors.
- business angels and angel network are a strong feature of Scotland risk capital market, with Scotland ranking only behind London for these types of deals.

Techscaler's fit within the wider ecosystem

The [Scottish entrepreneurial ecosystem](#) is complex and multifaceted, with a wide range of support programmes and organisations across public, private, and third sectors. The Scottish entrepreneurial ecosystem consists of:

- **13 coworking and lab spaces** – physical workspaces that offer room for businesses.
- **51 entrepreneur support and networking organisations** – connecting businesses with essential resources, opportunities, platforms, and networks.
- **27 entrepreneurial support programmes** – supporting founders and founding teams in early-stage companies, nurturing entrepreneurial talent, and offering a dynamic and supportive environment to grow.
- **32 financial support organisations** – offering growth investment to startups and early-stage companies.
- **23 incubators and accelerators** – providing environments for entrepreneurs to cultivate ideas, connect and collaborate, and learn techniques for starting and scaling a sustainable company.
- **21 innovation centres** – connecting businesses with academic knowledge, support, and resources.

Techscaler is one of the 27 entrepreneurial support programmes listed in the Scottish Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Guide – produced and updated by the High Growth Entrepreneurship team at Scottish Enterprise. The guide provides a snapshot of the breadth of organisations in Scotland that are there to support businesses.

The sheer number of organisations and programmes within the Scotland ecosystem would suggest there is a clutter landscape as well as the potential for duplication of effort and support.

Indeed, The Pathways Report (2023) found that the early-stage startup space is a cluttered environment, consisting of many organisations making it 'confusing and often intimidating for entrepreneurs' to navigate easily.

The Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Guide is presented at a high level which makes it more difficult to show the nuances between different forms of support based on the definitions used. In addition, some of the programmes could be considered 'catch all' to cover a broad base of companies and not positioned or targeted to address and alleviate some of the specific challenges facing Scotland's tech companies.

There is also a perception that the Scottish entrepreneurial ecosystem is heavily focused on early-stage startups. For example, according to [Scaling Up Scotland](#) (March 2023):

"Early-stage investments are available from a broad range of sources both public and private. However, at the mid to later stages of a business's growth, particularly where greater levels of investment are required, there are fewer options for accessing growth capital."

Summary

At a high level STER was well positioned and considered the full breath of the ecosystem, with many valuable and interesting insights. However, the STER is now five years old and in the intervening period there have been changes to policy and external environment in which Techscaler is delivered. These changes need to be considered to help shape programme delivery over the remaining three years of the current contract.

The entrepreneurial ecosystem landscape in Scotland is crowded. However, Techscaler has sought to distinguish itself from other entrepreneurial support programmes – it has been designed to help founders/companies that have established a foundation and are looking to scale their operations and achieve significant growth. In the first two years of delivery Techscaler has sought to do this through implementation of a nationwide programme offering Scottish Government-funded support, access to world-class education, a peer-led community, and flexible workspaces, while also not taking any equity from its members.

Appendix F: Techscaler Programme theory of change

Introduction

Theory of Change is a framework tool that projects and programmes can use to articulate (usually using images/infographics) how, and why, they expect to achieve a desired long-term goal. The framework highlights the causal linkages and why the inputs and activities have led to a series of connected outputs, outcomes, and impacts (or why it has not worked as intended – the intended and unintended outcomes).

A theory of change was developed for the Techscaler Programme in partnership between the Scottish Government and CodeBase to help better articulate what the programme intends to deliver (and for what beneficiaries), and importantly, to inform the collection of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) data.

A theory of change was developed for each pillar of Techscaler Programme activity, namely:

1. Build core startup and scaleup skills.
2. Foster social infrastructure development.
3. Increase investor connectivity and internationalisation.

This work supported the development of a summary programme logic model that is used for wider dissemination, see figures below.

Techscaler Programme theory of change

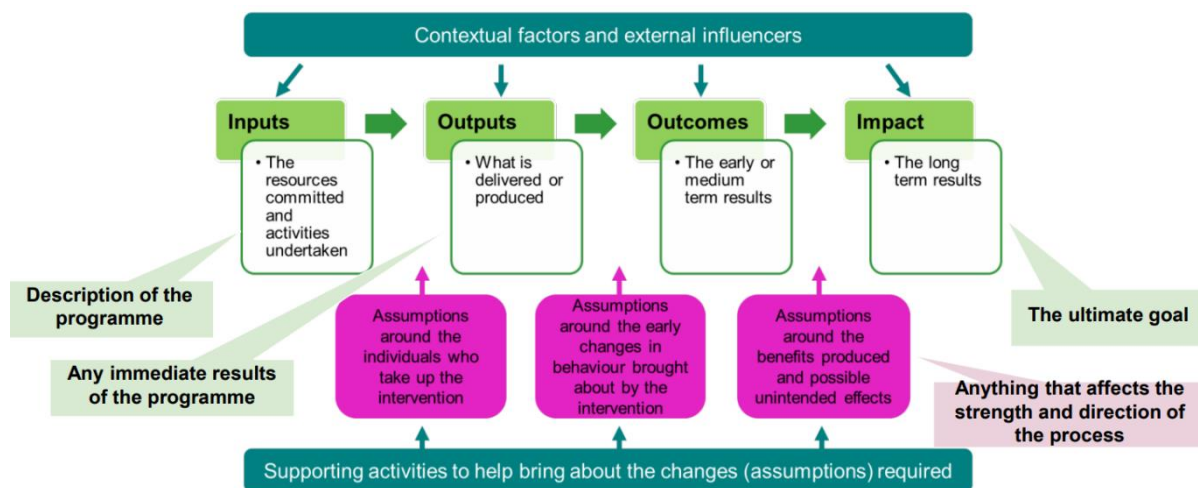
The development of a theory of change and logic model for the Techscaler Programme has been relatively comprehensive and has added value to the programme by promoting a shared understanding between the Scottish Government and CodeBase and informed discussions regarding performance data and the gaps within existing collection methods.

From the evaluator's perspective, the theory of change and logic model have:

- helped identify where gaps in the data and evidence exist which has informed the evaluation method, specifically, the Techscaler members survey sought to gather feedback to test the theory of change and fill the gaps.
- informed the recommendations with regards to improvements to ongoing monitoring and data collection.

We would, however, offer the following observations at this point that could strengthen the models and provide greater clarity.

A well developed theory of change can support the development and design of a project or programme by describing how the programme works and how planned activities will lead to intended outcomes.



Source: [Developing a Theory of Change, Cabinet Office 2025](#)

In the case of the Techscaler Programme this was developed retrospectively during its initial implementation phase. Development prior to design could have supported partners to ‘map backwards’ – work in reverse from the final goal to identify what short- and medium-term outcomes must occur, and the activities and outputs required to reach that goal. This could have informed the assumptions and risks, which ultimately inform planning and resource allocation.

Secondly, the complex models (necessarily by design) were shared and need to be presented in summary form to aid ease of understanding and assimilation. However, because of this simplification they perhaps underplay the complexity in the wider ecosystem and do not fully reflect the ‘top down’ policy environment, and wider macro-economic factors, assumptions and risks, and other actors/interventions that have an influence.

Finally, while the models have a relatively well-defined set of short- and longer-term outcomes, these could be considered more ‘enablers’ and there remains a lack of indicators and measures for defining what success looks like for Techscaler. As an example, there are no definitions with regards the ‘economy impacts’ in relation to business, employment, and economic growth.

This links to the point made regarding a degree of ambiguity on what success for the Techscaler Programme looks like.

Related to this point, the models could benefit from further detail on what metrics or approaches could be used to gather evidence to evidence progress towards delivering the programme’s outcomes.

Figure F.1: Techscaler current theory of change

Input	Pillar	Activities	Outcomes	
			Short-term / Intermediate	Long-term / Impact
ScotGov Funding Techscaler Team Mentors Connected Investors International & Domestic Partners Members Community Participants	Build core startup and scaleup skills	Asynchronous Learning Modules	Improved knowledge of startup fundamentals	Perceptions Founders prefer to incorporate in Scotland to access skilled talent and quality training resources Global ecosystems use Scotland as an example of leading startup education resources Participants Increase in Scottish tech company valuations Time between achieving core growth milestones (e.g. fundraising stage) decreases for Scottish tech companies Sector Increased profile of Scottish tech founders and employees
		Cohort Courses	Mindset, confidence, motivation shift	
		Mentorship	Higher quality of pitches delivered by founders	
		Partner Integrations	Increase in # of companies registered	
		Workshops	Increase speed of core metric growth (user base/revenue) More referrals to complementary partner activity	
	Foster social infrastructure development	Owned super connector events	Improve understanding of ecosystem support	Perceptions Founders (and teams) believe Scotland is a supportive ecosystem Founders find it easy to access relevant support Partners believe Techscaler is an enabler to providing their own, targeted support Participants Scottish tech companies hire teams faster and more efficiently The backing of barriers to growth for Scottish tech companies shifts from Seed to Series A+ stage Sector Increase in # of organic (non-funded) community activities take place Government intervention is deliberately reduced due to ecosystem maturity
		Contribute to partner and third-party super connector events	Improve access to ecosystem support	
		Signpost third-party and partner activities	Referrals to complementary partner activities	
		Support cohorts outside of service delivery	Applications to Techscaler	
	Increase investor connectivity and internationalisation	High growth potential pathway	Increase number of investment deals completed	Perceptions Founders view Scotland as a viable place to raise funding Investors view Scotland as a viable place to invest Global ecosystem view Scotland has a hub of quality, exciting startups Participants Scottish tech company valuations increase Increased # of investment deals in Scottish tech companies Sector Unsustainable companies fail faster and recycle talent into the ecosystem Increased amount (£) invested in Scottish tech companies Increase in # of exits and acquisitions of Scottish tech companies
		Direct access to active investors	Funding raised	
		International residencies	More inbound investor activity	
		London integration	Increase outbound international startup productivity (customers/suppliers)	
			Increase inbound international inquiries	

Source: Scottish Government and CodeBase, Techscaler Summary Logic Model, September 2024

Alternative text for Techscaler current theory of change:

Techscaler current theory of change: Inputs → Pillars → Activities → Outcomes

1. Inputs (What resources go into the programme)

- Scottish Government funding
- Techscaler team
- Mentors
- Connected investors
- International and domestic partners
- Members
- Community participants

2. Pillars (What the programme focuses on)

- Pillar 1: Build core startup and scaleup skills
- Pillar 2: Foster social infrastructure development
- Pillar 3: Increase investor connectivity and internationalisation

3. Activities (What the programme does under each pillar)

- Pillar 1 – Startup & scaleup skills
 - Asynchronous learning modules
 - Cohort courses
 - Mentorship
 - Partner integrations
 - Workshops
- Pillar 2 – Social infrastructure
 - Owned super-connector events
 - Participation in partner and third-party events
 - Signposting to third-party support
 - Supporting cohorts outside direct service delivery

- Pillar 3 – Investor connectivity
 - High-growth potential pathway
 - Direct access to active investors
 - International residencies
 - London integration

4. Short-term / Intermediate Outcomes (What happens first)

- Pillar 1 outcomes
 - Improved startup knowledge
 - Mindset, confidence, and motivation shift
 - More and better pitches
 - More companies registered
 - Faster early-stage growth
 - Increased referrals to partner activity
- Pillar 2 outcomes
 - Better understanding of ecosystem support
 - Greater access to support
 - More referrals to partner services
 - More applications to Techscaler
- Pillar 3 outcomes
 - More investment deals completed
 - More inbound investor activity
 - Increased outbound international productivity
 - More international enquiries

5. Long-term Impact (What changes over time)

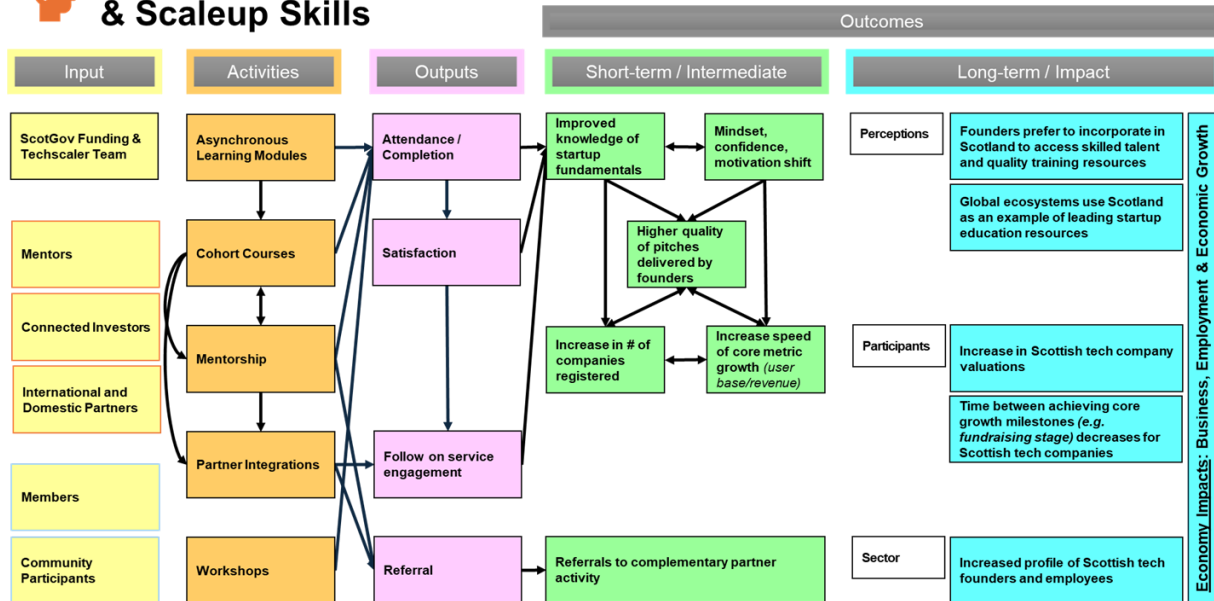
- Perceptions
 - Founders see Scotland as a good place to incorporate
 - Global ecosystems view Scotland as a strong startup location
 - Partners see Techscaler as a targeted support enabler
 - Founders find support easier to access
- Participants
 - Tech company valuations increase
 - Companies reach key milestones faster
 - Companies hire more efficiently
 - Unviable startups fail faster and recycle talent
- Sector
 - Higher profile for Scottish founders and employees
 - More organic community activity
 - More investment into Scottish tech companies
 - More exits and acquisitions

Overall Economic Impact

- Increased business creation, employment, and economic growth



Build Core Startup & Scaleup Skills



Alternative Text for the Build Core Startup & Scaleup Skills Figure.

This figure presents a logic model showing how the Build Core Startup & Scaleup Skills pillar of the Techscaler programme progresses from inputs, through activities and outputs, toward short-term and intermediate outcomes, and finally to long-term impact.

1. Inputs (resources that support this pillar)

- Scottish Government funding and Techscaler team
- Mentors
- Connected investors
- International and domestic partners
- Members
- Community participants

These inputs provide the foundation for activities that develop founder capability and support startup progression.

2. Activities (what is delivered under this pillar)

The programme delivers a range of learning and support activities:

- Asynchronous learning modules
- Cohort courses
- Mentorship
- Partner integrations,
- Workshops,

These activities aim to build the knowledge, confidence, and practical capability of early-stage founders.

3. Outputs (immediate results of activities)

Activities lead to several measurable outputs:

- Attendance and completion
- Satisfaction
- Follow-on service engagement
- Referral

Outputs indicate direct engagement and immediate reaction to the support provided.

4. Short-term and Intermediate Outcomes (changes expected early on)

These outcomes represent early signs of progress as founders engage with the programme:

Knowledge and skills

- Improved knowledge of startup fundamentals
- Mindset, confidence, and motivation shift
- Higher-quality pitches delivered by founders

Early business progression

- Increase in the number of companies registered
- Increase in the speed of core metric growth, such as user base or revenue

Engagement with wider ecosystem

- More referrals to complementary partner activity

These outcomes demonstrate early capability gains and business formation progress.

5. Long-term / Impact Outcomes (changes expected over time)

The model identifies long-term outcomes across perceptions, participants, and the wider sector.

Perceptions

- Founders prefer to incorporate in Scotland due to access skilled talent and quality training resources
- Global ecosystems use Scotland as an example of leading start up education resources

Participants

- Increase in Scottish tech company valuations
- Time between achieving core growth milestones (e.g. fundraising stage) decreases for Scottish Tech companies

Sector

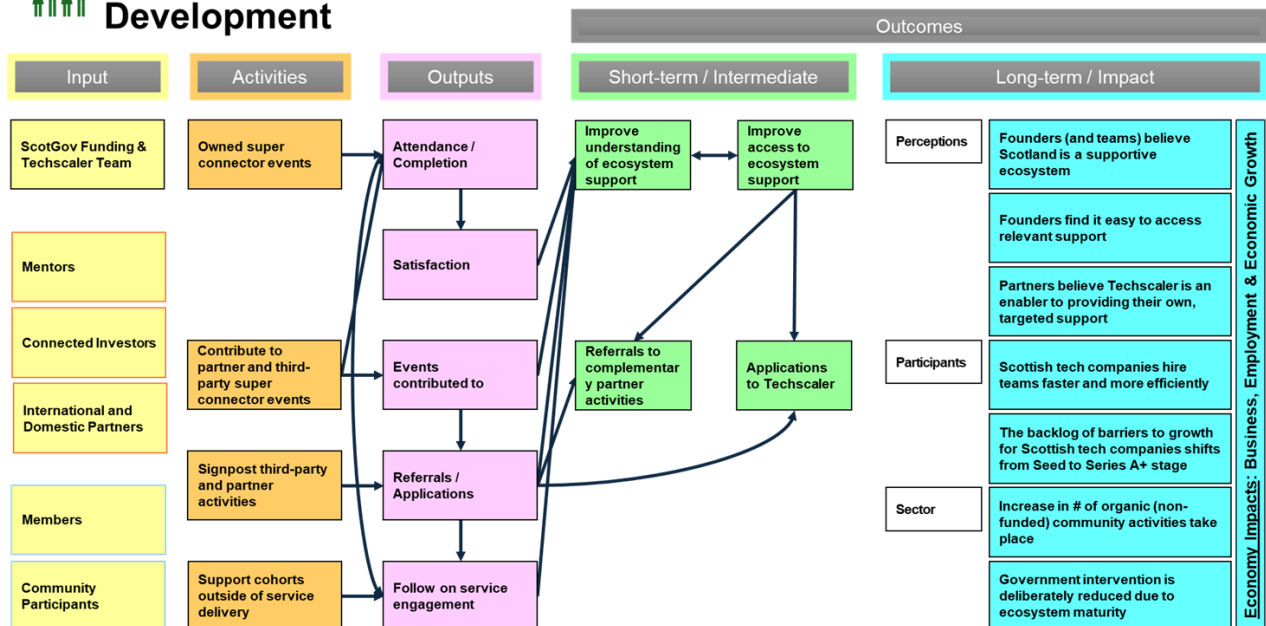
- Increased profile of Scottish tech founders and employees

Overall impact

- Economic improvement through business growth, employment growth, and increased economic activity



Foster Social Infrastructure Development



Alternative Text for the Foster Social Infrastructure Development Figure.

This figure presents a logic model describing how the **Foster Social Infrastructure Development** pillar of the Techscaler programme progresses from **inputs**, through **activities** and **outputs**, toward **short-term and intermediate outcomes**, and finally to **long-term impact**.

1. Inputs (resources enabling this pillar)

- Scottish Government funding and the Techscaler team
- Mentors
- Connected investors
- International and domestic partners
- Members
- Community participants

These inputs provide the foundation for supporting relationship-building, networking, and ecosystem engagement.

2. Activities (what the programme delivers under this pillar)

- Owned super-connector events, organised directly by Techscaler
- Contributions to partner and third-party super-connector events, including participation and support
- Signposting to third-party and partner activities, ensuring founders and teams can navigate the ecosystem
- Supporting cohorts outside of direct service delivery, such as community groups or peer programmes

These activities focus on strengthening networks, relationships, and founder access to broader ecosystem support.

3. Outputs (immediate results of activities)

- Attendance and completion of events and related activity
- Satisfaction with events and engagement

- Events contributed to, representing collaboration with external partners
- Referrals and applications, including directing founders to partner programmes or to Techscaler services
- Follow-on service engagement, such as continued participation in events or related support pathways

Outputs reflect direct engagement with the ecosystem-building activities.

4. Short-term / Intermediate Outcomes (changes expected early on)

Improved understanding and access

- Improved understanding of ecosystem support
- Improved access to ecosystem support

Strengthened connections

- Increased referrals to complementary partner activities
- Increased applications to Techscaler

These outcomes show early evidence that founders and teams better understand the ecosystem and can access relevant opportunities more easily.

5. Long-term / Impact Outcomes (changes expected over time)

Perceptions

- Founders and teams view Scotland as a supportive ecosystem
- Founders find it easier to access relevant support
- Partners believe Techscaler is an enabler of targeted support

Participants

- Scottish tech companies hire teams faster and more efficiently
- Backlog of barriers to growth shifts from early-stage (e.g., Seed) to later-stage (e.g., Series A+)
- Increased Scottish tech company valuations

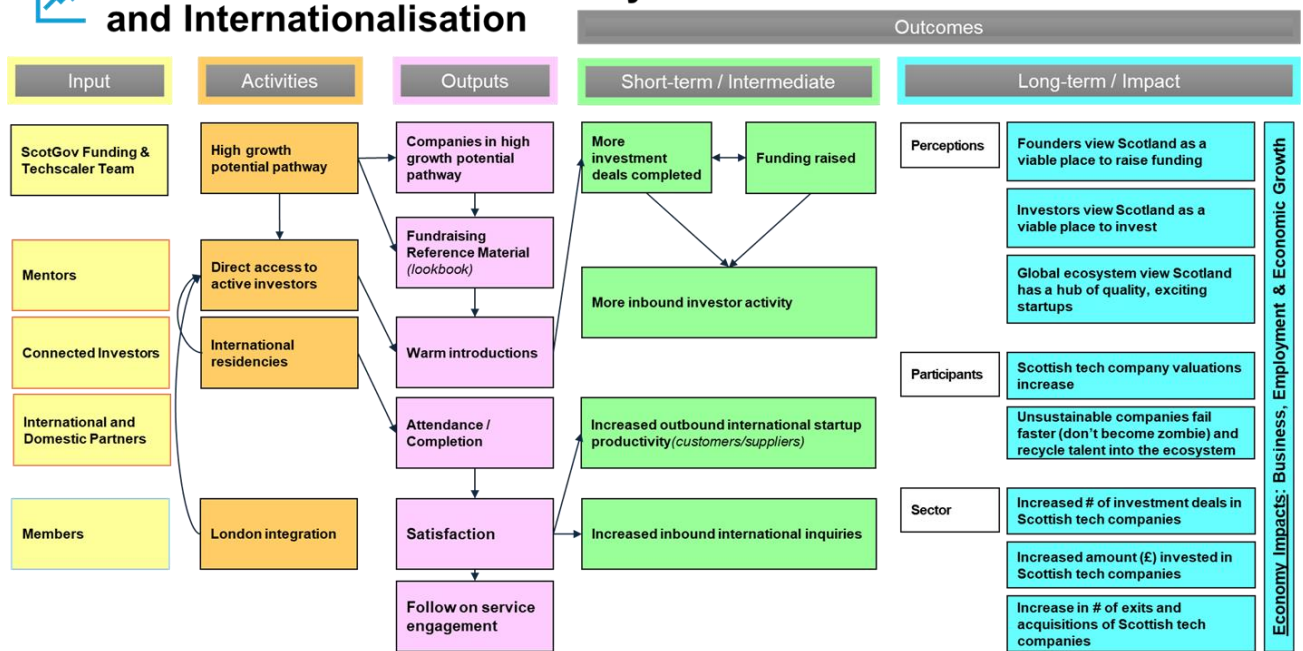
Sector

- Increase in the number of organic (non-funded) community activities
- Government intervention reduces over time due to ecosystem maturity

Overall Impact

- Stronger sector-wide conditions for startup and scaleup success
- Increased business creation, employment, and long-term economic growth

Increase Investor Connectivity and Internationalisation



Alternative Text for the Increase Investor Connectivity and Internationalisation Figure.

This figure presents a logic model showing how **the Increase Investor Connectivity and Internationalisation** pillar of the Techscaler programme progresses from **inputs**, through **activities** and **outputs**, toward **short-term** and **intermediate outcomes**, and finally to **long-term impact**.

1. Inputs (resources supporting this pillar)

- Scottish Government funding and the Techscaler team
- Mentors
- Connected investors
- International and domestic partners
- Members

These inputs enable delivery of activities that support investor access, international engagement, and scaling company pathways.

2. Activities (what the programme delivers under this pillar)

- High-growth potential pathway for companies showing strong development potential
- Direct access to active investors, enabling tailored interactions
- International residencies, placing founders in global tech ecosystems
- London integration, connecting founders to the UK's largest investment hub

These activities strengthen relationships between founders, investors, and international markets.

3. Outputs (immediate results of activities)

- Companies in the high-growth potential pathway
- Fundraising reference materials, such as lookbooks
- Warm introductions between founders and investors

- Attendance and completion of investment-focused activities
- Satisfaction with investor and internationalisation activities
- Follow-on service engagement, including continued support after initial interactions

Outputs indicate engagement with investor access and international mobility initiatives.

4. Short-term / Intermediate Outcomes (changes expected early on)

- More investment deals completed
- Funding raised
- More inbound investor activity, including interest from new investors
- Increased outbound international startup productivity, such as new customers or supplier relationships abroad
- Increased inbound international inquiries, showing global interest in Scottish startups

These outcomes indicate stronger investor connections and early capital mobilisation.

5. Long-term / Impact Outcomes (changes expected over time)

Perceptions

- Founders view Scotland as a viable place to raise funding
- Investors view Scotland as a viable place to invest
- The global ecosystem views Scotland as a hub of high-quality, exciting startups

Participants (companies and founders)

- Increase in Scottish tech company valuations
- Unsustainable companies fail earlier (instead of stalling), recycling talent back into the ecosystem

Sector

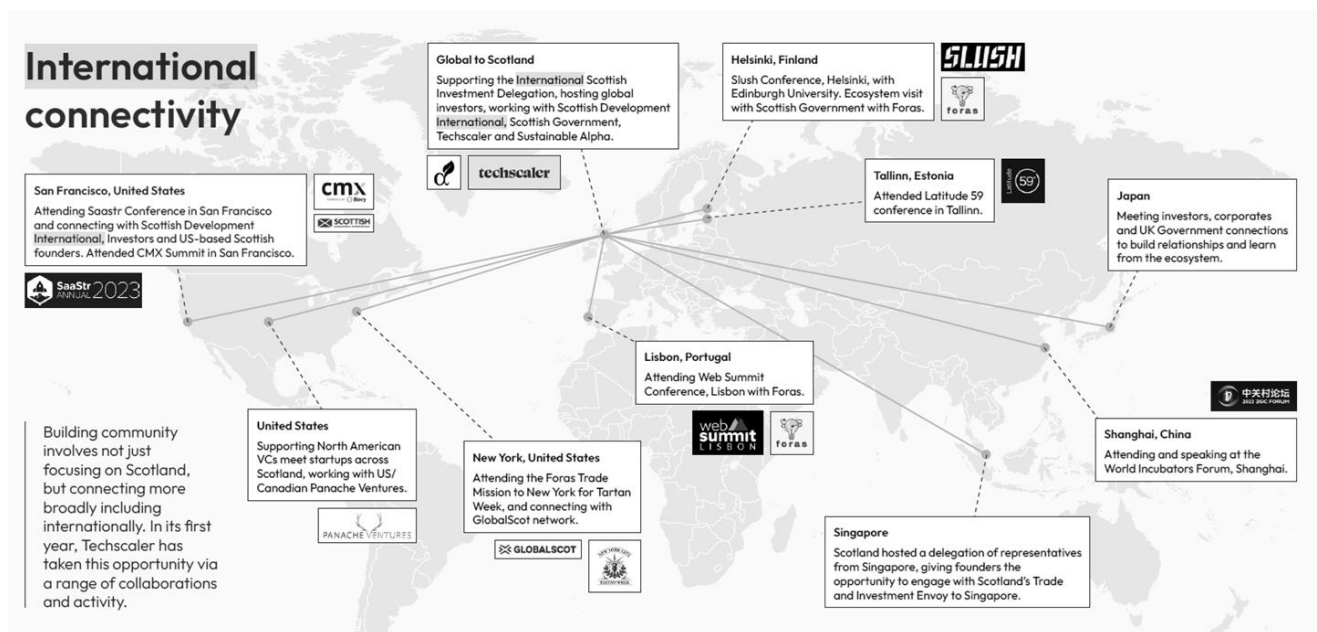
- Increased number of investment deals in Scottish tech companies
- Increased amount of investment raised into Scottish companies
- Increase in exits and acquisitions within the Scottish technology sector

Overall Economic Impact

- Business growth, job creation, and increased economic activity across Scotland

Source: Scottish Government and CodeBase, Techscaler Summary Logic Model.

Appendix G: International connectivity



Source: Techscaler Annual Report 2024

Alternative Text for the International Connectivity Map.

This figure summarises the international connectivity activity undertaken through the Techscaler Programme. It lists key global locations where Techscaler has engaged with investors, founders, partners, conferences, and international delegations.

San Francisco, United States

- Techscaler attended the SaaStr Conference in San Francisco, connecting with Scottish Development International, investors, and US-based Scottish founders. Techscaler also attended the CMX Summit in San Francisco.

United States (general)

- Techscaler supported North American VC-meet startups across the US and Canada, working with US and Canadian investor network Panache Ventures.

New York, United States

- Techscaler attended New York Tartan Week and connected with the GlobalScot network.

Global to Scotland

- Techscaler supported the International Scottish Investment Delegation, hosting global investors in Scotland in collaboration with Scottish Development International, the Scottish Government, Techscaler, and Sustainable Alpha.

Helsinki, Finland

- Techscaler participated in the Slush Conference, alongside Edinburgh University and Foras. Activities included an ecosystem visit with the Scottish Government.

Tallinn, Estonia

- Techscaler attended the Latitude 59 conference.

Lisbon, Portugal

- Techscaler participated in the Web Summit Conference in Lisbon, working with Foras.

Singapore

- Scotland hosted a delegation of representatives from Singapore, giving Techscaler founders the opportunity to engage with Scotland's Trade and Investment Envoy to Singapore.

Japan

- Techscaler met with investors and corporates to build relationships and exchange knowledge about the ecosystem.

Shanghai, China

- Techscaler attended and spoke at the World Incubators Forum in Shanghai.

Purpose statement from the figure

- Techscaler's international activity demonstrates how building community involves not only focusing on Scotland, but also connecting globally. In its first year, Techscaler pursued this through a range of collaborations and international engagements.

Appendix H: Technical impact assessment

This appendix provides additional detail on the data and methodology used to carry out the EIA and then includes additional results for the EIA including outliers and incorporating forecast impacts. We have provided a high-level guide to support readers' understanding of technical terms and concepts referred to within this section.

Economic indicators and coefficients

A summary and description of the (quantitative) economic indicators used within the assessment is provided below:

- **FTE jobs** – used to measure the direct annual employment effects within the supported member companies that have or will be created. FTEs are based on average sector coefficients linking GVA to FTEs. We have developed the following coefficients and have matched them on a case-by-case basis to each supported beneficiary based on their reported SIC codes from Companies House. Where SIC data was not available an average coefficient based on all supported members was applied (see **Table H.1**).
- **GVA** – is a measure of economic output that considers the value of goods and services produced before allowing for depreciation or capital consumption. At a micro-level GVA is the contribution of each individual producer, industry or sector to the economy and measures the income generated by businesses after the subtraction of input costs, but before costs such as wages and capital investment. The evaluation has found that Techscaler has had a positive effect on productivity and is assessed as the forecast uplift in economic output per supported member. GVA has been calculated based on the reported turnover uplift and converted into GVA using sector average co-efficient ratios using data sourced from official government statistics³⁶ (see **Table H.1**). The ratios are applied to the turnover generated by each supported member on a case-by-case basis.

Table H.1 summarises the economic coefficients used. Note that economic multipliers are also included as they are calculated based on the same SIC matching exercise.

³⁶ ONS and BEIS.

Table H.1: Economic coefficients

SIC Codes	Instances	Turnover/ GVA ratio	GVA per FTE	Turnover Multiplier	GVA Multiplier	Employ- ment Multiplier
18	1	0.42	£43,088	1.61	1.64	1.52
26	1	0.33	£65,814	1.50	1.68	2.20
58	7	0.50	£55,632	1.58	1.56	1.25
59	2	0.38	£30,203	1.45	1.62	1.56
62	31	0.68	£98,665	1.48	1.41	1.45
63	3	0.52	£45,852	1.48	1.41	1.38
70	7	0.59	£75,740	1.59	1.64	1.50
71	2	0.47	£95,569	1.61	1.59	1.50
72	2	0.47	£69,436	1.75	1.99	2.03
74	2	0.59	£45,549	1.57	1.57	1.44
75	1	0.71	£39,760	1.41	1.35	1.17
82	2	0.61	£50,678	1.53	1.54	1.31
85	1	0.59	£24,815	1.53	1.43	1.27
90	2	0.54	£30,702	1.47	1.60	1.29
93	1	0.62	£22,028	1.62	1.69	1.25
96	3	0.55	£26,063	1.34	1.26	1.24
21/72	1	0.58	£141,994	1.56	1.64	2.03
32/58/6 2/74	1	0.56	£79,031	1.54	1.53	1.41
47/53/6 3/82	1	0.50	£41,287	1.55	1.51	1.34
47/58/6 2/63	1	0.49	£57,343	1.51	1.45	1.33
56/85	1	0.55	£22,313	1.55	1.48	1.25
58/59/7 3	1	0.60	£63,911	1.48	1.53	1.38
58/62	3	0.59	£77,148	1.53	1.48	1.35
58/62/8 2	1	0.60	£68,325	1.53	1.50	1.33
58/74	1	0.55	£50,590	1.58	1.56	1.34

SIC Codes	Instances	Turnover/ GVA ratio	GVA per FTE	Turnover Multiplier	GVA Multiplier	Employ- ment Multiplier
59/79/85	1	0.47	£48,245	1.49	1.56	1.49
62/70	2	0.64	£87,202	1.53	1.53	1.47
62/71	1	0.58	£97,117	1.54	1.50	1.47
62/72	1	0.57	£84,050	1.61	1.70	1.74
62/72/76	1	0.57	£84,050	1.61	1.70	1.74
62/74	2	0.64	£72,107	1.52	1.49	1.44
62/85	2	0.63	£61,740	1.51	1.42	1.36
70/72	1	0.53	£72,588	1.67	1.82	1.76
70/85	1	0.59	£50,277	1.56	1.54	1.39
72/74	1	0.53	£57,492	1.53	1.78	1.73
74/82	1	0.60	£48,114	1.56	1.55	1.37

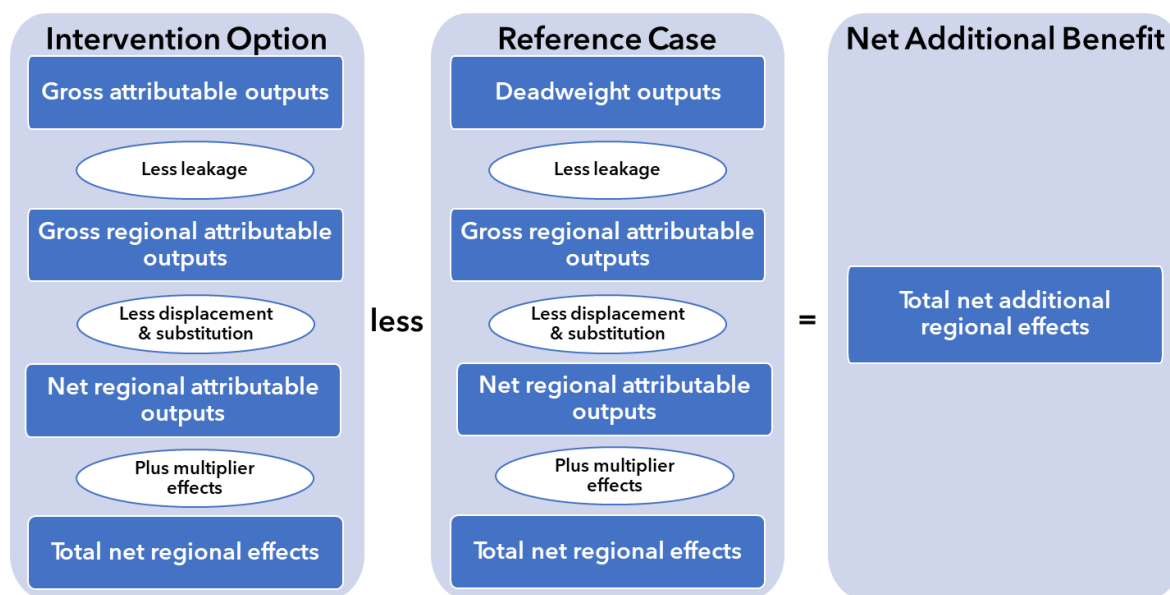
Where SIC codes were not available, average coefficients based on the rest of the sample were used – the average coefficients are as follows:

- Turnover to GVA ratio: 0.59.
- GVA per FTE: £71,260.
- Turnover Multiplier: 1.52.
- GVA Multiplier: 1.51.
- Employment Multiplier: 1.44.

Gross and net impacts

- **Gross impacts** – the direct impacts that measure the overall change in economic activity that has occurred over the 10-year appraisal period.
- **Net additional impacts** – is the difference between what would have happened anyway in the absence of the Techscaler Programme (that is, the reference case) and the impacts/benefits generated by the support (that is, the intervention case), adjusted for displacement, leakage, deadweight, and multiplier effects:
 - deadweight refers to the benefits and costs of an intervention that would still have occurred if support was not provided.
 - the impact that growth within supported members is estimated to have on other businesses and the labour market (displacement).
 - the proportion of impacts that will benefit those outside the defined spatial area (leakage outside Scotland).
 - the positive spin-off benefits generated through income and supplier multiplier effects (that is, paying suppliers and salaries).

Figure H.1: Calculation of net additional benefits



Other technical considerations

- **Present Values (PV)** – the total quantified value of the costs and net additional GVA over a defined timescale taking account of the time value of money (that is, £1 today is worth more than £1 next year). Impacts are discounted at the HM Treasury Social Time Preference Rate (3.5%).
- **Constant Prices** – the total quantified value of the costs and net additional GVA adjusted for inflation (that is, increases in costs and turnover are due to real growth and not inflation). Financial values are set at the base year 2024/2025. Impacts occurring in 2023/2024 and economic coefficients (where specified) are adjusted to 2024/2025 prices using data from the ONS GDP Deflator³⁷.
- the **Impact Profile** is considered on an annual basis for a 10-year period from when a supported member either first accessed support or was expected to form a company to allow for the accrual of impacts. Members were first supported in 2023/2024 and the latest formation of a company is expected in 2026/2027. Therefore the time horizon for impacts runs from 2023/2024 to 2034/2035. This recognises that there may be considerable periods of time elapsed before impacts emerge. The EIA therefore reports on impacts that have been generated to date as represented in Chapter 7 (2023/2024 to 2024/2025) and that are forecast to occur in the future up to 2034/2035.
- **Optimism Bias** is the demonstrated, systematic tendency for ex-ante EIAs to be overly optimistic in forecasting outcomes (for example, time taken to implement interventions, costs of implementation, and impacts achieved). The method for applying optimism bias is described in Forecast Impacts section below.

³⁷ UK GDP Deflator.

- **Grossing Up and Confidence Intervals** – in order to calculate the overall impact of Techscaler it is necessary to ‘gross up’ the results to reflect the population of supported organisations. The impact data that is captured through the survey sample are ‘grossed up’ to the entire population based on the inverse of the proportion responding to the survey (for example, a response rate of 20% generates a grossing up factor of $100\%/20\% = 5$.)

To date impacts including outliers

As noted in Chapter 7, the dynamics of an innovation ecosystem often produces a small number of companies who greatly outperform their peers and may themselves be considered outliers. Therefore, an additional analysis with the single “to date” outlier included in the “grossing up” process has been carried out with gross economic impacts and net additional economic impacts presented in **Tables H.2** and **H.3**, respectively.

Table H.2: Gross impacts – to date – including outlier

Turnover (£m)	GVA £(m)	FTE jobs	Job years
£206	£149	1,030	2,070

Source: Survey Data

Note: Jobs rounded to nearest 10. Turnover and GVA rounded to the nearest £1 million.

Table H.3: Net additional economic impacts – including outlier

Net additional economic impacts	Turnover (£m)	GVA £(m)	FTE jobs	Job years
Net direct	£30	£20	140	270
Indirect (supply chain effects)	£8	£5	30	70
Induced (spend effects)	£10	£6	30	60
Total net additional impact	£51	£30	200	400

Source: Survey Data

Note: Jobs rounded to nearest 10 and GVA and turnover to nearest £1million.

Forecast economic impacts

The EIA presented in **Chapter 7** considered economic impacts that have occurred to date (2023/2024 and 2024/2025). This analysis extends the EIA to cover forecast years up to 2034/2035. The methodology for quantifying impacts is identical to that described in the main report, however there are several further methodological steps taken when considering forecast impacts.

These are outlined below.

Attribution

The assessment of attribution considered reported attribution, level of engagement with Techscaler and other support programme accessed. For forecast impacts the temporal dimension is also considered with attribution declining in subsequent years following Techscaler engagement. This has been applied of the following basis.

Table H.4: Temporal attribution adjustment

Years after engagement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Attribution adjustment	100%	97.5%	95%	92.5%	90%	87.5%	85%	82.5%	80%	77.5%

Optimism bias

Optimism bias is applied to counteract the tendency for survey respondents to be overly optimistic about future impacts. The application of optimism bias represents a reduction in the reported forecast impacts.

It has been applied on a case-by-case basis and considers the following data points:

- stage of company – ideation/early-stage or growth/scaling.
- live product on the market – yes or no.
- level of investment/funding raised for growth/scaling companies. It is assumed that the level of investment must be over £100,000 to have an impact.

Table H.5 summarises the different rates of optimism bias applied based on the above criteria. The number of observations within the sample of supported members who meet each criteria for optimism bias are also specified.

Table H.5: Optimism bias rates

Criteria	Live product	Investment	Rate	Observations
Ideation/early-stage	Yes	N/A	50%	11
Ideation/early-stage	No	N/A	60%	33
Growth/scaling	Yes	Yes	20-30%	2
Growth/scaling	Yes	No	40%	7
Growth/scaling	No	Yes	45%	1
Growth/scaling	No	No	50%	2

Overall, the average level of optimism bias was 54%.

Business failure rates

A newly or recently formed business – ideation/early-stage members – are subject to new business failure rates. It is expected that within the startup and scaleup landscape many businesses will fail, and consequently fail to generate the forecasted impacts.

If there is a strong tech scale up ecosystem, this is not necessarily to the detriment of the technology sector as it allows for entrepreneurs to learn and re-engage with new business ideas that may be more successful in the long run. We apply Scotland’s Survival Of Newly Born Enterprises³⁸ data to all ideation/early-stage members to simulate the proportion of business which are expected to fail. Note that after year 5, we assume a constant survival rate. **Table H.6** presents these rates.

Table H.6: Survival of newly born enterprises 2018 to 2022

Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Years 5-10
100.0%	95.2%	75.3%	59.0%	48.1%	39.8%

Outliers and grossing up

As the data has been ‘grossed up’ based on a sample population we have included a Confidence Interval (CI) to include additional sensitivity. Prior to grossing up, outliers are removed. Defined as being more than two standard deviations away from the mean forecast impacts, when considering the longer-term, 10-year impacts, 5 outliers have been identified.

Based on a sample size of 64 and population of 643, at a 95% confidence level, the confidence interval (or margin of error) is +/- 12%. The impact data has therefore been calculated and presented at a lower-point and upper-point estimate.

The ‘low-point’ and ‘high-point’ estimates reported in the tables below have been calculated by applying the (+/-12%) Confidence Interval to the ‘mid-point’.

Gross forecast impacts

The forecast gross impacts are presented in **Table H.7**. These represent sample impacts that have been “grossed up” to the population. They are also the “midpoint estimate” in that no margin of error has been applied.

³⁸ Business demography, UK: 2023. Table 4.1 - Survival Of Newly Born Enterprises Region By Births And Their Survival For 2018 To 2022. Accessed [here](#).

Table H.7: Gross impacts – forecast

Turnover	GVA	FTE Jobs	Job Years
£6,651	£3,882	6,030	60,280

Source: Survey Data

Note: Jobs rounded to nearest 10. Turnover and GVA rounded to the nearest £1 million.

Net additional forecast impacts

Applying the additionality factors of deadweight, displacement, leakage and supply chain and income effects as well as optimism bias and business failure rates to the gross impacts yields the Net Additional Forecast Impacts. These are presented in **Table H.8** below.

Table H.8: Net additional forecast impacts

Net additional forecast impacts	Turnover (£m)	GVA (£m)	Job Years	FTE Jobs
Low	£230	£132	2,230	220
Baseline	£253	£145	2,460	250
High	£276	£158	2,690	270

Source: Survey Data

Note: Jobs rounded to nearest 10 and GVA and turnover to nearest £1million.

Economic efficiency and effectiveness

We have considered the value for money and return on investment (RoI) over the appraisal period considering both to date impacts (as presented in Chapter 7) and forecast impacts (as presented above). This is measured through:

- cost per job – the total net additional annual FTE jobs set against the total input costs (treated for Present Values).
- impact investment ratios – net additional GVA impacts set against the total input costs (treated for Present Values).

Cost per job

To date (up to 2024/2025) Techscaler has achieved a cost per job of £101,120 – while this is very high, it reflects the significant upfront investment from the Scottish Government and the time lag to generate impact.

By 2030, the cost per job is estimated at c. £8,750 – this is a very positive return, and we would note that it is in line with what we would expect for a startup and scaleup support intervention for high technology intensive companies.

Return on investment

Cost per job is simply a measure of inputs set against outputs, and when considering the wider value, particularly of a programme that is targeted at supporting high value/growth activity and reducing the productivity gap, it is important to consider the 'economic value' of these jobs. The RoI measures the wider economic value of these jobs (GVA) – the key Government measure for economic growth.

Table H.9 provides an assessment of the impact-ratios (return on investment) that Techscaler is forecast to deliver.

Table H.9: Forecast return on investment

Forecast return on investment	To Date GVA	Forecast GVA	Total GVA	Costs	Impact Ratio
Low	£16	£132	£148	£24	6.28
Base	£18	£145	£163	£24	6.91
High	£19	£158	£178	£24	7.55

Over the 12-year appraisal period it is forecast that Techscaler will generate a RoI between 6.28 and 7.55. This means that for every £1 invested in the programme it will generate an additional £6.28 to £7.55 in net additional GVA within Scotland.

Appendix I: Post 2024 changes to delivery

Introduction

This appendix provides some information on changes made to the Techscaler Programme post 2024. While these changes are not in scope of the early evaluation they do provide useful context. This is for illustrative purposes only and is not meant to be a comprehensive list.

Education programmes

In Year 3 of the programme, Startup Basics has been pivoted by CodeBase into Techscaler Discovery. The main changes to Startup Basics that have been put in place to create Techscaler Discovery fall into three main areas:

- who it is for: Startup Basics used to be for anyone that wanted to know about startups. Techscaler Discovery is really focused on members at ideation stage (that is, people who have an idea that they are at the beginning of exploring).
- what it covers: all content that was in Startup Basics, plus new information on mindset, solution discovery, prototype building, value proposition, AI, fundraising and IP.
- where it is: Startup Basics used to be on Mighty Networks but this was making it increasingly difficult for CodeBase to provide a good user experience, so Techscaler Discovery is now on Notion.

The Startup First Steps and Startup Next Steps education programmes have since been condensed by CodeBase into a single hybrid early-stage 10-week long accelerator course – Techscaler Catalyst – offering guided progression aligned to founder stage, pace, and ambition. Similar to Next Steps, Catalyst utilises hybrid delivery with some sessions in-person and others online. Key elements of Techscaler Catalyst include:

- from learning to doing – introduces a hackathon alongside hybrid workshop delivery, ensuring founders apply learning each week to build tangible outcomes – prototypes, traction, and funding strategy. Pre-work materials prepare founders in advance, creating more space for activity and discussion during sessions.
- embedded mentor and ecosystem access – integrates visiting entrepreneurs and partner drop-ins to provide tailored advice and connections across legal, funding, and technical domains – embedding Scotland’s wider ecosystem directly into the founder journey.
- adaptive, iterative framework – enables founders to pivot between tracks or re-enter at later stages, supporting the non-linear realities of early-stage startup building and ensuring continued alignment with founder needs.

The Spring 2025 cohort commenced on 3rd April 2025 and the course offered two tracks, comprising:

- Iteration track – for founders pursuing sustainable growth, or those unsure of their preferred pathway.
- Sprint track – for founders focused on pressurised growth.

Based on learning, the second Catalyst cohort which commenced on 2nd October 2025 has three tracks to better reflect founder intent, including:

- Raise (former Sprint track) – for founders looking to raise significant investment capital (venture capital/ high-growth route).
- Grow (former Iteration track) – for founders making progress and looking at sustainable/ organic growth.
- Refine (new track) – for those founders who are still very early stage and may have dropped out before (early-validation/ pivot stage).

Other changes made for the second cohort include:

- stronger visiting entrepreneur integration – visiting entrepreneurs now host one-to-one onboarding sessions to tailor content and provide ongoing account management and scouting for standout startups.
- broadened funder engagement – Raise track includes Investing Women Angels, Ventures Lab, and Scottish Enterprise, alongside venture capitalists one-to-one sessions, giving high-potential startups a richer view of funding routes and wider ecosystem connections.

Post 2024 CodeBase renegotiated its contract with Reforge to allow 'seat swaps' throughout the year, widening access to the platform without increasing spend. CodeBase brought the playbooks to businesses at growth and growth-potential stage, enabling them to embed expert ways of working earlier in their journeys, to power their teams, and free their attention from 'training' during the most crucial stages of accelerated growth. CodeBase report that this change saw a three-fold increase in Techscaler member activity on the Reforge platform one-month post-pivot.

The Techscaler Programme has specifically partnered with University of Edinburgh and University of Glasgow on a pilot programme called AI Discovery (which CodeBase delivered). AI Discovery is a nine-week programme designed to help postgraduate researchers in Scotland become startup founders. Backed by the two universities and NHS Scotland, the programme connects participants with the tools, mentors, and networks they need to turn research into real-world impact.

CodeBase has worked with the University of Edinburgh on the [Venture Builder Incubator](#) (which University of Edinburgh is delivering). The Venture Builder Incubator aims to empower aspiring entrepreneurs from Scotland's universities to start or grow their tech business. Bridging the gap between research and entrepreneurship, Venture Builder Incubator provides the tools, skills, and support to transform a Deep tech or data-driven idea into a thriving startup. The Venture Builder Incubator predates the Techscaler Programme – CodeBase report that this partnership has enabled rollout to other universities.

As well as introducing partnership offerings specific to AI and Deep tech. Further, CodeBase report that more flexible learning experiences will be provided on key problem areas through micro-cohorts activities, asynchronous content, and as a core pillar of events activity making it easier for founders to access this content while managing their business.

An internal mid-term review of the Funding Accelerator pilot undertaken by CodeBase (June 2025) identified lessons learned which have been used by CodeBase to inform follow-on support. Based on learning and experience of the pilot, CodeBase has now launched the Venture Network which will allow growth and scaling companies to join for specific sessions that meet their requirements, rather than running this as a cohort programme. In practice this may mean having different cohort requirements based on identifying founders at different stages/requirements (for example, Deep tech or medtech cohort, raising 7 figures versus 6 figures, angel funding-only). It has been highlighted that a cohort-based approach enables the founder-to-founder support and comradery that builds stronger outcomes and learning, but that a long programme at fixed time points through the year does not always enable founders to access the support at the time or stage that they most need it.

Mentorship

In 2025 CodeBase has:

- introduced new systems and automations, including a stage-relevant credit system to standardise support, and automations to streamline booking.
- separated mentorship entry from onboarding, and shifted focus toward more one-to-one support for growth and scale-stage businesses while replacing some early-stage one-to-one capacity with one-to-many group mentorship to increase reach and efficiency.
- been exploring ways to increase the diversity of the mentor pool.

Hubs

As at November 2025, there are now eight physical hubs (with the addition of Dumfries) across seven regions and eight pop-up hubs.

Investor connectivity and internationalisation

CodeBase is continuing to expand the Techscaler international programme. Techscaler Japan took place in April 2025, Silicon Valley took place in October 2025, and Singapore in November 2025. CodeBase is also looking at potential new locations for international programmes.

Other developments

Other ways the support is evolving includes for example:

- entrepreneurs in residence support – dedicated support to help tech companies scale faster through personalised mentoring, strategic guidance, and ecosystem connections, etc.
- launch of Venture Network programme.
- a new hub strategy.
- a new stakeholder engagement strategy.



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