

Masterclass: Fundraising in Africa

WEE Deal Accelerator – Oct 2025



Agenda for today's funding masterclass

1 Welcome and Introduction

5 minutes

2 Technical session

40 minutes

3 Q&A discussion

40 minutes

4 Wrap up

5 minutes



Founder Masterclasses

Purpose

Strengthen core business and fundraising capabilities through focused, expert-led learning sessions

Founder Masterclasses aim to...

- Provide practical, action-oriented workshops relevant to all founders in the Deal Accelerator
- Draw on learnings from investor engagement and ecosystem research
- Blend expert input and peer learning
- Complement individual investment readiness support

Funding

Friday, Oct 31

How to prepare and succeed in fundraising

More detail on next slide

Pricing (TBC)

November

Designing and communicating pricing for growth

TBC

December

**Under discussion:
Options include leadership for scale or partnerships for expansion**

Founder Masterclasses' intended outcomes will aim to...

- Build confidence and capability in fundraising and other core startup questions
- Address recurring capability gaps across founders
- Contribute to a sustainable founder capacity-building model for future accelerators

This session's guidelines



First half of the session will be recorded



Stay on mute unless speaking to minimize background noise



Feel free to send questions in the chat or raise your hand to ask throughout



Raise your hand during Q&A if you would like to ask a question

Speaker introduction



Katie Hill

Associate Director & Partner, BCG

Katie is an Associate Director & Partner at BCG with over 20 years of experience in climate finance, emerging markets investing, and renewable energy

Katie co-leads the Green Growth Acceleration (GCA) initiative for Africa and has led several venture-focused programmes, including the FCDO Deal Accelerators and JICA Start-up Ecosystem Initiative for the past 2+ years

Previously, Katie launched Apple's Clean Energy Programme, co-led a \$2.5B green bond issuance, and directed off-grid energy investments for Acumen in Africa and India. She holds an MBA and MS in Environmental Engineering from Stanford University

Speaker introduction



Simon Harford
Partner & Director, BCG

Simon is a Partner and Director at BCG with over 30 years of experience in investment, climate finance, and impact across global and African markets

He was the founding CEO of GEAPP, a \$1.5B initiative accelerating renewable energy in emerging markets, and previously served as Co-Head for Africa at Actis, a leading global growth investor

Earlier in his career, Simon held senior roles in aviation and investment banking, including founding several airlines in Europe and Africa. He holds an MBA from INSEAD and a BA in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics from the University of Oxford

Objective |
Walk through
the 4-step
approach to
successful
fundraising

01

Develop your fundraising strategy



Katie Hill

02

Identify the right investors



Simon Harford

03

Prepare investor materials




Katie Hill

04

Engage with investors



Simon Harford



Objective | Walk through the 4-step approach to successful fundraising

01

Develop your fundraising strategy

- Quantify the funding required to reach your strategic milestones
- Determine the optimal capital stack (e.g., equity, debt, and when to raise)

02

Identify the right investors

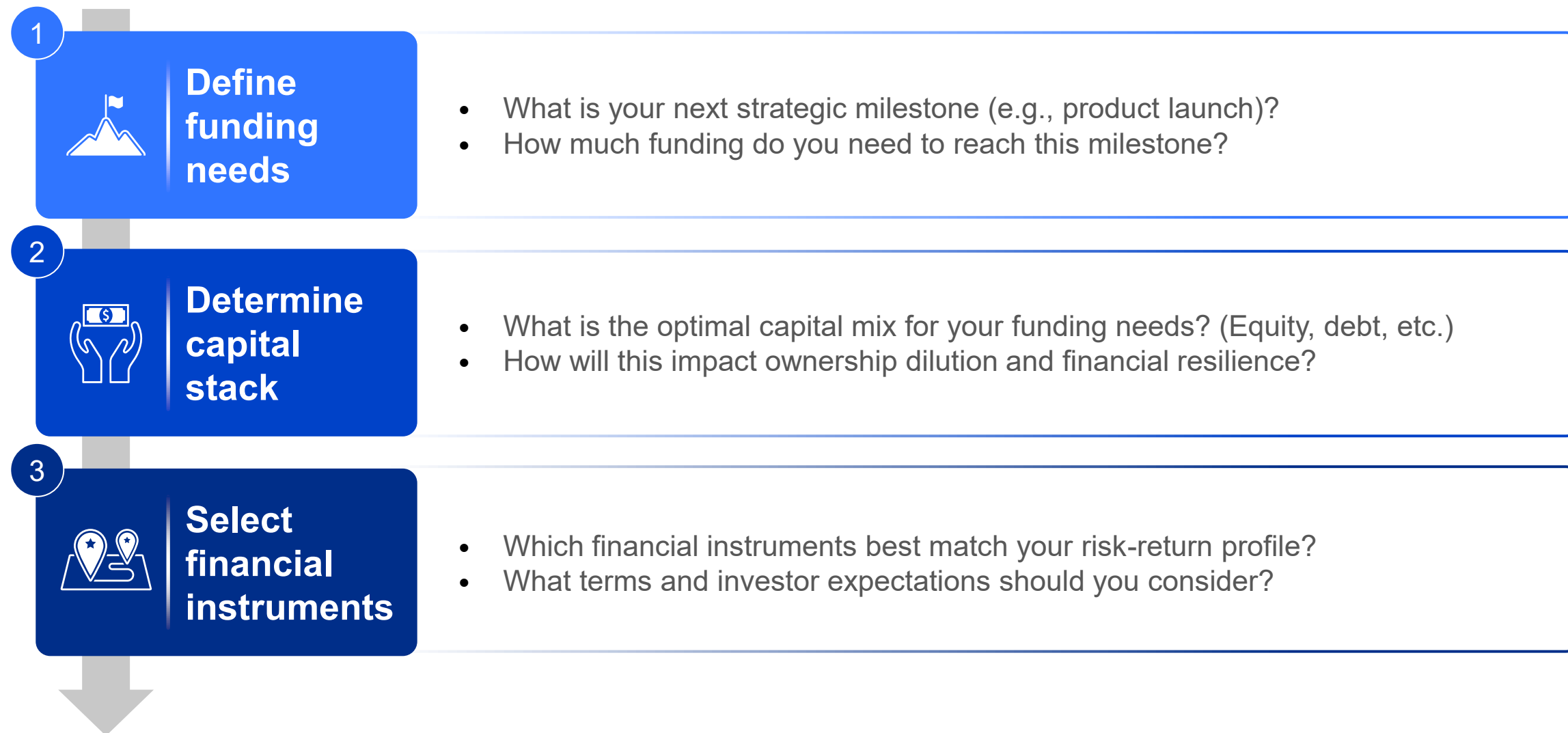
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Prepare investor materials

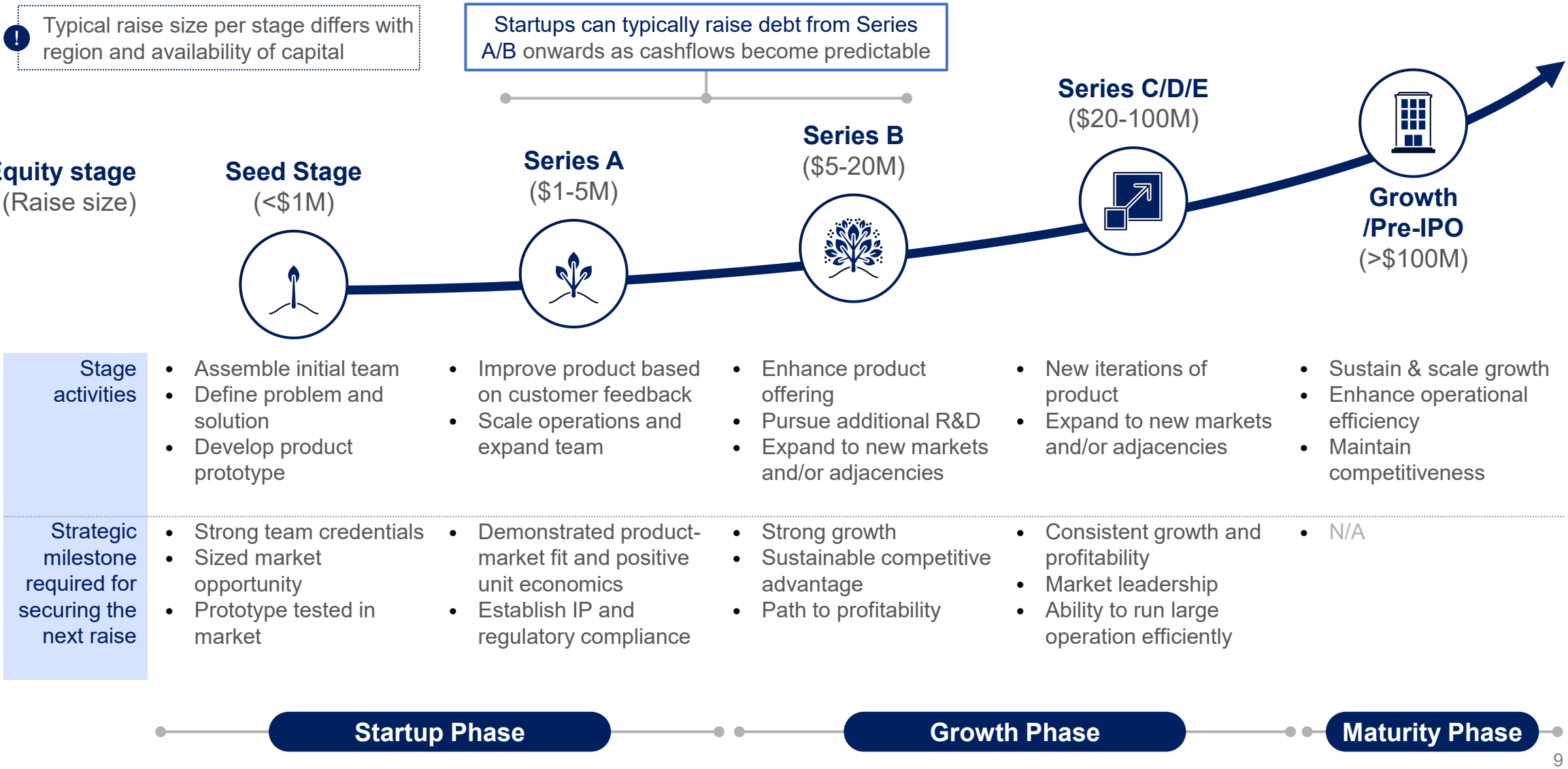
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Engage with investors

Strategy development | To build a winning strategy, determine your funding needs, structure capital effectively, and choose the right financial instruments



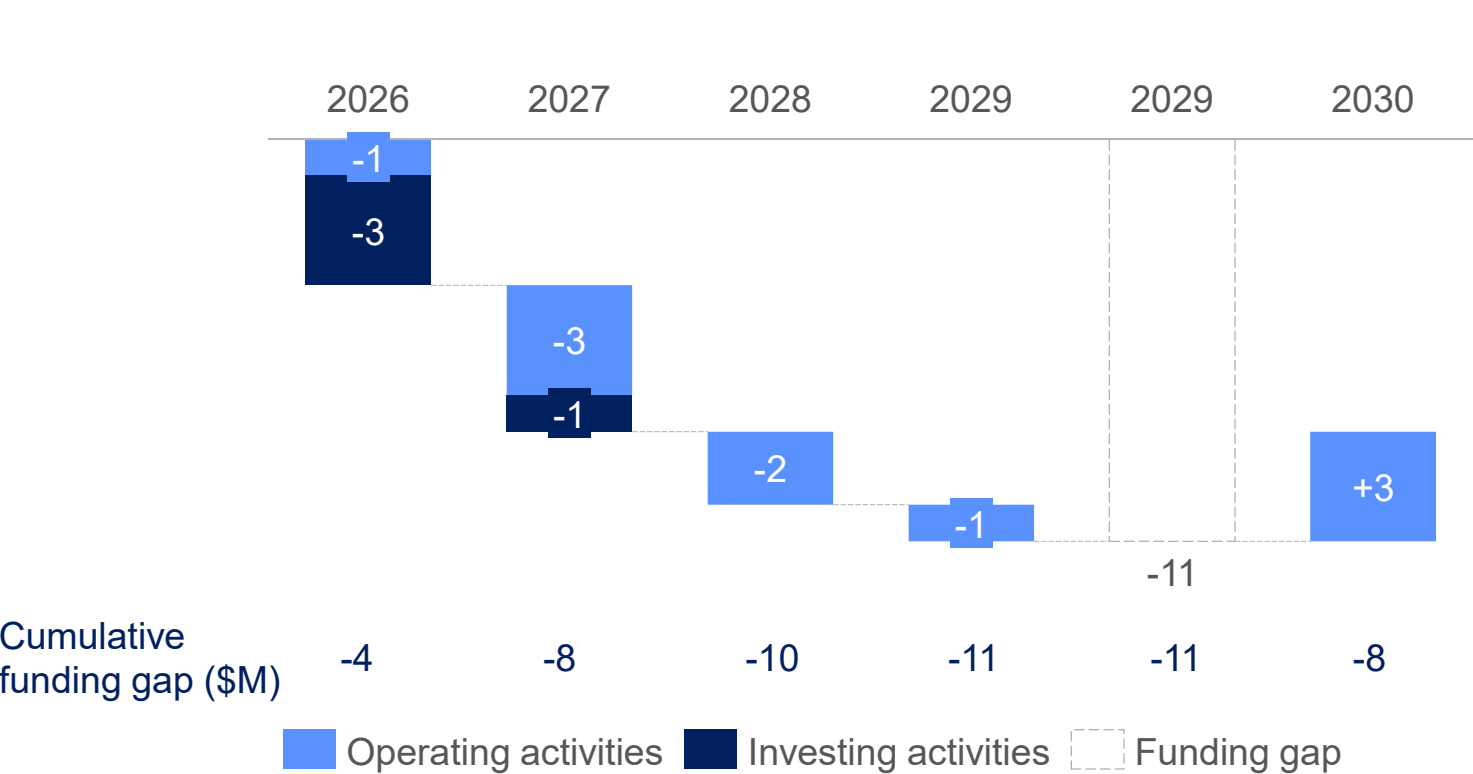
Strategic milestones | Determine your key milestones for each stage and the funding needed to achieve them



Funding gap | Assess your funding gap based on how much and when capital is needed to bridge shortfalls, reach key milestones, and achieve profitability

Example | Startups raise capital to close the funding gap

Cashflow breakdown by year by activity (\$M, 2026-2030)



Commentary

The funding gap is derived from the **cumulative cash flows** from operating and investing activities

- The financial model must reflect the business plan for reaching strategic milestones

In this example, between 2026 and 2029 \$11M in capital (grant, debt, or equity) will be needed to bridge cash shortfalls

2025-2027: The company initially raises equity to cover the initial investment and operational losses

2028-2029: The company can raise venture debt to avoid ownership dilution and extend runway until profitability is achieved in 2030

Capital stack | When designing your capital stack, consider the right mix, cost, and timing of capital to optimize financial outcomes

The optimal capital stack provides the financing necessary to execute on operating and investing activities, while trading-off different objectives within a set of financing and practical constraints

Design the capital stack through the following choices... ... to optimize outcomes for the company ...



Capital mix (deep-dive next slide)
Distribution of capital across grants, (junior) debt, and equity



Minimise Weighted Average Cost of Capital (WACC)
Lowering the overall cost of capital increases returns and financial sustainability



Target valuations
Targeted revenue multiple used at each equity raise



Adjust raise planning to suit investors at different stages
Ensure sufficient room for valuation increase for future investor attractiveness as well as exit opportunities for existing investors



Debt terms and timing
Assumed interest rate, payback period, and repayment schedule per debt type



Maximise project implementation speed
Some types of capital deployments take longer and can hinder implementation speed

....**Within a set of project financing, debt-related and practical constraints**....

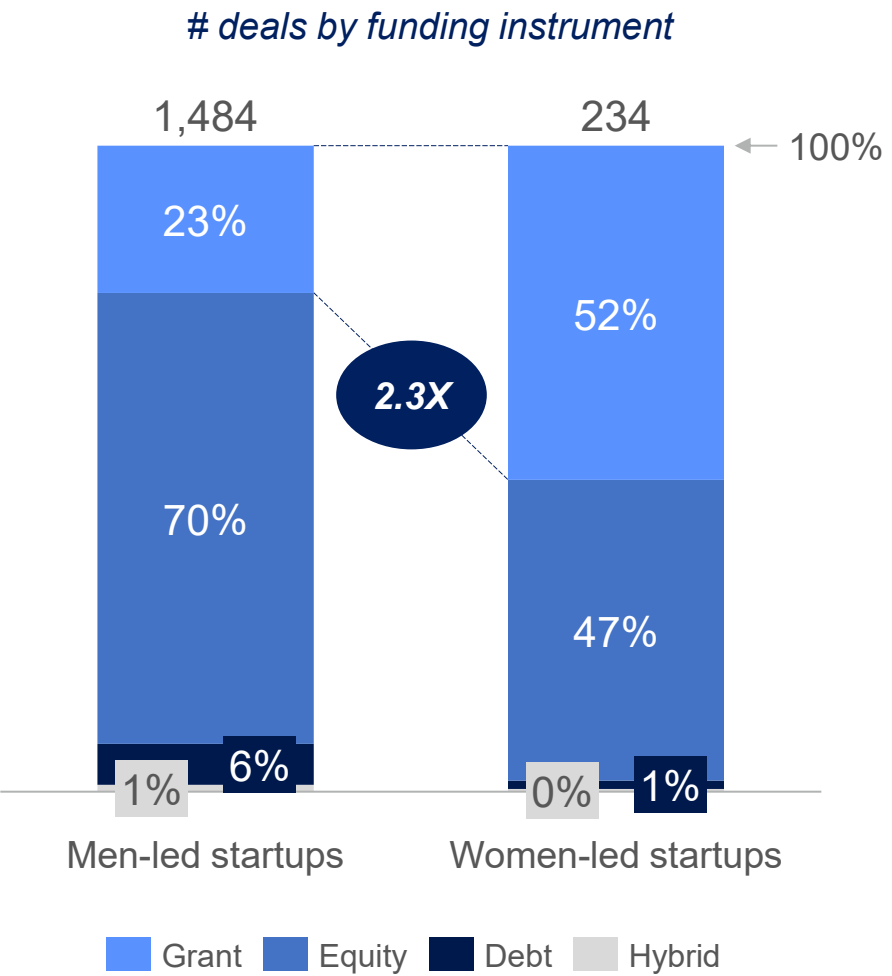
- Sufficient cash reserve by EOM
- Buffer of First-Loss Capital
- Debt Service Coverage Ratio (DSCR)
- Debt-to-Equity Ratio
- Limitations to likely capital deployment in Africa

Financial instruments | Common funding types early-stage founders pursue are equity, debt and grants – each with different risks and suitability considerations

	Dilutive Funding	Non-dilutive Funding	
	Equity (from venture capital)	Debt (from traditional loans)	Grants
Repayment Obligation	No repayment, but investors expect high returns (via exit sale or IPO)	Must repay loan with interest , regardless of revenue	No repayment, but may have impact/reporting requirements
Funding Amount	Can be high ; depending on business potential (typically up to \$5M for Series A)	Varies ; depends on creditworthiness & collateral	Smaller amounts ; usually small to mid-sized (\$10k - \$500k)
Ease of Access	Difficult ; long pitching process and investor due diligence	Moderate ; quicker if you have revenue/assets, but approval needed	Very difficult ; highly competitive and application-heavy
Founder risk	Low risk ; If business fails, investors take the financial loss	High risk² ; loans must be repaid even if the business fails	No risk ; but may have usage restrictions on funds like approved expenses, timeframe
Best for	High-growth startups (tech, SaaS ¹ , etc) needing large-scale funding	Revenue-generating businesses (typically Series A+) with assets for collateral	Very early-stage startups ; esp. with research/innovation and social impact focus
Top tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Raise only after key milestones (e.g. product-market fit) to justify higher valuation and avoid early dilution➤ Valuations depend also on VC market conditions; in VC downturns, consider waiting or using other funding (e.g. debt)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Use debt to extend your 'runaway', avoiding an immediate equity round and maintaining valuation leverage➤ Use debt as short-term solution to bridge costs before a larger funding round	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Grants can be useful when validating an idea or building a prototype before seeking venture capital or debt financing➤ Winning a grant can validate your startup, helping secure a higher valuation when raising VC funding later

1. SaaS = Software as a Service; 2. In most countries, company debt differs from personal debt, so founders are generally not personally liable if the business fails - to minimise risk, founders should avoid personal guarantees and have a wind-down plan.

Deep-dive | Compared to men, women tech founders in Africa typically rely more on grants while sometimes struggling to raise debt and equity



The reality is...

Women founders are **2.3x more likely to use grants** to fund their startups

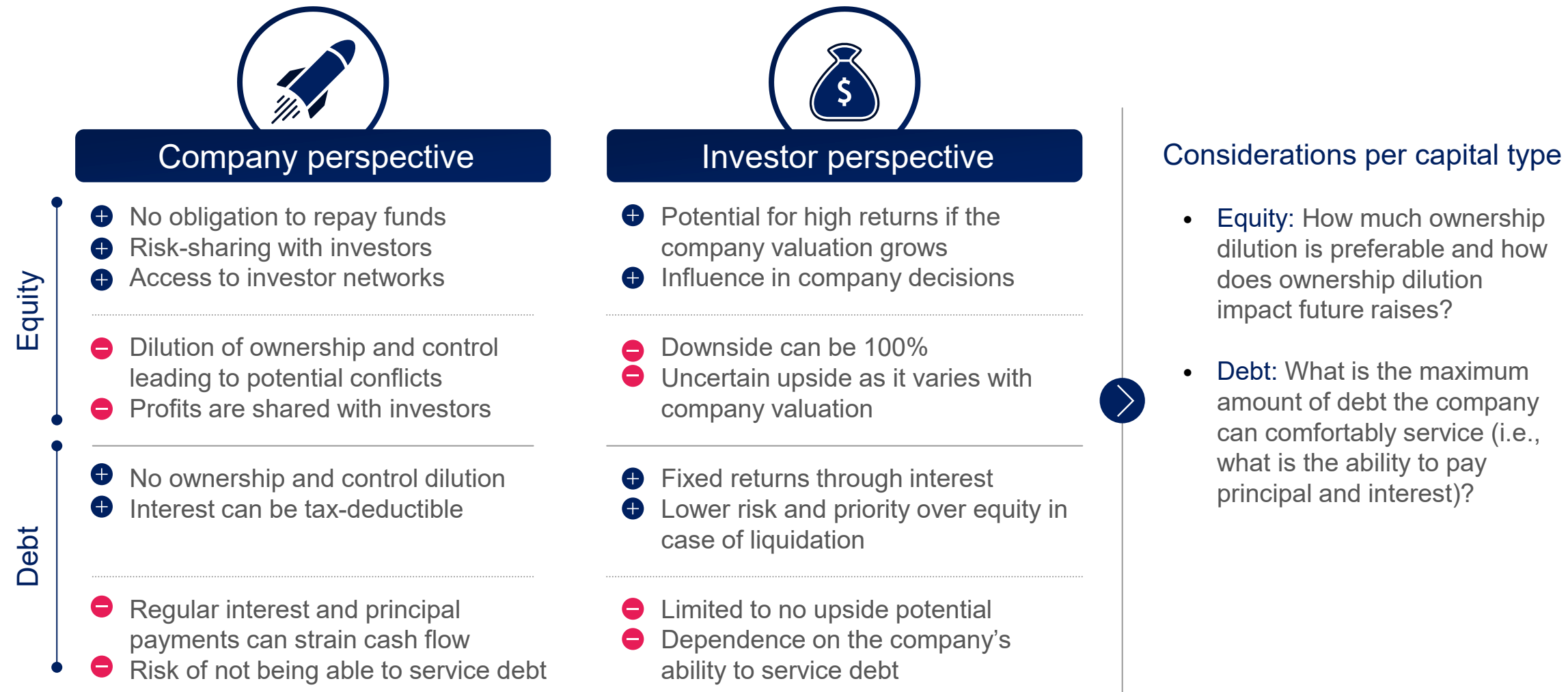
Equity funding goes primarily to men, with women founders **receiving only a fraction of venture investment**


Debt represents <1% of women's funding, potentially due to lack of collateral

What this mean for you

- Go beyond grants**
Grants help start, but commercial investors can fuel long-term growth
- Raise equity with confidence**
Negotiate strong deals and proactively seek scalable funding
- Mix your funding sources**
Explore debt, equity, and grants strategically to build financial flexibility

Equity vs. debt | Consider the dilution and cash flow implications when choosing between equity and debt funding





Objective | Walk through the 4-step approach to successful fundraising

01

Develop your fundraising strategy

02

Identify the right investors

- Determine which investor types provide the required capital mix with a matching risk-return profile
- Understand what different investors types seek

03

Prepare investor materials

04

Engage with investors

Fundraising trends | The fundraising landscape for African climate startups is evolving rapidly, creating both unpredictability and opportunity



Funding decline & resilience



- Despite a >20% decline in total funding for two consecutive years, investor interest in Africa remains strong showing signs of resilience, with 188 startups securing at least \$1M in 2024



Growth in climate funding



- Despite a decline in total funding, African climate startups are securing a growing share, now making up 32% (2024) of total investment driven by rising investor interest in sustainable ventures



Africa's debt access challenges



- Despite emerging financing solutions, Africa faces a significant credit gap, with Sub-Saharan Africa having the lowest domestic credit availability (22% of GDP)
- Startups struggle with high debt costs (5-6pp above similar markets), strict collateral requirements, and limited cash flow lending










Grants in African Development



- Official Development Assistance (ODA) grants contribute over +\$150B to Africa in 2018-2021, with health (30%) and government (30%) sectors receiving the largest share highlighting
- However, ODA is facing significant cuts from major donors, creating a projected \$35–50B funding gap with widespread implications across the development ecosystem

Investor types | There are 7 common types of funders in the African landscape

Non-exhaustive						
						
Friends and family	Multi-lateral & grant funders	Impact investors	Venture capital	DFIs ¹	Commercial lenders	Private equity funds
Provide early informal capital based on personal trust rather than business performance, often with minimal due diligence or structured terms	Offer grants or in-kind support for early-stage or non-commercial ventures with strong social outcomes but limited revenue potential	Invest in businesses that aim to deliver both financial returns and measurable social or environmental impact, often accepting moderate returns in exchange for mission alignment	Invest equity in high-growth startups in return for a minority ownership stake and future upside	Support impactful businesses with longer horizons and lower return expectations than commercial investors	Provide loans to companies with repayment capacity, typically secured by interest and principal terms	Invest in mature businesses by taking significant positions to drive scale, efficiency, and profitability

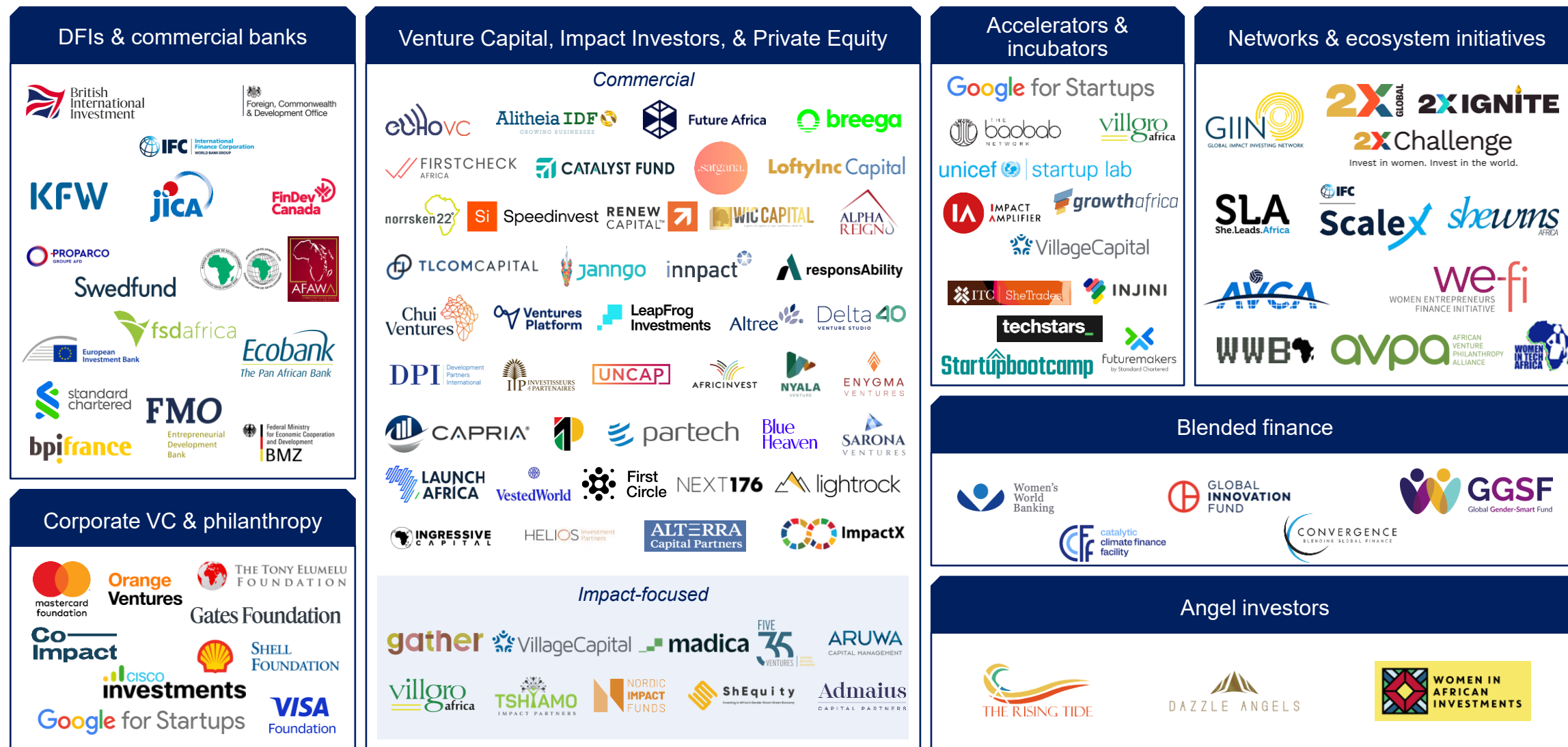


Increasing company maturity


















1. Development Finance Institutions

Investor landscape | There is a wide variety of investors with different priorities to explore across the investor types

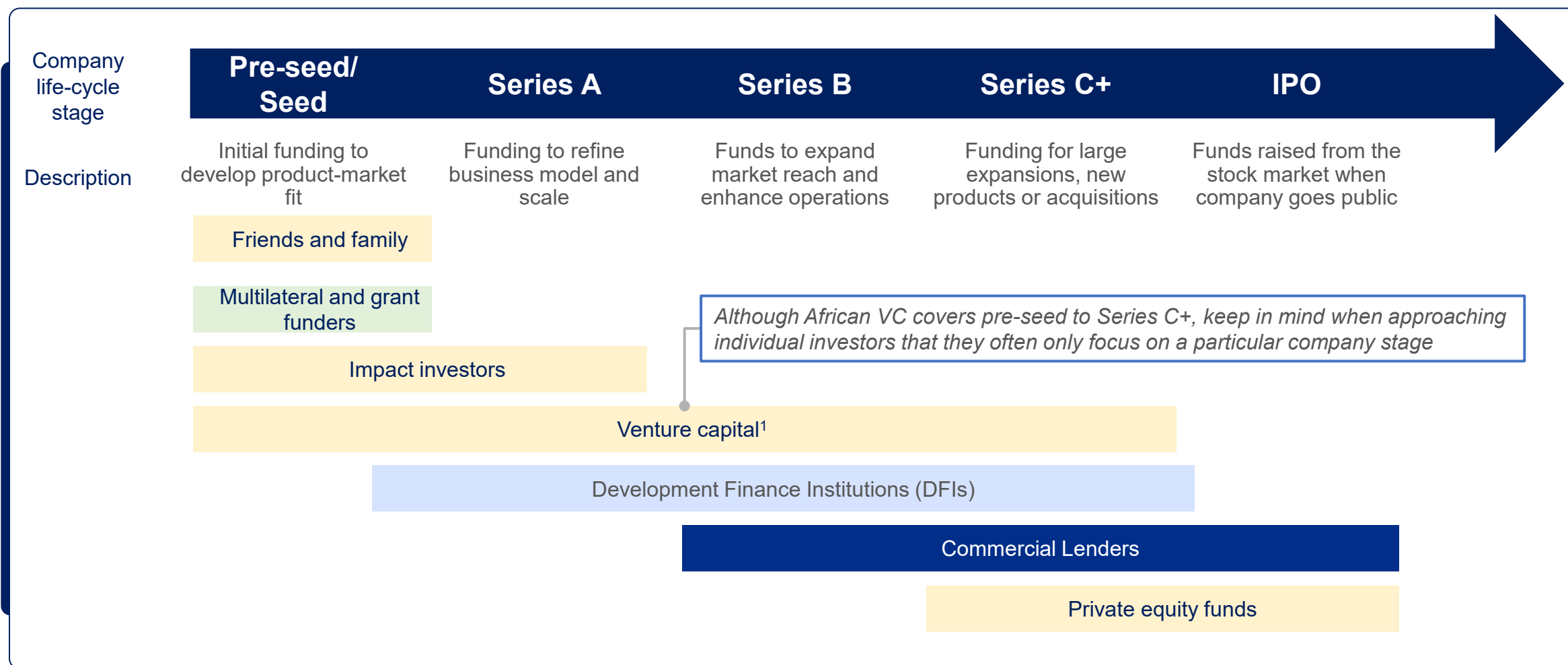
Non exhaustive



Characteristics | Target investors that align with your investment thesis, funding type and exit timelines

							
	Friends and family	Multi-lateral & grant funders	Impact investors	Venture capital	DFIs¹	Commercial lenders	Private equity funds
Investment Thesis	Provide early informal capital based on personal trust	Fund social-impact initiatives that drive long-term change	Fund businesses that deliver measurable impact alongside returns	Back high-growth, high-potential startups with clear return paths	Invest in impactful private sector projects with commercial potential	Finances stable, revenue-generating businesses	Acquire controlling stakes in mature businesses to drive value creation
Funding Type	Informal equity and unsecured funds	Grants	Equity, concessional debt, or blended capital	Equity	Equity, Debt, concessional loans	Commonly debt financing	Large equity investments
Growth expectations	Minimal or none-based on personal support rather than financial return	Long-term systemic impact	Balanced – financial returns alongside measurable impact	Rapid scaling and significant market share	Measurable financial and developmental returns	Reliable revenue streams	Operational improvement potential
Exit timelines	No formal expectations, often open-ended	No typical defined exit	~5-10 years, aligned with impact goals and financial sustainability	~5-10 years typically via IPOs and M&A	~10-15 years for equity and structured payment for loans	Set repayment schedules	~5-10 years typically via Strategic sales or IPOs
Illustrative examples		 	 		 	 	

Investee stage | As investors prefer to invest in specific stages of a company's lifecycle, choose an investor type that aligns with your stage



1. Includes impact-focused VC, such as Acumen
Source: Investopedia, Prior BCG experience

Mainly grants

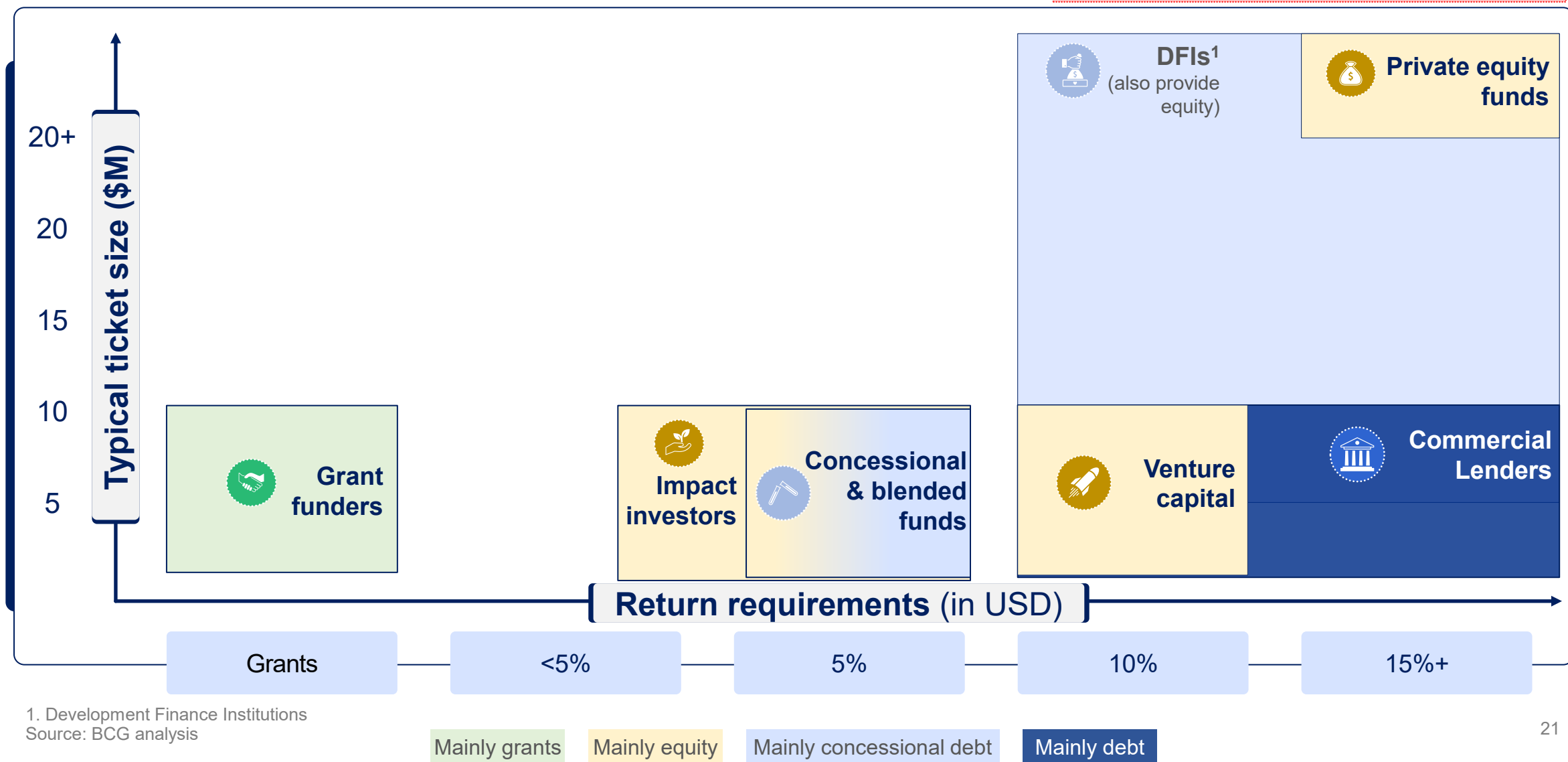
Mainly equity


Mainly concessional debt

Mainly debt

Ticket size and return | Ensure the potential return from an investment in your company aligns with an investor's return requirement

! Data to be treated as directional and generalization





Objective | Walk through the 4-step approach to successful fundraising

01

Develop your fundraising strategy

02

Identify the right investors

03

Prepare investor materials

- See the deal through the investors' eyes
- Craft a clear story highlighting traction and potential
- Ideate how to determine the right valuation
- **Debt investors:** Tailor the pitch book focusing on reliable cashflows, collateral, and financial resilience
- Determine due diligence documentation, and how to prepare

04

Engage with investors

Equity story | Having a clear fact-based narrative outlining the value potential of the company is the foundation for all investor communication

What is an equity story



Clear, fact-based narrative that communicates the company's strengths, market position, and growth potential to investors



Addresses key investor concerns, minimising surprises and aligning your business plan with their expectations

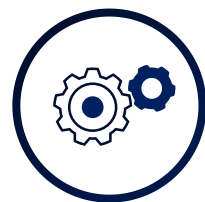


It is the foundation of all investor communications, from pitch books to presentations, especially during funding rounds or exits

How to build a compelling one



Anchor in data and insight to establish credibility and showcase a deep market understanding



Tailor the narrative to match investor priorities, emphasising growth potential, market opportunities, and long-term value potential. Sufficiently **emphasise impact** to concessional investors (e.g., DFIs)



Continuously refine by **pressure testing** and **iterating the equity story** based on investor feedback

Equity story – Elements | A comprehensive equity story contains proof points on the market opportunity, competitive position, track record, and business plan



Substantial and growing addressable market

- Size of Total Addressable Market, Serviceable Addressable Market and Serviceable Obtainable market
- Historical and projected growth for core and expansion markets
- Market trends underpinning market growth projections
- Favourable regulatory environment (if applicable)



Strong competitive positioning, supported by sustainable competitive advantage

- Current market share & share development
- Unique value proposition
- Proof of competitive advantage (e.g., IP, brand, or network effect)
- Customer loyalty and retention



Proven track record through historical performance

- Revenue growth (incl. split in volume vs. price, and showing proportion of recurring revenues)
- Achieved operational and technical milestones
- Positive unit economics and path to profitability
- Leadership and management quality and team capabilities



Well-supported business plan

- Short, medium and long-term ambitions incl. planned expansions with key milestones
- Plan for identifying and mitigating risks
- Planned use of funds
- For strategic investors: Potential for synergies between company and investor



For impact investors: High impact across climate, job creation, and Women Economic Empowerment

- Jobs and resilient livelihoods created
- High share of female employees, disproportionately benefiting women, or female founding team
- Measurable climate mitigation and/or adaptation and resilience impact (e.g., CO2 emissions avoided)

Equity story – Example | Example of substantiation points per bucket



Sizable and growing addressable market

- Robust Demand: [Region/Country]'s [sector] is projected to grow at [X% CAGR] by 20XX, driven by rising [consumer trends/policy mandates]
- Market Gap: Local supply constraints + import reliance create a significant underserved market
- Favourable Market Factors: Supportive government policies, trade regulations, and cost advantages (e.g., local production vs. imports)

123

Strong competitive positioning, supported by sustainable competitive advantage

- Differentiated Offering: [Company] utilises [proprietary tech/IP or unique process] that lowers cost and/or improves efficiency compared to competitors
- Strategic Partnerships: Partnerships with [local suppliers / distributors] ensure reliable operations and scalable distribution networks



Proven track record through historical performance

- Early Commercial Traction: [X,000 units sold / \$X million in revenue] and [X%] repeat customers highlight product-market fit
- Demonstrated technology feasibility and reliability over [X,000 hours] of operation or [X years] in market
- Financial Milestones: Achieved positive [EBITDA margin / net profit] since [year/quarter], indicating scalable unit economics



Well-supported business plan

- Phased Expansion: A clear roadmap for growth across [phase 1 to phase n], with realistic timelines and budget allocations
- Risk Management & Structuring: Diversified offtake agreements, secured raw material supply, and mitigation strategies for macro-economic risks (inflation, FX, commodity prices)





High Impact for ESG/Impact Investors

- Economic Development & women empowerment: Generates direct/indirect jobs in [sector], benefiting underserved regions & [high % of female employees or leadership], fostering inclusive growth
- Climate & Environmental Benefits: Reduces [carbon emissions/deforestation] or substitutes [more polluting alternatives]

Recap |

A pitch book is an easier-to-understand version of your equity story and entails 6 core elements

-  **1 Company purpose** Define the business and the problem it addresses so investors clearly understand the proposition
-  **2 Market opportunity and landscape** Quantify the market size and growth potential to show investors the scale of upside
-  **3 Business model** Describe how revenue is generated and scales to demonstrate profitability and defensibility
-  **4 Performance and traction** Present evidence of adoption and revenue growth to validate market demand for investors
-  **5 Team** Detail the leadership's capabilities and track record to give investors confidence in execution
-  **6 Investment ask** Specify the capital required and milestones it will fund to provide investors visibility on value creation

Debt investors | Debt investors focus on downside risk and, therefore, the pitch book should contain more proof points on risk management when raising debt

What debt providers care about



Ability to repay debt



Resilience in face of external shocks



Ability to recover value in case of default

Practical proof points to prepare

- Prepare well-substantiated financial model forecasting revenues, profit, and cash flows
 - Highlight key financial metrics, such as the Debt-Service-Coverage-Ratio and Debt-To-Equity ratio
 - Highlight long-term contracts or recurring revenue to assure lenders of consistent cashflows
-
- Pro-actively present a sensitivity analysis showing the impact of different scenarios (e.g., interest rates) on the company's performance
 - Highlight mitigation strategies for the following risks: currency, inflation (specifically energy and feedstock price increases), and economic downturn
 - Highlight diverse customer and supplier base
 - Show emergency cash reserves and access to credit lines for liquidity during downturns
-
- Provide overview of collateral (e.g., assets) and evidence of collateral value and liquidity
 - Ensure legal documentation proves asset ownership
 - Include signed agreements from third-party guarantors, personal or corporate guarantees
 - Showcase insurance products, like credit insurance, to cover defaults or political risks

The VC perspective¹

Investments are based on the “power law”

VCs expect one or two unicorns to return their fund; so every deal is judged on its' potential to generate \$1B

Doing investments is largely “vibe” based

Investments are made based on belief in the founder more than the company

Goal is to have a share of final company

Targets is having 10-20% of future unicorn, independent of current valuation

Valuation is mostly “whatever VC can get away with”

Investors want to offer as little as possible without souring relationship

And what it means to you

Frame billion-dollar path

Clearly explain why you can be a unicorn, generally as part of SAM/TAM

Prove founder and team strength

Investors back teams who can deliver on big ambition; founders' background and scale proof-points are critical

Raise size signals ambition – if reasonable

Need to explain why you are raising and link it to clear milestones, more is not always better but can signal ambition - consider raising for a longer runway to use this

Let VC make first valuation move





There's little upside to stating your valuation. A lower amount minimises the investment amount while a higher amount appears out-of-touch

1. Based on interviews with VCs, refinement ongoing

Nevertheless, **always have a data-backed valuation** in your pocket;
helpful during **investor negotiation**

Valuation methodologies | Three valuation methodology best apply for earlier stage companies

Preliminary

 Valuation method	 Description	 How it applies to earlier-stage companies	 How it applies to later-stage companies
VC Method	Work back from a realistic future exit, based on investors' return goals and projected revenue to set current valuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use-case: when companies lack steady revenues; investors back-solve from a future exit valueKey inputs: size of potential exit, expected ownership after dilution, growth milestones, and time to liquidityLimitations: highly assumption-driven; small shifts in exit or timing can swing valuation multiples dramatically	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use case: becomes a cross-check to test if an exit still delivers target returnsKey inputs: realistic forecasted revenue, exit multiple benchmarked to peers, and exit route (IPO/M&A)Limitations: adds little insight once cash flows are predictable; mainly sanity validation vs. DCF or comps
Comparables	Apply peer multiples to your matching metric (revenue/EBITDA) and adjust for size and liquidity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use case: when there's some traction but limited profits; investors apply peer multiples to estimate valueKey inputs: early revenue, user growth, retention, and margins; plus benchmark EV/revenue multiplesLimitations: private-market data is noisy; hard to find truly comparable scale, geography, or model	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use case: primary market benchmark once the company has consistent revenue and EBITDA visibilityKey inputs: public and M&A comps, revenue and margin trajectory, efficiency ratios (EBITDA margin, CAC payback)Limitations: multiples compress quickly with slower growth / weaker margins; less room for narrative upside
First Chicago / DCF ¹	Combines three DCF scenarios (downside, base, upside) by assigning probabilities and averaging their values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use case: when there's early revenue visibility but still uncertainty; investors assess probable scenariosKey inputs: forecasted sales growth, take-rate, CAC and payback period, scenario weightings, and burnLimitations: sensitive to forecasting quality; wide error range if milestones or conversion rates unproven	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use case: core intrinsic value tool once cash flows are predictable; used to test value creation vs. capital useKey inputs: multi-year free-cash-flow forecast, WACC, terminal growth/exit multiple, reinvestment assumptionsLimitations: can overstate precision; depends heavily on discount rate and long-term growth assumptions

1. Discounted Cash Flow

Valuation methodologies | There are tradeoffs with each methodology; comparables can complement other methodologies and build credibility

Valuation methodology	Required inputs	Pro-s	Con-s
VC Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projected revenue at exit Target return multiple Planned raise Target investor stake Allowance for future rounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligns with how early-stage rounds are priced Ties valuation to raise size / ownership Light data burden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terminal value derived from other methods Requires credible comparables
Comparables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiples from peer set Current revenue / EBITDA Projected revenue / EBITDA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy to explain and market references establish credibility Provides strong sanity check against other methodologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good peers can be difficult to find Private data may be thin Cyclical markets and illiquidity require judgmental haircuts
First Chicago	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three scenarios of revenue / exit (downside, base, upside) Probabilities per scenario Valuation method per case 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Captures uncertainty transparently Forces clarity on drivers and anticipated odds Complements other methods in investor discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depends on judgement for scenarios and probabilities Results can vary significantly with small assumption changes


Due diligence documentation | 5 document types to have ready for investor

Preliminary

	Market sizing and growth projections	Historical and forecasted view of market size based on underlying growth drivers
	Competitive position	Overview of you compare against competitors on key purchasing criteria
	Target historical performance	Financial and operational performance, detailing historical drivers in business performance
	Business Plan assessment	Business plan assumptions detailing growth strategy and scenario analyses
	Key risks and mitigation	Synthesis of key risks to business plan, likelihood to occur, and mitigation efforts

Data room best practices

- 1 Have a clear folder structure with descriptive document names and include one document explaining the folder structure
- 2 Ensure documents are latest versions
- 3 Preferably upload PDF documents and not photocopies
- 4 Ensure there is only one copy of each document
- 5 Sweep documents and delete internal comments
- 6 Check for consistency of data across documents
- 7 Models can be dynamic or static dependent on the sensitivity of data and agreement with investor
- 8 Include references in documents
- 9 Potential to include FAQ document with answers to anticipated and previously asked questions



Objective | Walk through the 4-step approach to successful fundraising

01 Develop your fundraising strategy






02 Identify the right investors

03 Prepare investor materials

04 **Engage with investors**

- Determine how to approach investors successfully
- Deliver a compelling pitch
- Determine how to counter gender biases in fundraising
- Understand how to handle investor concerns about risks

Fundraising trends | There are five common ways you can engage with investors, with founders typically benefiting from combining multiple approaches

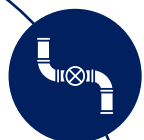
	Do you have a <u>strong network</u> of investors or startup mentors?	Are you a great <u>conversationist</u> ?	Are you comfortable with <u>online visibility</u> ?	Are you great at <u>public speaking</u> ?	Do you lack a strong network, but you have <u>strong traction</u> ?
	 The "warm intro"	 The "event goer"	 The "media personality"	 The "pitch master"	 The "cold outreach"
How this works	Leverage trusted connections to get introduced to investors through your existing network	Build relationships by actively networking at investor-focused events and gatherings	Create investor-relevant content online to grow visibility and attract inbound interest	Refine your storytelling and public speaking to stand out in pitching events & competitions	Directly contact investors with personalised messages
How to do this effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Leverage trusted relationships to get investor introductions ➤ Build rapport first before formally pitching (e.g. casual coffee chats, drinks, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ You need to be proactive & strategic - casual networking without follow-ups won't convert 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Build a personal brand with valuable content that is investor-focused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tell a story that investors can connect with ➤ View every pitch as one practice closer to investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Craft highly personalised outreach emails/messages
Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Relationship-building takes time – introductions don't always translate into investments ➤ Dependent on the credibility of the introducer – a weak intro may not be effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Events can be costly (travel, tickets, sponsorships) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Requires long-term consistency - results don't happen overnight ➤ Sharing too much may raise risks or competition ➤ Hard to track who is genuinely interested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some pitch competitions offer no funding, just exposure ➤ Highly competitive to get selected for big pitch events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Low response rate –most investors ignore cold emails ➤ Time-consuming – you may need to send dozens of messages before getting interest
	Most effective!				



More difficult to get noticed; Deep-dives to follow on how to do these effectively

Warm intros | Women-focused venture studios can facilitate introduction to potential investors, for example

Why investors leverage venture studios?



Continuous women-founder deal flow

Direct and continuous access to a curated pipeline of women-led startups across stages and sectors



High-quality, ready for scale female startups

Sourcing women-led ventures with validated theses, defined go-to-market, measurable traction and executional readiness



Exclusivity and early visibility on deals flow

Accessing advanced insight into ventures still in development, enabling early relationships, and the option to co-invest or lead before public rounds

Priority to introduction for external follow-on capital

Priority to internal follow-on capital with co-investment option

Examples - non exhaustive



Focuses on helping its founders connect easily with best follow-on investors actively deploying in Africa by building credible, high-quality networks of funds



Runs a company-builder program from pre-team/idea stage with hands-on mentoring & first investment check then plugs startups into investors network for further fundraising



Runs a "Circle of Investors" offering de-risked pipeline with matching investment interests, and exclusive deal flow through a monthly digest featuring top tech deals in Africa



Offers introductions to extensive network of follow on debt, equity and grant investors, pitches alongside founders, and shares diligence with co-investors to unlock more capital

There is an opportunity to leverage venture studios as a bridge for investor readiness and facilitating investor introductions



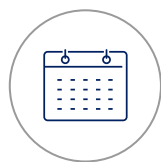
Events | The following top startup events in Africa could significantly enhance your network and open doors to potential investment opportunities

Event	Overview	Location	Upcoming dates	Why attend?
	Focuses on technology and innovation across multiple sectors, including smart cities, cybersecurity, data economy, mobility, healthcare, and telecoms	 Marrakech, Morocco	April 14-16, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45,000+ visitors • 350+ investors • Pitch competition with \$110K prize
	Brings together technology and telecom leaders, entrepreneurs, and policymakers to discuss digital transformation and innovation in Africa	 Cape Town, South Africa	November 10-13, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15,000+ attendees • Strong presence VC and corporate sponsors
	A networking and deal-making event connecting investors, founders, and industry leaders to discuss technology's impact on business in Africa	 Lagos, Nigeria	November 22, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,000+ attendees • 100+ meetings facilitated
	A platform for South African entrepreneurs and startups to connect with investors and industry experts	 Cape Town, South Africa	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,500+ attendees • Over \$3M in media exposure (PR value)
	A startup and innovation event focused on entrepreneurship and technology, bringing together investors and founders from across the region	 Nairobi, Kenya	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,000+ attendees • Includes startup pitching competition

Not an exhaustive list; make sure you also research events/conferences that are relevant to your sector and market



Events | Plan for and show up to events like your business depends on it, because it does



1

Before the event

Research and strategise

Identify key investors attending, research their portfolios, and tailor your pitch to their interests

Craft a powerful elevator pitch

Clearly define your problem, solution, market opportunity, and business model in under 60 seconds

Prepare essential materials

Have a digital/printed pitch deck, and business cards or QR codes linking to your website/contact details

2

During the event

Be proactive & confident

Approach investors directly; don't wait to be noticed. A strong introduction can set the right tone

Show understanding of investors

Show understanding of their investment focus by asking insightful questions like, *"What industries are you currently excited about?"*, etc

Leverage different formats

Participate in panels, roundtables, or informal gatherings where investors are more relaxed and approachable

3

After the event

Follow up promptly & personally

Send a personalised email or LinkedIn message referencing your conversation, attaching your pitch deck if requested

Nurture relationships over time

Engage with investors' content on LinkedIn and update them on your startup's milestones, even if they don't invest immediately

Seek warm introductions

If an investor isn't interested, ask for recommendations within their network to explore other potential funding opportunities



Media | Founders who have a strong online brand and actively share their journey find it easier to secure investor interest

Investors don't just invest in ideas – they invest in people.

A strong personal online brand can make the difference between an investor taking a meeting or ignoring your pitch.

A visible, credible presence on LinkedIn, Twitter, and other industry platforms signals that you are **serious, knowledgeable, and reliable**.



How you can build a strong online brand



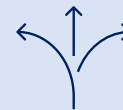
Share your founder journey: Talk about why you started your company and what drives you



Highlight your wins: Investors love momentum - post about milestones, revenue growth, and partnerships



Be authentic: Show both successes and lessons learned – authenticity and personality builds trust



Leverage different channels: Post on LinkedIn and other platforms, and write thought pieces on Medium, etc. to reach the appropriate investors



Pitching | To deliver a successful pitch, ensure a simple, compelling story with confidence and clarity

For any pitch, remember ...



Your pitch is the trailer, not the movie

Spark curiosity but don't share everything - leave investors wanting to know more



97% of communication is non-verbal

Your energy, body language, and tone matter as much as your words



Confusion kills investment

Keep it clear and simple - if they don't get it, they won't fund it



Investors care about what's in it for them

Your passion is great, but how will this make them money?



Pitching in competitions is different from investor meetings – you have **limited time**, a **broad audience**, and **high competition**

See example pitch [here](#) from GoodyBag, and [here](#) from Doordash

How to successfully pitch in competitions



Master your time limit: Practice with a timer and plan for a strong finish (don't get cut off!)



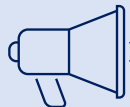
Hook your audience in the first 30sec: Start with impact – either a surprising stat, statement or a story



Keep slides clean & visual: Stick to one idea per slide, use big fonts and high contrast colours



Anticipate tough questions: Be concise & confident and have backup responses ready 🔍



Own the stage: if you're excited, the audience will be to (and make sure you don't read off the slides!)





Cold outreach | Cold outreach is a numbers game; make sure you follow a structured, personalised process, track results, and adapt based on responses



1

Find the right investors

Create a target list

Use Crunchbase, LinkedIn, Twitter or VC websites to find relevant investors to target

Quality > quantity

Avoid mass messaging; focus on those that most fit your needs and business profile

Engage first

Like posts, comment, or seek a warm introduction before reaching out

2

Draft a cold email

Keep it short

Stay under 150 words; busy investors won't read long emails or messages

Make it personal

Reference their portfolio, interests or recent news to grab their attention

End with a call-to-action

Ask a direct question to encourage a response

3

Follow up (don't spam)

Follow up 2-3 times

Give investors some time; space follow-ups 5+ days apart

Add value

Share updates, wins, or relevant insights in follow-ups

Know when to stop

If no response after 3-4 attempts, move on

4

Track & optimise

Use a CRM tool

Track outreach with tools like HubSpot, Notion, or a simple spreadsheet

Measure & adjust

Monitor open rates and iteratively tweak your approach and content

Stay consistent

Cold outreach is a numbers game; persistence is key

Cold outreach | Cold outreach isn't one-size-fits-all; depending on your goal, craft effective messages by giving value or using social proof

	The value-first outreach "Give before you ask"	Mutual connection outreach "Social proof"	Classic cold outreach "Direct ask"
Draft message (needs to be adapted and personalised)	<p>Hi [investor's name],</p> <p>I saw your recent investment in [company X] and your focus on [industry]. We're working in the same space at [your startup], and I wanted to share a quick insight—[short industry trend or data point].</p> <p>We're seeing this firsthand as we scale, and I'd love to get your thoughts on it. Would you be open to a quick 15-min chat? No pitch - just exchanging perspectives.</p> <p>Looking forward to connecting!</p> <p>Best,</p> <p>[Your name]</p>	<p>Hi [investor's name],</p> <p>[Mutual contact] suggested I reach out because we're building something in [industry] that aligns with your focus.</p> <p>At [your startup], we help [target audience] solve [problem] with [solution]. We're already backed by [notable investor/accelerator] and have secured [big customer/partnership], with [traction metric] growth in the last [X months].</p> <p>We're now raising [\$X] to scale, and I'd love to connect and hear your thoughts.</p> <p>Would you be open to a quick call next week?</p> <p>Best,</p> <p>[Your name]</p>	<p>Hi [investor's name],</p> <p>We're raising [\$X] to scale [your startup], and I believe this aligns with your investment focus.</p> <p>We help [target audience] solve [problem] with [solution], and we've seen [key traction metric: revenue/user growth].</p> <p>Would you be open to a quick 15-minute chat next week to discuss?</p> <p>Here's my [Calendly link] or let me know a time that works.</p> <p>Looking forward to your thoughts.</p> <p>Best,</p> <p>[Your name]</p>
Why it works	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✔ No direct pitch – builds trust first✔ Shows industry expertise (makes you worth their time)✔ Higher response rates than a straight-up "we're raising" email	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✔ Leverages trust (mutual connections build credibility)✔ Less "cold" than direct outreach (easier response)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✔ Short, clear ask (no wasted words)✔ Traction upfront (investors love numbers)✔ Call-to-action (specific next step)



Cold outreach | Cold outreach works best when it's strategic, focused, and turns every response – "yes" or "no" – into forward momentum

Keep it short, sharp, and specific – lead with why your startup matters, and the ask

Save time by pre-qualifying – research investors who are aligned with your sector and values before reaching out

Turn rejections into opportunities – always ask for referrals when you get a "no"

Low conversion is normal – focus on clarity and consistency over volume



“

Cold outreach worked for me because I had a strong narrative and was clear about the opportunity we were creating. While conversion was low, I saved time by targeting investors who fit the exact profile I was looking for. And every 'no' was followed with, 'Okay, but can you introduce me to five other investors?'



Varaidzo Tendai Moyo
Co-founder & CEO, Ruka

Next steps | After reaching out to investors, be prepared to answer tough questions about your business

Investors will likely ask tough questions across every part of your business ...



See following slide for a list of common (not-exhaustive) questions investors may ask across these 8 dimensions




... so be sure you're prepared to respond with clarity, evidence, and strategic insight

- **Think like an investor** – anticipate what's behind the question; usually it's about risk, scalability, or return on investment
- **Know your numbers** – be fluent in key metrics, such as revenue, CAC, LTV, runway, churn, and growth drivers
- **Support with evidence** – use real customer insights, data, and testing results to back up your claims
- **Be honest, not defensive** – It's okay to not have all the answers; own the gaps and show how you're addressing them
- **Tell a consistent story** – align your answers with your pitch, deck, and vision; remember that confusion kills confidence

See p.50-52 for common investor biases toward women founders, strategies to respond effectively, and ways to address concerns around risk

1. Investors will ask 'curveball' questions to gauge your composure, critical thinking, and whether your confidence is rooted in real insight or just a polished pitch

Navigating biases | When evaluating women-led startups, investors may hold innate biases; knowing how to navigate these is key to securing funding

What biases can I encounter?	What do these mean?	What can I reference to keep a positive mindset?	How do I respond to investor biases?
 <p>Women found impact-driven businesses</p>	<p>Perception that women primarily start impact-focused businesses that lack commercial viability</p>	<p>"Women establish sustainable businesses, and growth is where they excel" <i>Investor at Pan Africa VC that finances +100 investments</i></p>	<p>Demonstrate long-term commercial viability by highlighting traction, scalability, and the market opportunity</p>
 <p>Women founders lack pitch preparedness</p>	<p>70% of investors prefer pitches delivered by men rather than women, even when the content is identical²</p>	<p>"Own your power. The industry may not be built for us, but we are more than capable of shaping it. Be unapologetic about your vision" <i>Tendai Moyo – Founder, Ruka Hair</i></p>	<p>Exude confidence in pitch delivery, and highlight the founder characteristics your target investor values</p>
 <p>Women founders are more risk-averse than men</p>	<p>Perception that women overemphasise risk and underestimate the growth potential of their businesses</p>	<p>On average, women-led businesses generate 10% higher long-term revenues than those led by men¹</p>	<p>Emphasise the opportunity over the risk when pitching and clearly outline your growth plans</p>

Navigating biases | A strong pitch is pivotal to dispelling biases and securing funding; it's the first impression investors have of you and your business

Be prepared to deliver ...	When each pitch is appropriate	Plan how to deliver the pitch verbally	Prepare the right supporting materials
1 Elevator pitch	Use as a quick introduction to spark interest and secure a meeting during initial contact with investors	Start with a hook (e.g., a surprising stat), then deliver a concise 30-second overview of your business's value proposition	Carry a business card with your contact details and website link – also consider having a secure link to your pitch deck
2 5 min pitch	Use in pitch competitions, demo days, or early investor meetings where time is short and impact matters	Start strong – investors look for ambition, clarity, and conviction . Keep your structure tight and leave time for at least one question	Create a short, visual pitch deck covering the problem, solution, market, traction, team, and ask - keep text minimal, use strong visuals, and tell a clear story
3 30 min pitch	Use during formal investor meetings where you have more time to go deeper into your business and demonstrate credibility	Deliver a structured narrative that covers the full business case. Investors look for sharp thinking, data fluency, and clear command of vision and execution . Pitch in 15–20 minutes and leave time for Q&A	Prepare a longer pitchbook covering your purpose, problem and solution, market, business model, traction, team, financials, and ask

Founder tips



Prepare supporting **pitch deck in advance**



Practice pitch with **neutral parties**



Prepare responses to **potential investor questions**



Continuously refine the pitch



Investors decide in 5 min if they like your pitch

Lagos-based VC investor



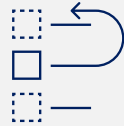
We talked to over 100 investors before we got a yes. Do not accept defeat. Don't shake.



Rukayat Kolawe-Bello
Founder & CEO, Regxta

Recap | Six things you can do now to get started

1



Make a target investor list that fits your startup's vision, problem area and funding stage

2



Leverage warm introductions by tapping into mutual connections, mentors and fellow founders

3



Build a strong online presence by sharing your insights and by engaging with investor content

4



Perfect your elevator pitch with a compelling 60 second narrative for when you meet with investors

5



Show up at relevant events to naturally expose yourself to the investors you care most about

6



Prepare for tough questions by crafting solid answers and supporting material



Agenda for today's funding masterclass

1 Welcome and Introduction

5 minutes

2 Technical session

40 minutes

3 Q&A discussion

45 minutes

4 Wrap up

5 minutes

Let's move to questions

