AICEP
Portugal Trade & Invest

Portugal to Take Off

Terms and Conditions for participation in the Program Portugal to Take Off

Submission of an Application constitutes the Applicant's agreement to the following Terms and Conditions. Participation in the Program is conditional upon the Applicant fulfilling all requirements set forth below.

1. Program

Portugal To Take Off is the Portuguese Trade and Investment Agency's (AICEP) Program focused on accelerating the growth of Portuguese companies in California. During the Program, the selected companies will attend workshops and one-on-one meetings with the mentors that will provide feedback on go-to-market strategies and assistance in preparing their commercial approach. Additionally, mentors and AICEP will facilitate access to potential customers, partners and investors.

With the support of AICEP local network and the experience and knowledge of the mentors, the time to enter the US market should be significantly reduced.

2. Program Timeline

- Applications Opened: **July 20, 2026**.
- Applications Close: Midnight (GMT) **August 14, 2026**.
- AICEP Portugal will provide a shortlist of **8 finalist startups** by **August 21, 2026.**
- Start2 Group will conduct the pitch calls and complete the final selection of the **4 participating startups** by **August 31, 2026**.
- The virtual Program is scheduled to begin during the **week of September 21, 2026**.
- Demo day: **January 29, 2027.**

3. Alterations or cancellation

AICEP reserves the right to make any changes to the Program, including cancellation, as may be deemed necessary or advisable by AICEP, in its sole discretion. AICEP shall not be liable for any claims, damages, costs, or losses of any kind if the Program is altered, rescheduled, postponed, or canceled.

4. Cost

The Program is free of charge, but selected companies will be responsible for their own travel and subsistence expenses, including airfare, lodging, transportation, meals, and related costs. In addition, companies should be prepared to develop a market approach and participate in the Program activities, mainly online workshops, mentorship sessions, one-on-one meetings with potential customers, and an in-person Demo day in California.

5. Selection Criteria

When reviewing the Applications, AICEP and the Program Mentors and Managers will select companies based on Product-Market Fit and the Impact of the Project on the Portuguese Economy, as detailed below:

• Product-Market Fit:

- Low: When the company does not appear to have a product that is differentiated from the competition and/or does not appear to have the resources (technological, financial, and human) needed to scale in the U.S. market.
- Medium: When the company has a product differentiated from the competition and aligned with its market strategy and/or appears to have the resources (technological, financial, and human) needed to scale in the U.S. market, although there are some doubts about its readiness to enter the market.
- High: When the company has a product differentiated from the competition and international customers, and appears to have the resources (technological, financial, and human) needed to scale in the U.S. market.

• Impact of the Project on the Portuguese Economy

- Low: When the product appears to address limited market demand and/or the project appears likely to face difficulties scaling and/or value creation in Portugal is limited.
- Medium: When the product appears to address significant market demand and/or value creation in Portugal and for the regional economy is significant.
- High: When the product satisfies strong market demand, is highly scalable, can be used in several global markets, and value creation in Portugal and for the regional economy is significant.

The Application process begins online with an Application form, all written in English. The questions are designed to give AICEP and the Program Mentors and Managers an understanding of both the companies' business needs and their commitment to entering the market. Shortlisted candidates are invited to a video conference interview conducted in English.

6. Data Privacy

Submission of an Application constitutes the Applicant's agreement to authorize the processing of personal and business data collected through the form for the purposes of preparing and carrying out the evaluation in accordance with AICEP's Privacy Policy, including sharing such data with entities located in third countries. In the latter case, this may involve risks with respect to the Applicant's rights due to the absence of guarantees in those countries in light of European and national regulations on the protection of personal data.

7. Publicity and promotion

Participants agree to participate, upon reasonable request, in all promotional activities requested by AICEP.

8. No Recordings

All attendees of the Program are free to take their own notes. However, audio recording, video recording, and photography are prohibited during workshops, pitch training, panels, the community event, and other Program activities.

9. Others

All situations not covered by these terms and conditions will be decided by AICEP.