



Zabka Group seeks innovative solutions and supports startups through acceleration programs

Zabka Group, the leading Polish convenience ecosystem with nearly 3 million customers daily, is looking for startups that will help embrace positive change and foster innovation, to further transform convenience shopping. Applications are now open for Zabka Future Lab, an accelerator program for startups that want to grow with Zabka Group and test their products and services at scale, using its infrastructure and resources.

The program is open for early-stage startups, who can help Zabka Group with enhancing its customer experience, improving the logistics, optimizing operations, and transforming it into a leading global retailer. Up to 5 startups from all around the Europe and Middle East, who will apply to the program, will take part in workshops and mentoring sessions with industry experts that will help them improve business models, learn how to communicate with potential customers or develop the right product/market fit.

Startups will also have a chance to test their product and services at scale, within Zabka Group's infrastructure. Being the leading convenience ecosystem in Poland, the company has over 9,000 stores, over 50 Zabka Nano autonomous stores, and over 6 million users of its mobile app. In addition, the PoC and commercial pilots can be held within logistics facilities, with Zabka Group's partners, and even conduct sensory tests in company's own lab.

Zabka Future Lab is one of three acceleration programs run by Zabka Group, and an example of a whole variety of endeavours by Venture Studio, a division of Zabka Future that specifically seeks for startups and tech companies, to foster innovation that could further expand and improve the convenience ecosystem and create additional value to for Zabka Group.

„We work closely with startups to bring innovative solutions to retail. We support companies that are designing unconventional solutions for e-commerce, q-commerce, and D2C. We share our expertise to help young entrepreneurs test their ideas, reduce the risk of failure, and bring their products to market. The work of our team is all about supporting innovators, searching for new business opportunities, and building relationships within the startup community”, says Karol Gajewicz, Head of Venture Studio.

Venture Studio on the lookout for startups

In 2022 alone, Venture Studio analysed applications from 1335 startups, meet with over 100 of them and invited 13 companies for the pilot program of their products or service. The team has also organised 4 acceleration programmes, aimed at working with different companies, that solve different issues. The list includes the first edition of Zabka Future Lab, Foodtech Lab aiming at fostering innovation in the food industry, and 2 editions of the Startup Impact Program, seeking for startups that create a positive impact on the world around them.



The winning projects in the 2nd edition of the Startup Impact Program are the development of energy-free fast beverage cooling (E-ice); biopolymer production (Seasoil); the development of intelligent composters suitable for use in urban and even office environments (Vermico).

The winners of the 1st edition of Foodtech Lab include SERio Vegetable cheese – vegan cheeses made from lupin, BIO COOLS – cryogenic, vegan ice cream, NewGranny – functional coffee drinks with high protein content, Small Giants – healthy insect-based protein snacks, and Fermentful – fermented plant-based drinks for gut health.

Startup success stories in the convenience ecosystem

Żabka's Venture Studio has already seen successful pilots, tests, and implementations. Including Virbe and Omniaz.

Virbe is a startup that creates 3D virtual assistants using conversational AI, used to help stores improve customer experience. They can be present both in digital channels as well as in physical locations, serving as brands ambassadors that are brand always available. Żabka Group tests them in the autonomous stores, to provide customers guidance and personalised product recommendations, as well as make the checkout process a breeze.

Omniaz is an end-to-end augmented reality solution for retail, uses AR to merge online and offline shopping experience. The first pilot, conducted in 2022, resulted in an NPS of 90%. The second pilot, with a larger customer base, is planned for 2023.

“As a technology-driven company, we're able to quickly test and validate new ideas. And with our large-scale operations, we're able to do it in a real environment, always listening to customer feedback. That's how we've introduced new payment methods, q-commerce services, and made investments in AI. And as a result, Żabka Nano is the largest chain of autonomous stores in Europe. But innovation is a constant process, not a single project. We're always open for bold ideas that could help us respond to consumer needs, invent new categories and stay ahead of the market”, says Karol Gajewicz.

The applications for the 2nd edition of [Żabka Future Lab program](#) are open till the 15th March. Selected companies will take part in the acceleration from April till June.

Żabka Group was established in early 2021 and comprises: Żabka Polska - the largest business unit, bringing together the commercial area, Żabka Future - responsible for new investments, business development, and technological tools, and Strategic Leadership - three teams responsible for setting the directions of development of the entire Group through building consumer, personal and financial strategies. Żabka Group also includes Maczfit, the leader of the dietetic catering market in Poland, and Dietly.pl, the leading e-commerce platform in this segment. The Group's goal is to create and combine convenient and responsible solutions in the area of convenience, which make everyday life easier for customers. The Group develops its activities in the area of social and environmental responsibility in a strategic way, integrating environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) factors with a business strategy. As part of its responsibility strategy, Żabka Group has made commitments to, among other things, good nutrition, services facilitating sustainable life, the development of entrepreneurship, diversity and an inclusive organizational culture,



corporate governance and decarbonization, and circular economy. Link to the 2021 Responsibility Report: [Responsibility Report 2021](#)

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