MODULE 4

Starting Your Equine Enterprise

young equine innovators

www.youngequineinnovators.eu

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contents

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Learner Outcomes:

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Use your Module 3 evidence to prepare your enterprise
- Think like an equine business owner
- Design simple systems for bookings, money, safety and delivery
- Create a professional customer experience
- Understand the funding routes — grants, micro-loans, friends-and-family, crowdfunding — to get your venture from idea to open.
- Set practical goals and track progress
- Check your readiness to start small and grow with care

Your learner workbook – take what's yours

This module comes with a Learner Workbook. It's yours to mark up, write in, and share with a mentor.

One rule: there is no rule.

You don't have to complete every activity. Some won't apply to your idea, your stage, or your country. The point is to pick the ones that move YOUR venture forward and skip the rest without guilt.

A workbook half-finished but acted on beats a workbook fully completed and filed away.

01

Introduction

Why this module matters:

This module supports young people in moving from an early-stage idea to setting up and running their equine micro-enterprise with structure, confidence, and professionalism.

It equips young learners to think and act like business owners, planning how they will deliver value, manage operations, and lay the groundwork for growth.

In Module 3, you created your first equine offer and gathered evidence from real users. Module 4 helps you organise that offer so it can be delivered with structure, confidence and professionalism.

Bring Your Module 3 Evidence

Start this module with the evidence you created in Module 3.

Your offer statement

What you provide, who it helps and what value it creates

Tester evidence

What people used, valued, questioned and wanted again

Your revised offer

What you decided to keep, improve, remove or add

Your next move

Develop, refine or rethink, with one action in the next 30 days

What you will build

Your enterprise mindset

Thinking Like an Entrepreneur - Learn how business owners make decisions, balancing risk, reward, time, and value. Shift from project mode to enterprising mindset.

Your operating systsms

Designing Business Systems That Work - the basic systems a small enterprise needs to function day-to-day: managing customers, bookings, payments, supplies, and communication.

Your customer experience

Offering a Professional Experience - Explore what makes a customer experience feel trustworthy and professional, from first contact to delivery and follow-up.

What you will build :

Your readiness plan

Setting Goals and Tracking Progress - Use simple tools to set short-term goals (e.g. number of clients, hours worked, revenue targets) and measure what's working.

Review

Knowing When to Adapt or Grow - Reflect on how your business might need to evolve, pivot, or expand and how to make confident decisions about next steps

Your Role:

Be curious, be honest, and take time to reflect. This is about you – your future, your choices, and your potential in the equine world.

Activity: Enterprise Starting Point

Use your completed Module 3 workbook. Fill in the first page of your enterprise plan before moving on.

My tested offer is:	
My specific customer is:	
The strongest evidence from testing was:	
The key improvement I made was:	
My next move after Module 3 was:	
The biggest question I still need to answer is:	

02

Think Like an Equine Entrepreneur

Your Mindset Shapes your Actions

"I love horses"
becomes
"I create value in the horse world".

Enterprise thinking helps you turn equine passion into responsible action, income, impact and opportunity.

Your Mindset Shapes your Actions

Why learn how to think like an entrepreneur?

- Your mindset shapes your actions
- You can learn what to do, but it's your mindset that keeps you moving forward.

For young people

- Create your own opportunities
- Turn your passion into income
- Build real-world skills like problem-solving, planning, communication
- Start small and test ideas
- Gain confidence and independence
- Join a community of young innovators
- Shape the future of equine work — sustainability, welfare, digital innovation

What changes when you start an enterprise

Doing the work:

- You focus on the task in front of you.
- You physically deliver your product or service
- This matters, but it is only one part of enterprise

Running the enterprise:

- You also plan the system around the work.
- You think about customers, safety, payments, communication, time, quality, welfare and repeat delivery.
- This is how your offer becomes reliable.

Entrepreneurs don't just work in their business – they work on it.

They ask themselves:

- How do I create value for others?
- What problems am I solving?
- How can I turn my passion into sustainable income?

Every business decision involves balancing:

- **Risk** - What could go wrong? How do I minimize it?
- **Reward** - What's the benefit (money, impact, learning)?
- **Time** - How long will this take? Is it sustainable?
- **Value** - Does this help my customers? Does it align with my goals?

Making Decisions Like a Business Owner

Entrepreneurs are comfortable with:

- Testing ideas before perfecting them
- Learning from mistakes quickly
- Saying "no" to opportunities that don't fit
- Asking for help and building networks

You don't need all the answers, but you need the mindset to find them.

Shift from project mode to enterprise mindset.

Project mode	Enterprise mindset
One-off activity	Repeatable system
"I'll figure it out as I go"	“I plan and adapt"
Focused on tasks	Focused on outcomes
Ends when the job is done	Built to continue and grow

Your goal:

Move from doing occasional equine work to building a real micro-enterprise.

Risk: The Four Decision Lens

A business decision can look attractive through one lens and fail through another. The purpose of the four lenses is to expose that risk before you commit money, time, horses or your reputation.

Horse	Customer	You	Enterprise
Can it be delivered to add to welfare, comfort, safety or good practice?	Consider what the customer needs from your offer.	Consider what you need to create and deliver the offer well.	Consider how your equine offer will work as a real business.
For a product, think about: • Materials, fit, comfort and durability • How the product will be used • Whether instructions are clear • How you will test it safely • Whether the design supports good equine practice For a service or experience, think about suitability, workload, supervision and recovery.	Think about: • The problem they want solved • The result they expect • How easy the product is to choose, use or maintain • What quality, reliability and value mean to them • What would make them trust the offer • What would encourage repeat purchase, return use or recommendation	Think about: • The skills and knowledge you already have • The expertise or advice you may need • Your ability to design, source, make, test or deliver the offer • The time and money you can realistically commit • The support available from suppliers, mentors, coaches or partners • The parts of the work you can manage yourself and the parts you may need to outsource	For a product, this may include: • Materials and production costs • Suppliers and minimum order quantities • Quality checks • Packaging and storage • Stock management • Delivery and returns • Instructions, guarantees and customer support For a service or experience, this may include bookings, payments, venues, equipment, scheduling and insurance.

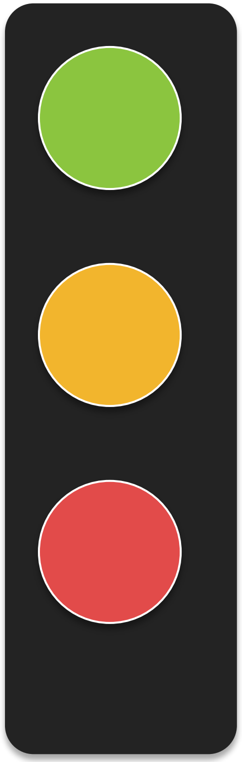
Risk, Reward, Time and Value

Every business decision involves choices. Before saying yes, consider what could go wrong, what you could gain, how much time it will take and whether it creates real value. Looking at risk, reward, time and value together helps you make decisions that are practical, responsible and right for your equine enterprise.

Lens	Equine question	Example
Risk	What could go wrong and how will I reduce that risk?	A young rider clinic needs supervision, safe ponies and clear emergency arrangements.
Reward	What benefit could this create?	A saddle comfort check could increase confidence and reduce discomfort for horse and rider.
Time	How much time will delivery and preparation take?	A one hour service may need thirty minutes of travel, set up and follow up.
Value	Does the result matter enough to the customer?	If owners save time every week, they may pay for a simple reliable system.

Decision Traffic Light

Before moving ahead, decide whether your next step is Green, Amber or Red



Green Go ahead
Use this when the next step feels ready. You can deliver it safely, clearly and with the support you need.

Amber Pause and improve
Use this when the idea has potential, but something still needs attention, such as price, permission, planning or skills.

Red Stop and review
Use this when there is a serious concern around welfare, safety, value, trust, delivery or cost.

How to use it
Before moving ahead, decide whether your next step is Green, Amber or Red.

Task
Write one Green, Amber or Red decision you need to make about your own equine enterprise.

Project Mode vs Enterprise Mindset

A project shows that you can deliver something once. An enterprise needs a clear and reliable way to create value again and again. Customers should know what to expect, horses should be protected by consistent standards, and the work should remain manageable for you. Enterprise thinking means looking beyond the immediate task and considering the customer experience, delivery process, true cost, welfare responsibilities and future demand.

Project mode	Enterprise mindset
• Complete the immediate activity	• Build an offer that customers can understand, choose and return to
• Accept work when it becomes available	• Check whether it fits my time, skills, support and horse availability
• Focus on what I need to do	• Define the result and experience I promise the customer
• Depend mainly on my own effort each time	• Use clear processes, roles, standards and checks
• Respond to problems as they arise	• Use evidence, planning and feedback to make decisions
• Think mainly about the money received	• Understand full costs, customer value, pricing and cash flow
• Rely on experience and good intentions	• Build trust, records, relationships and future demand
• Judge success by whether the activity happened	
• Finish the job and move on	

Activity: Are You Thinking Like an Entrepreneur? Find out now!

This short quiz helps you reflect on your current approach to problem solving, responsibility, and creativity in your equine work. Read each statement and rate yourself from **1 to 5:** (1 = Not at all true for me, 5 = Very true for me)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I look for opportunities to solve problems, not just complete tasks.					
I try to find solutions when something doesn’t go as planned.					
I think about the long-term results of my choices.					
I enjoy learning new things to improve my work.					
I take responsibility for my results, not just my effort.					
I can make decisions even when I don’t have all the details.					
I believe I can turn my passion for horses into something valuable.					

Feedback:

25 – 35 points:

You’re already thinking like an entrepreneur - keep developing those habits.

15 – 24 points:

You’re starting to think like a business owner - this module will help strengthen your confidence.

Below 15 points:

Great starting point! You’ll soon develop a stronger mindset through practice and reflection

Build Systems That Work

03

A business system is the way your business gets things done every day. It is the routine behind your offer.

It is …

A clear and repeatable way of getting important work done. It sets out:

- Who is responsible
- What happens and in what order
- What information must be recorded
- What standard must be met
- How the customer is kept informed

Without systems: chaos.

With systems: calm, consistency, confidence, and….success.

Why Systems Matter

- They **save time** and reduce stress
- They help you **look professional** and reliable
- They make your services **repeatable and scalable**
- They let you **track what's working** and fix what's not

6 core systems for equine micro enterprises

System	What it answers	Simple tool
Customer contact	How do people enquire and receive information?	Email template, message script, enquiry form
Bookings and schedule	When is the service delivered and who is confirmed?	Calendar, booking sheet, shared diary
Money and pricing	What is charged, paid and recorded?	Payment link, receipt book, income tracker
Safety and welfare	What checks protect people and horses?	Risk checklist, horse care notes, incident log
Equipment and supplies	What do I need and when must it be checked?	Kit checklist, stock list, maintenance log
Follow up and feedback	How do I learn and improve after delivery?	Short survey, call notes, testimonial request

An example: Small riding tour operator in Iceland: short tours, small groups, summer only

System	How it works	Used tools	Why it matters
Bookings	Clients call or email to reserve tours. Availability, departure, level, price confirmed.	Phone + Mail + booking calendar	Avoids double-bookings and manages group sizes (max 6 riders)
Customer Management	Guest details recorded: name, phonel, mail, riding experience, weight (for horse matching)	Excel spreadsheet or notebook	Quick reference for horse assignment and safety
Scheduling	Weekly tour calendar with weather backup days marked	Calendar + weather app	Keeps tours safe and flexible
Payments	50% deposit via payment link when booking, rest paid in cash/card on tour day	Bank app + receipt book	Secures bookings and tracks income
Equipment & Supplies	Daily check: saddles, helmets, rain gear, first aid kit	Printed checklist	Ensures safety and professionalism
Communication	Confirmation email day before tour: check in time, what to bring, weather update	Email template	Reduces late arrival, no-shows and confusion

Activity: Design Your First Five Systems

Choose simple systems that match your offer now. You can improve them later.

How will customers first contact me?	
How will bookings or sessions be confirmed?	
How will payments, costs or deposits be recorded?	
What welfare and safety checks will happen every time?	
What equipment or supplies must be checked?	
How will I collect feedback after delivery?	

Young Equine Innovators

What Makes The System Work?

An example: Small riding tour operator in Iceland: short tours, small groups, summer only

- **Simple but reliable** - no fancy software needed
- **Clients feel informed and safe** - clear communication
- **Operator stays organized** - even during busy season
- **Easy to train helpers** - systems are documented and repeatable

You don't need expensive technology. You need **clear steps, reliable tools, and consistency.**

That's what makes clients trust you - and come back

ACTIVITY: Now reflect on YOUR OWN equine business idea!

Question	Answer
What's your business idea?	
Which booking/payment system fits YOU best right now?	
Why did you choose that option?	
What might make you switch to a different system later?	
Is there a "perfect" system, or does it depend on your business?	
When is it okay to start simple (paper/phone), and when should you invest in better tools?	
What's one system you thought you didn't need — but now realize you do?	

04

Create a Professional Customer Experience

A professional experience means your customers feel:

- **Welcomed** - from the first message
- **Informed** - they know what to expect
- **Safe & valued** - during service delivery
- **Appreciated** - after the service ends

In the equine world, professionalism is built through clarity, reliability, kindness and respect for horses.

People remember how you made them feel, not just what you did.

It's about how your clients feel at every step

Customer touchpoints

Touchpoint	Customer question	Your standard
First contact	Do they understand me and respond professionally?	Reply within a clear time and use a friendly tone.
Information	Do I know what is included and what it costs?	Provide simple price, timing, location and suitability information.
Booking	Is my place confirmed and clear?	Send confirmation with time, payment, safety and preparation notes.
Delivery	Do I feel safe and respected?	Explain steps, check comfort, treat people and horses with care.
Follow up	Did they value my feedback?	Thank the customer, ask for feedback and record learning.

Real-Life Example — Professional Customer Experience

Meet Liina

Equine Photographer in Iceland - **https://linaimages.com**

Business

Freelance, individual and event photography for riders, breeders, and event organizers. Coaching.

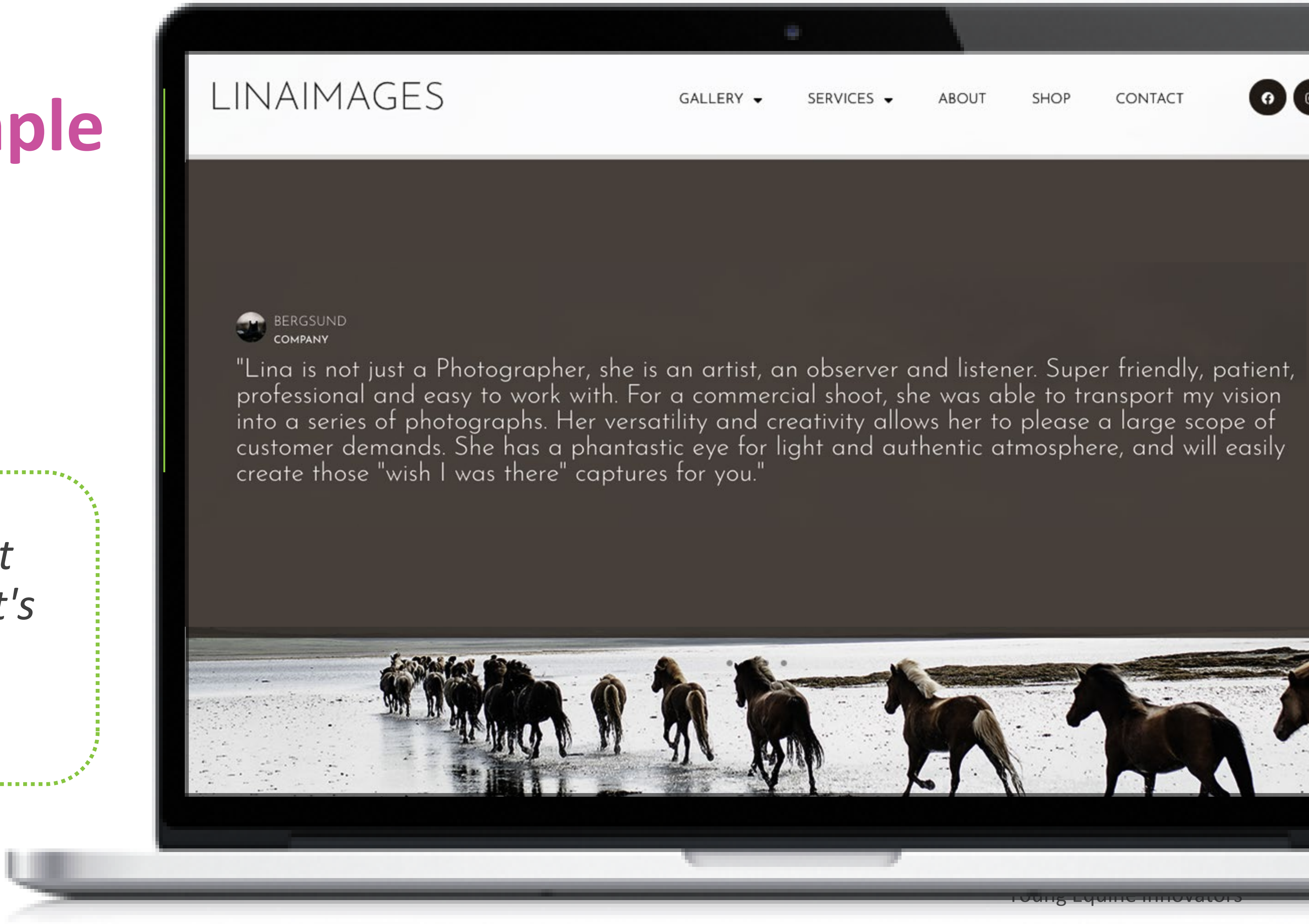
Clients

Amateur riders, professional riders, breeders, tourism companies, commercials, local shows and competition

Lina's Customer Experience Strategy

Touchpoint	What Lina Does	Tools/Action	Impact
First Contact	Responds to Instagram DM or email within 4 hours	Professional greeting, link to portfolio	Client feels heard and confident
Inquiry & Booking	Sends clear pricing, package options, booking form	Google Form + email template	No confusion, easy decision
Before Shoot	Sends reminder 2 days before with location, timing, what to wear/bring	WhatsApp message + checklist	Clients arrive prepared and relaxed
During Shoot	Friendly but focused, gives clear directions, shows respect for horses and riders, creates an engaging atmosphere	Professional behavior + backup camera	Clients feel comfortable and trust her skills
After Shoot	Delivers preview within 48 hours, final edited photos within 1 week, thank-you note included	Picdrop link + personalized message	Clients are impressed and share her work online

Real-Life Example - Professional Customer Experience



Professionalism isn't about being fancy - it's about being clear, reliable, and kind.

Your Professional Standards Checklist

Create your own "Promise to Clients"
3–5 standards you commit to

Example (Lina's Standards):

- I respond to all inquiries within 4 hours
- I deliver photos on time, every time
- I treat every horse with care and respect
- I communicate clearly and kindly
- I say thank you after every job

Your Standards:

Handling problems professionally

Problems can happen in any equine setting. A professional response has four parts.

1. Stay calm and put safety first
2. Explain what is happening in plain language
3. Record the issue and what action was taken
4. Follow up with the customer, helper, yard or mentor

A problem handled well can build trust. A problem hidden or ignored can damage it.

Activity: My Promise to Clients and Horses

Write three to five standards you will commit to every time you deliver your offer.

I will respond to enquiries within:	
I will explain safety and welfare arrangements by:	
I will treat every horse by this standard:	
I will communicate changes or delays by:	
I will collect feedback by:	
I will say no or stop delivery when:	

SECTION

05

Funding Your Equine Venture

Money is rarely the first problem, but it's always a problem

Most young equine founders need three pots of money before they can launch:

1. SET-UP MONEY	2. RUNNING MONEY	3. RESERVE MONEY
Equipment, registration, insurance, first stock or materials.	To cover months one to six to twelve while the venture finds its feet.	A cushion for the unexpected: a sick horse, a broken truck, a quiet month.

The good news: across Iceland, Ireland, Sweden and Denmark there is more funding available to young founders than most realise. The catch is knowing where to look.

Five funding routes for young equine founders

Stack two or three sources rather than relying on one. Most successful young equine founders mix at least two.

G **Grants — public**

LEADER funds (rural), national startup grants (Local Enterprise Office, Ireland), equine-sector funds.

M **Micro-loans**

Microfinance Ireland, ALMI (SE), Vækstfonden (DK). Low-interest, fast, repaid as you grow.

F **Friends & family**

Loan or pre-paid services. Written agreement. Lowest-friction starting capital.

C **Crowdfunding**

Kickstarter, Indiegogo, GoFundMe, Patreon. Works best with a strong visual product and ready audience.

S **Sponsorship**

Tack brands, feed companies, local businesses. Trade visibility and content for kit or cash.

R **Revenue (own)**

Pre-paid lessons, deposits, your own savings, side-income while testing.

Country-by-country starting points

Ireland (KCC region and nationally)

Local Enterprise Office Priming Grant · Enterprise Ireland Innovate · LEADER (Kildare LCDC) · Microfinance Ireland · Horse Sport Ireland industry funds

Iceland

Tækniþróunarsjóður (Tech Development Fund) · Atvinnumál Kvenna (women entrepreneur fund) · regional development foundations · LEADER through SSNV

Sweden

ALMI Företagspartner micro-loans · Tillväxtverket regional grants · Coompanion Göteborg co-op support · Jordbruksverket rural funds · Vinnova innovation grants

Denmark

Vækstfonden startup loans · Erhvervshus regional business hubs · Innovationsfonden grants · Landdistriktspuljen rural fund · LAG micro-grants

What funders actually want to see

Most funders look for the same five things, no matter the country or the fund:

1. A REAL PROBLEM — backed by evidence that real people have it.

Your NABC Needs section from Module 2 does this work.

2. A WORKABLE SOLUTION — with a tested first version.

Your MVP from Module 3 does this work.

3. A FOUNDER THEY CAN TRUST — your story, your honesty, your strengths.

Your Strengths Finder from Module 1 + your tested delivery from Module 3.

4. A CLEAR MONEY PLAN — line by line, with realistic numbers.

Your Time & Cost Estimator from Module 3 does this work.

5. A MEASURABLE OUTCOME — what success looks like in numbers.

Clients, income, jobs created, welfare improvements, carbon saved.

Crowdfunding for equine ventures — what works

Equine crowdfunding succeeds when three things are true:

1. A BEAUTIFUL, SHARE-WORTHY STORY.

Horses photograph well — use that. Show the work, not the pitch.

2. REWARD TIERS THAT MAKE SENSE.

€25 for a poster. €100 for the product. €500 for a yard visit. Clear value at each level.

3. THE FIRST 30% IS COMMITTED BEFORE LAUNCH.

Friends, family and inner circle pledge in week one so the campaign looks alive when strangers arrive.

Realistic target: most successful equine crowdfunds raise €2,000–€15,000. Plan for that range — not the headline-grabbing million-Euro outliers.

ACTIVITY: My Funding Plan — Worksheet

TEMPLATE | Fill this before approaching any funder. It's also your starting position for a loan conversation.

How much do I need (total)?	*Set-up + 6 months running + reserve…*
What for, specifically?	*Equipment, insurance, marketing, stock…*
From which sources?	*Grant € + loan € + own € + family € + crowdfund €…*
By when do I need each piece?	*Cash-flow timeline — month by month…*
Plan B if a source falls through?	*Smaller launch, slower start, different model…*

Learn from Saoirse Brennan · Ireland

Example case study of funding through stacked small sources

Saoirse left her Dublin job at 26 with no savings to speak of. She stacked five small funding sources to launch her children's riding school in County Kildare.

€7,000 came from a Local Enterprise Office Priming Grant. €3,500 from Microfinance Ireland as a low-interest loan. €5,000 from a family pre-paid lessons scheme — relatives paid for blocks of lessons up front.

Another €4,000 came from a Kildare LCDC LEADER micro-grant for rural enterprise. The final €2,000 was her own savings.

Within 18 months she was running three Saturday lesson groups and a Pony Camp programme. She paid back the micro-finance loan early and never needed bank debt.

THE LESSON: Funding rarely comes from one place. Stack small, varied sources — and start asking before you need the money.

06

Setting Goals and Tracking Progress

Why Goals Matter

Without goals, you're just busy. With goals, you're building something.

Goals give you:

- **Direction** - you know where you're going
- **Focus** - you work on what matters most
- **Motivation** - you can see progress
- **Confidence** - you make decisions based on a plan

Goals without milestones are just dreams. Milestones turn dreams into reality.

The SMART Goal Framework

Not all goals are equal. Good goals are **SMART:**

Smart	Measurable	Action - Based	Realistic	Timed
What exactly do I want to achieve?	How will I know I've succeeded?	What steps will I take?	Can I actually do this with my resources?	When will I achieve this by?

The SMART Goal Framework

Vague:
"I want to teach kids to ride"

SMART:
”I will run a Saturday morning riding school for 8 children aged 6–12 within 4 months by securing 2 suitable ponies and obtaining insurance

Breaking Down Your Goal - Real Example

Case:

Ben (24) Wants to Start a Children's Riding School

His Main Purpose:

"Turn my passion for teaching into income while staying in my rural community and sharing the joy of horses with the next generation."

Big goals need small, timed steps — that's how you stay on track.

Breaking Down Your Goal - Real Example

Step 1: Identify the Benefits & Challenges

Benefits (Why This Matters)	Challenges (What Could Stop Me)
Work with horses and children daily	Need safe, reliable ponies
Create income doing what I love	Insurance and liability concerns
Build skills as a teacher/coach	Lack of teaching qualifications
Keep local stables active	Limited marketing budget
Positive impact on children's confidence	Need suitable facility (arena, parking)

Breaking Down Your Goal - Real Example

Step 2: Make It Measurable

Ben's Year 1 Goals:

- Start with **Saturday morning group lessons** (1-hour sessions)
- Enroll **8–12 regular students** (ages 6–12) by Month 4
- Run **2 sessions per Saturday** (beginners 9am, intermediate 10:30am)
- Generate **€800–1,000/month** to cover costs and build savings

Breaking Down Your Goal - Real Example

Step 3: Create an Action Plan with Timeline

Timeline	Action	Milestone
Month 1	Research insurance, check facility safety, get first aid certified	Insurance secured, facility approved
Month 2	Identify/lease 2 suitable ponies, prepare equipment (helmets, saddles)	Ponies ready, equipment checked
Month 3	Create flyers, social media page, contact local schools and parent groups	First 5 inquiries received
Month 4	Launch first Saturday sessions (start with 4–6 kids)	First lessons delivered
Month 5-6	Build to full capacity (8–12 students), collect feedback from parents	Regular weekly schedule established
Month 6-12	Add holiday camps or workshops, improve teaching skills	Expand offering, increase income

Tracking Your Progress

You can't improve what you don't measure.

What to track	Why it matters	Tool Example
Number of students enrolled	Shows growth and demand	Student register spreadsheet
Attendance rate	Reveals commitment and satisfaction	Weekly attendance sheet
Income per month	Tracks if business is sustainable	Simple income tracker
Parent feedback	Shows what's working (safety, teaching)	Short survey after first month
Lesson plans completed	Keeps teaching structured	Lesson log notebook

Tracking Your Progress

Weekly Check-In Questions - Ask yourself every Sunday

- Did I reach this week's goal? (e.g., contacted 5 parents, ran both lessons)
- What went well with the children?
- What needs to improve? (safety, communication, pony behavior)
- Am I still on track for my bigger goal?

Tracking Your Progress

But don't give up just because it's hard - that's when discipline matters most!

When to Adjust Your Goals - Sometimes things don't go as planned - and that's okay.

Adjust your goal if

- Enrollment is slower than expected (maybe pricing or timing needs tweaking)
- Demand is higher than expected (great problem - Time to add sessions)
- A pony isn't suitable (safety first - find a replacement)
- Parents want different times or services (adapt to their needs)

Activity: Create Your SMART Goal

Step 1: See the Difference

Vague:
"I want to teach riding"

SMART:
" I will run Saturday lessons for 6 children aged 7-10 by June 1st using 2 school ponies"

Activity: Create Your SMART Goal

Step 2: Make Your Idea SMART

My Business Idea:

....

....

Element	Your Answer
S - What exactly?	
M - How measured? (clients, income, sessions)	
A - 2 key actions?	
R - What do you have/need?	
T - Launch date?	

Activity: Create Your SMART Goal

Step 3: Write Your Complete SMART Goal

"I will__________(what) for______________(who)

by _______________(when), measured by __________ (how)."

Your Goal:

....

....

....

Activity: Create Your SMART Goal

Step 4: Your First 3 Actions

What I'll do	When
1.	
2.	
3.	

Quick Check:

- ✓ Is it specific, measurable, and timed?
- ✓ Can someone else understand it clearly?

Your business won't stay the same forever, and that's a good thing.

Why Businesses Need to Evolve (Ben’s case):

- **Customer needs change** (parents want weekday lessons, not just Saturdays)
- **You gain experience** (you're ready to teach more advanced riders)
- **Opportunities appear** (a local school asks you to run a riding program)
- **Challenges arise** (a pony retires, costs increase, competition grows)
- **Your goals shift** (you want more income, less hours, or a bigger impact)

Your business won't stay the same forever, and that's a good thing.

Three Ways Your Business Might Evolve

1. **ADAPT** - Small changes to improve what you're already doing.
2. **PIVOT** - A bigger change in direction - you shift what you offer or who you serve. Pivoting isn't failing - it's learning and adapting smartly!
3. **GROW** - Expand your capacity or offerings.

Successful entrepreneurs plan but importantly they observe, reflect, and adjust.

07

Are You Ready to Launch?

Part 1: Business Readiness Checklist

Rate yourself honestly for each statement:
✓ = Yes, I've thought about this
? = I need to work on this
✗ = I haven't considered this yet

Entrepreneurial Mindset (Unit 1)

Statement	✓	?	✗
I understand that running a business means balancing risk, reward, time, and value			
I'm willing to learn from mistakes and keep going when things get tough			
I can make decisions even when I don't have all the information			

Part 1: Business Readiness Checklist

Rate yourself honestly for each statement:
✓ = Yes, I've thought about this
? = I need to work on this
X = I haven't considered this yet

Business Systems (Unit 2)

Statement	✓	?	X
I know how clients will contact and book with me			
I have a plan for handling payments and tracking income			
I've thought about the supplies and equipment I need			

Part 1: Business Readiness Checklist

Rate yourself honestly for each statement:
✓ = Yes, I've thought about this
? = I need to work on this
✗ = I haven't considered this yet

Professional Experience (Unit 3)

Statement	✓	?	✗
I know what I'll do at each customer touchpoint (first contact to follow-up)			
I can describe what makes my service feel professional and trustworthy			
I have clear communication standards (response time, tone, clarity)			

Part 1: Business Readiness Checklist

Rate yourself honestly for each statement:
✓ = Yes, I've thought about this
? = I need to work on this
✗ = I haven't considered this yet

Goals & Tracking (Unit 4)

Statement	✓	?	✗
I have written at least one SMART goal for my business			
I know what I'll measure to track if my business is working			
I have a plan for checking my progress regularly (weekly or monthly)			

Part 1: Business Readiness Checklist

Rate yourself honestly for each statement:
✓ = Yes, I've thought about this
? = I need to work on this
✗ = I haven't considered this yet

Adapting & Growing (Unit 5)

Statement	✓	?	✗
I've thought about what I'll do if demand is higher than expected			
I have a backup plan if things are slower than expected			
I understand the difference between adapting, pivoting, and growing			

Part 2: Reflection Questions

Answer these 5 questions -be honest with yourself:

01

What's the ONE thing I feel most confident about?

02

What's the ONE thing I still need to figure out before launching?

03

Who can help me with what I don't know yet? *(mentor, family, friend, consultant)*

04

What's the smallest first step I can take THIS WEEK?

05

Complete this sentence: *"In 6 months, I will feel proud if I have..."*

Feedback:

Look at your checklist:

- Count your ✓ marks - these are your strengths!
- Look at your ? marks - these are your priorities to work on
- Your ✗ marks - find help or resources for these areas

- You don't need everything perfect to start - but you need to know what you still need to learn.
- You need to start to become good.
- The equine industry needs YOUR ideas, energy, and passion.
- Your journey as an equine entrepreneur starts now. Good luck!

Real Stories from Young People

Júlíus Guðni Sveinsson - Founder of Sveifla (Iceland)

READ MORE:

Young Equine Innovators

Júlíus Guðni Sveinsson

How It Started

Júlíus grew up on a horse farm in North Iceland, where horses weren't just animals—they were part of daily life, family tradition, and the tourism business his family runs. Surrounded by Icelandic horses from birth, he learned early what riders really need in the saddle.

But it wasn't until he took on responsibility for showcasing the Icelandic horse to tourists—demonstrating the breed's unique gaits—that he started seeing things differently. As he worked with horses and equipment day after day, a problem became impossible to ignore

The riding equipment available simply wasn't good enough.

Bridles wore out too quickly. Gloves didn't last. Reins failed. And importantly, much of the equipment didn't prioritize horse welfare the way Júlíus believed it should.

His breakthrough thought was simple but powerful:

"What if I could create products that last longer, work better, and put the horse's comfort first?"

That idea became **Sveifla**—a business producing high-quality, practical riding equipment designed for real horsemen and horsewomen.

Júlíus Guðni Sveinsson

Turning an Idea Into a Business

Júlíus didn't wait to become an expert before he started. At just 21 years old, he took his first practical steps: researching suppliers, contacting manufacturers, requesting samples, and - most importantly - **testing everything himself.**

He didn't just rely on his own judgment. He asked local riders to test products and give honest feedback. He talked to people who would actually buy what he was creating. Within about three months, his first products arrived.

The pivotal moment came when those first items sold -and kept selling. That's when Júlíus realized:
"I'm really doing this."

He made a critical early decision: **start with products every rider needs**. Gloves were his entry point - practical, affordable to produce, and something riders replace regularly. This smart choice kept costs manageable and gave him immediate cash flow to reinvest.

Júlíus Guðni Sveinsson

Challenges Faced

Júlíus faced the challenge many young entrepreneurs do: **he was starting from scratch**. He'd been a user of riding equipment his whole life, but knowing what you need and knowing how to manufacture it are two very different things.

Finding the right manufacturing partner was crucial - and he got lucky. The company he chose was responsive, communicative, and willing to work with a young entrepreneur testing new ideas. When things didn't go perfectly, they helped him problem-solve quickly.

Financial limitations were real. Living in remote North Iceland with limited capital meant every investment had to be carefully thought through. He couldn't afford mistakes.

And there was the **logistics challenge**: all products are imported, which requires careful planning to balance costs, timing, and environmental responsibility. Every order needs to be strategic - scheduled well in advance and sized appropriately.

Challenges Faced

One of his biggest setbacks came early: a batch of warm winter gloves arrived with a manufacturing defect which impacted quality. Rather than compromise his reputation by selling substandard products, Júlíus made a tough call: **he wouldn't sell them at all**.

Instead, he gave them away for free, explaining the quality issue upfront. Many customers were delighted by his honesty - and the unexpected gift. That decision reinforced his commitment: **Sveifla would never compromise on quality**.

Júlíus Guðni Sveinsson

Supports That Helped

Júlíus credits several key supports for helping Sveifla grow:

- **Family and girlfriend:** Helped wherever possible—spreading the word, assisting at markets, offering encouragement
- **Friends and early customers:** Bought products and became advocates, helping build credibility
- **Market organizers and event hosts:** Gave him opportunities to sell directly to riders at markets and gatherings
- **His manufacturing partner:** Provided invaluable input on materials, design improvements, and problem-solving
- **Northwest Iceland Development Foundation:** Provided funding specifically for product development
- **Young Equine Innovators project:** Invited him to attend a meeting in Ireland, connecting him with a wider network

Beyond tangible support, Júlíus values something simple but powerful: Encouragement from people who believed in what he was building. The most valuable guidance he received?

Be interested. Be careful. But also have the courage to innovate.

Where Sveifla Is Now

Júlíus sells through multiple channels:

- An E-Commerce store serving customers across Iceland (and beyond): www.sveifla.is
- Direct sales at (equestrian) markets and events
- Sponsorships of competitive riding teams - putting Sveifla products exactly where his customers are

In 2026, he'll attend **Landsmót**, Iceland's largest horsemen gathering, where 8,000 - 10,000 people are expected. It's a major milestone for a business that started less than a couple of years ago.

The impact goes beyond sales. Júlíus has created himself a job and a future - one that allows him to live and work on the family farm in remote North Iceland, doing what he loves. His customers appreciate his commitment to quality, practicality, and fair pricing.

He's building Sveifla largely on his own, though family and his girlfriend help wherever they can. As the business grows, he may build a team - but for now, he's proving that one person with a clear vision and strong work ethic can make a real impact.

Július Guðni Sveinsson

Vision for the Future

Júlíus sees a **big and bright future** for Sveifla. He's confident there's strong demand in Iceland for high-quality, practical riding equipment at reasonable prices. His customers aren't looking for luxury - they want products that work, last, and respect the horse.

That gives Sveifla a **broad customer base**: from tourism operators like his family to competitive riders to everyday horse owners.

His goal is clear: **expand Sveifla to become essential for Iceland's horsemen and horsewomen - and eventually reach riders of Icelandic horses in other countries too.**

Advice for Young Entrepreneurs

"Make yourself a good plan and a goal - and start. Be open to changing things that don't work out. Be brave, sensitive and see your opportunities"

Július Guðni Sveinsson

He emphasizes **thoughtful innovation** - not rushing, but not hesitating either. Success comes from balancing preparation with action.

young
equine
innovators

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