**Press breakfast invitation** – World Bank and European Commission announcing biggest regional startup contest “Pioneers of the Balkans” on 28th August, starting at 9am, Esplanade Zagreb Hotel

"Pioneers of the Balkans" is probably the **biggest startup competition to ever take place in the Balkans**! The program is led by the team of Pioneers Festival in Vienna on behalf of the **World Bank and the European Commission**. Pioneers Festival is Europe's leading annual conference on science, technology and entrepreneurship, gathering more than 3,000 innovative entrepreneurs, companies and venture capital investors under one roof at the Hofburg Imperial Palace in Vienna each year.

"Pioneers of the Balkans" is delivered in **cooperation with several partners from across the region**. Belgrade Venture Forum will host the **Semi-Finals on 12-14 November in Belgrade**. The finalists of this unique competition will then present again **on 3-4 December in Zagreb** at Balkan Venture Forum.

All **startup entrepreneurs, innovative small and medium enterprises (SME)** with promising products or services, as well as **ICT outsourcing firms** or **individuals with an idea for the 'next big thing'** are welcome to apply. All eligible applicants will have the chance to participate in the Semi-Finals in Belgrade. Our participants will furthermore receive a **comprehensive preparation and training package provided by the World Bank** and get a **free one-day pass to attend Belgrade Venture Forum**. Most importantly, they will pitch their business in private, behind the closed doors, in front a **jury consisting of investors and successful entrepreneurs.**

The 50 best entrepreneurs will be selected as finalists and invited to Zagreb. At the **exclusive Investors Conference** there, they will have the chance to meet **more than 100 international venture capitalists, angel investors and corporate leaders**. And the very best teams will have the chance to negotiate **EUR 200,000 in seed investment by J&T Ventures** (Czech Republic) and **Speedinvest** (Austria) to grow their business.

The **deadline for submitting applications online is Monday, 31 August** (midnight). All details are also available on our official website at [http://pioneersofthebalkans.io](http://pioneersofthebalkans.io/).

Please note that press conference will be held over a **breakfast at the Esplanade hotel in Zagreb**, (Mihanoviceva 1) on **Friday, 28 August, starting 9 a.m.**

All attendees will need to **confirm their attendance** upfront to secure their accreditations

via [peter.trapp@pioneers.io](mailto:peter.trapp@pioneers.io) latest **by Thursday 27 August, 5pm**.