

MEHMET BAŞARAN

International Growth, Strategic Partnerships & Ecosystem Executive

hello@therealbasaran.com • [linkedin.com/in/mehmet.basaran](https://www.linkedin.com/in/mehmet.basaran) • therealbasaran.com • Istanbul, Türkiye

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International growth and partnerships executive with over two decades of experience spanning private enterprise, government, higher education and entrepreneurship. Spent eleven years in the field of inward investment for the UK Government across Türkiye and the wider Eastern Europe & Central Asia region, building a pipeline of 400+ opportunities across more than ten technology sectors and helping 125+ companies establish in the UK, worth £516M+ in investment and 775+ jobs. Moved the operating model from reactive to ecosystem-led, lifting pipeline performance by 37% and generating roughly three-quarters of new opportunities through direct relationships with founders, accelerators, universities and venture capital communities. That ecosystem-first approach traces back to an earlier role at the Netherlands Institute for Higher Education, managing international programmes and institutional partnerships between Dutch and Turkish universities, research institutions, government bodies and diplomatic missions. Now Founder & Managing Director of Frontbenchers Limited, advising founders and organisations across various sectors on international expansion, market entry and strategic partnerships.

CORE EXECUTIVE COMPETENCIES

- International Growth Strategy & Market Entry
- Strategic Partnerships & Ecosystem Building
- Innovation Ecosystem Development
- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Promotion
- Founder & Executive Advisory
- Cross-Border Institutional Collaboration
- Cross-Sectoral Stakeholder Leadership
- Programme Design & Multi-Stakeholder Delivery

SELECTED EXECUTIVE ACHIEVEMENTS

- £516M+ inward investment facilitated across 125+ confirmed UK market-entry projects, supporting the creation of 775+ jobs (UK Department for Business & Trade, 11-year tenure).
- Built and scaled an international investment pipeline of 400+ qualified opportunities, redesigning the regional operating model from reactive to ecosystem-led engagement and lifting qualified pipeline performance by 37%.
- Generated ~75% of opportunities through self-built ecosystem relationships with founders, accelerators, universities and venture capital communities, rather than inbound enquiries.
- Scaled the UK Technology Investment Conference roughly 6× (170 → nearly 1,000 attendees), establishing one of the largest bilateral UK–Türkiye technology and innovation platforms.
- Built the London Tech Week national delegation model for Türkiye, growing annual participation to 100+ companies and ecosystem stakeholders.
- Approximately tripled departmental sales while building and leading a newly established 20-person team.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Founder & Managing Director, Frontbenchers Limited

2025 – Present | Istanbul, Türkiye

Founded and lead an executive advisory practice supporting international growth, strategic partnerships and founder advisory for organisations and entrepreneurs, drawing on two decades of cross-sector experience in international expansion, ecosystem development and investment promotion.

- Advise founders and organisations on international expansion strategy, market entry and strategic partnership development.
- Apply an ecosystem-led approach to growth advisory, built on eleven years of relationship-based pipeline development within UK Government investment promotion.
- Advise a portfolio of technology founders across health-tech, digital health, cybersecurity and deep technology, covering international expansion, UK and US market entry, commercial strategy and investor readiness.

Senior Inward Investment Adviser, UK Department for Business & Trade

2014 – 2025 | *Istanbul, Türkiye*

Eleven-year tenure leading inward investment activity for the UK Government across Türkiye and the Eastern Europe & Central Asia (EECA) region, covering 10+ technology sectors. Redesigned the regional operating model from reactive opportunity management to proactive, ecosystem-led engagement.

- Built and managed a qualified international expansion pipeline of 400+ opportunities, supporting investment lifecycles from 20 days to 18 months.
- Facilitated 125+ confirmed UK market-entry projects, generating £516M+ in inward investment and 775+ jobs.
- Increased qualified investment pipeline performance by 37% through an ecosystem-led operating model redesign, moving from inbound-enquiry dependency to proactive founder and ecosystem engagement.
- Generated approximately 75% of investment opportunities through proactively built relationships with founders, accelerators, tech clusters, universities and venture capital communities.
- Founded and scaled the UK Technology Investment Conference from ~170 to nearly 1,000 attendees (~6× growth), establishing it as one of the largest bilateral UK–Türkiye technology and innovation platforms.
- Built the London Tech Week national delegation model for Türkiye, growing annual participation to 100+ companies and ecosystem stakeholders and integrating it into the wider inward investment pipeline.

Public Relations & Office Manager, Netherlands Institute for Higher Education (NIHA)

2011 – 2014 | *Ankara, Türkiye*

- Led international programme management and institutional partnership development between Dutch and Turkish universities, research institutions, government bodies and diplomatic missions.
- Managed the FIT Platform and a TÜBİTAK-supported integrated water management research programme, coordinating multi-stakeholder academic and institutional collaboration.

Membership Affairs & Services Manager, World Trade Center Ankara

2010 – 2011 | *Ankara, Türkiye*

- Led commercial transformation and business development, growing organisational revenue by approximately 40% through new service lines.
- Launched a serviced-office concept for the primary use of international organizations and a corporate training business line for governmental clients.
- Organised the Turkey–Japan Trade Mission, delivering 20+ B2B meetings with WTC Osaka.

Business Agent, ANKON Consulting

2009 | *Ankara, Türkiye*

- Delivered market intelligence and business matchmaking for the Netherlands' Economic Mission to Turkey.
- Managed an independent portfolio of five Dutch companies entering the Turkish market.

Sales & Marketing Manager, EGAŞ Eczane Gereçleri

2005 – 2008 | *Ankara, Türkiye*

- Built and led a newly established commercial department of approximately 20 staff.
- Approximately tripled departmental sales while managing the company's international supplier relationships.

EDUCATION

Masters on Economic Development and Growth

Gazi University, Türkiye (2008)

Thesis on the structural preconditions for sustained 6.5–8% annual GDP growth in Türkiye; research subsequently published as a peer-reviewed journal article (*Ekonomik Yaklaşım Dergisi*, 2011, co-authored with Prof. Dr. M. Kemal Çakman).

Bachelors on Economics

Başkent University, Türkiye (2005)

EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

- Entrepreneurship Essentials (Harvard Business School Online, 2021)
- Macroeconomic Challenges of Global Imbalances (London School of Economics, 2014)
- Effective Account Management & Consultative Selling and Investment Promotion (UKTI, 2014–2015)
- International Negotiation Techniques (Clingendael Institute, 2012).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Languages: Turkish (native), English (full professional proficiency)
- Open to permanent relocation and international travel of up to ~40% of working time; available for full-time executive leadership, fractional executive roles, advisory board appointments and strategic consulting.