# 1st Version Of The Knowledge Repository On Funding Opportunities



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### **1. Introduction**

This guide has been put together to serve as a source of information for digital and deep-tech startups that are searching for different types of opportunities to develop their products and expand internationally, as well as a guide for any institutions that want to support startups in their development. This is the first version of the document, created as part of the Ready2Scale program running until 2025, and it will be further developed.

It covers selected: financing under the EU's 2021-2027 budget, open calls in innovation, significant European events, as lists of business angels and venture capital networks. The guide presents essential information to help potential fundraisers map out their course of action as precisely as possible. The presented material reflects the state as of June 2024.

To facilitate navigation, the document is divided into three sections. The first section addresses situations where a startup seeks public support, the second where it looks for private funding, and the third when it wants to join the European startup community by taking advantage of networking opportunities. Each category includes examples of the offering. Information is presented clearly and understandably, allowing users to quickly select the most relevant material and use links for more information.



### 2. Public funding

The selected offering is highly popular among the startups with whom the authors of the document have collaborated so far.

A significant portion of the funding described below comes from Horizon Europe, the EU's primary funding programme for research and innovation. Therefore, this name will often reappear throughout this document.

The opportunities we describe are often complex and multifaceted. Later in the document, we will introduce NCPs, which assist companies in understanding Horizon's offerings.

It's important to note that the first part of this chapter relates to the process where applications must be submitted, so startups can compete for funding. The second part describes contact points and hubs where various types of support can be found, including assistance in preparing proposals.

#### 2.1 European Grants

In this part, there is information about the activities of the European Innovation Council, projects supporting women in leadership positions, and funds aimed at developing companies closely aligned with sustainable development and the European Green Deal.

Under the umbrella of the **European Innovation Council**, you may find four streams of support. Startups are typically most interested in the EIC Accelerator.

#### **EIC Accelerator**

Supports startups and SMEs in developing and scaling up high-impact innovations. The recruitment process has two stages. First, it consists of a short proposal, and after qualification, a main proposal must be prepared. Applications can be submitted throughout the year but there are specific cut-offs when proposals are evaluated. Upon qualification, you can then submit a more detailed application.

Additionally, specific challenges <u>are announced</u> each year. It is advisable to follow this page, as the challenges are updated annually based on the most pressing needs identified for the current year.

**Grants:** up to EUR 2.5 million, with the option of equity investments ranging from EUR 0.5 to 15 million.

#### **EIC Pathfinder**

EIC Pathfinder supports multidisciplinary research teams where startups may be a part of the consortium to explore breakthrough technologies. It is targeting visionary research that can lead to significant technological advances. Similarly to EIC Accelerator, there are bottom-down open calls and calls with <u>specific challenges</u>. It aims to transform high-risk, high-reward research into viable innovations.

Grants: up to EUR 3-4 million



#### **EIC Transition**

EIC Transition helps convert research results into market-ready innovations. It supports projects which have already received funds from EIC Pathfinder and ERC Proof of Concept with funding to mature technologies and develop business cases. Grants focus on three main challenges: micro-nano-bio devices, environmental intelligence, and chip-scale optical frequency combs. The program fosters collaboration to bridge the gap between lab research and commercialization.

Grants: up to EUR 2.5 million and additional booster grants for ongoing projects.

#### **Business Acceleration Services**

These services are aimed only at participants, who have received funding from EIC programmes such as the EIC Accelerator or Pathfinder. Additionally, applicants of EIC Accelerator who have passed Step 1 and been invited to prepare a full proposal, can benefit from 3 days of remote coaching to help with Step 2 application. The services include coaching, networking opportunities, access to investors, and increased visibility in the European innovation ecosystem.

#### EmpoWomen

Horizon Europe also supports programs dedicated to women. EmpoWomen is a 2-year programme (2024-2025), aiming to tackle the underrepresentation of women in the deep-tech sector, particularly in emerging European countries. 25 selected via open calls womenled companies will participate in a unique acceleration programme, shaped together by StartupWiseGuys & BusinessAngelsEurope, and get services, awards and equity-free funding per startup (the deadline for applications is December 2024).

#### Grants: up to EUR 45,000

#### WomenTechEU

This initiative aims to assist women-led startups and SMEs in the deep tech sector. Eligible applicants are early-stage startups founded or co-founded by women, or those with a female CEO, registered in the EU or Horizon Europe-associated countries. Successful applicants may receive a grant to support their initial steps in innovation and business development. Moreover, the program provides mentoring, coaching, and networking opportunities to help female entrepreneurs scale their businesses and strengthen their leadership capabilities.

#### Grants: up to EUR 75,000

#### New European Bauhause

The New European Bauhaus is another interesting form of financial support that companies and startups can utilise. It promotes funding for various activities aimed at fostering the implementation of the European Green Deal. This initiative supports startups by promoting innovation at the intersection of art, culture, social inclusion, science, and technology to create sustainable and aesthetically pleasing living spaces. Startups can access funding with projects that align principles of sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusivity. Examples of three calls closing on September 13th,2024, can be found <u>here</u>



#### 2.2 Other types of support from the European Commission

Below are various forms of support that are intended to positively impact the development of a startup, most commonly in the form of advice, consultations, or assistance in building business partnerships.

#### <u>EEN</u>

The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) is primarily focused on helping businesses find international partners and opportunities through various events and matchmaking activities. If you are seeking a business partner in Europe, EEN should be your first point of contact. With a vast network of over 600 member organisations across more than 60 countries. EEN facilitates collaborations and connections between small and medium-sized enterprises, helping them expand their market reach and innovate globally.

#### <u>NCP</u>

National Contact Points are places where information about Horizon Europe can be obtained. The earlier part of the document showed how many initiatives dedicated to startups come precisely from this source. Each of them has its specifics and conditions that must be met to enter the competition. It is complex, so free support can be sought from NCPs. They are providing guidance, practical information, and assistance on all aspects of participating in Horizon Europe. Contact points are established in many non-EU and non-associated countries as well.

#### **EDIHs**

European Digital Innovation Hubs are one-stop shops supporting companies and public sector organisations to respond to digital challenges and become more competitive. Across Europe, many EDIHs have information points.

Digital and deep tech startups can benefit from this initiative in two main ways:

Access to Advanced Technologies: EDIHs offer startups access to cutting-edge technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), High-Performance Computing (HPC), and cybersecurity tools. This allows startups to experiment and integrate these advanced technologies into their products and services without significant upfront investment. Startups can enhance their capabilities through workshops, training sessions, and guidance from experts, helping them stay competitive and innovative in the fast-evolving digital landscape.

**Collaboration Opportunities**: If a startup develops technology that can support the growth of other entities, it can collaborate with EDIHs to find clients for its technologies. This mutual cooperation can help startups establish valuable partnerships and expand their market reach.

#### <u>EIT</u>

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) supports the growth of innovative small and medium-sized enterprises by promoting collaboration among the education, research, and innovation sectors. Key activities facilitated by EIT include:

 Training the next generation of entrepreneurs through entrepreneurial education programs at master's and doctoral levels.



- Developing innovative products and services through research projects focused on innovation.
- Supporting new companies during their startup and scale-up phases with coaching, business creation, and acceleration services.

The EIT operates eight Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). Therefore, if a startup fits within one of these areas, it is best to seek information directly from the appropriate community

- <u>EIT Climate KIC</u>: working to accelerate the transition to a zero-carbon economy
- <u>EIT InnoEnergy</u>: achieving a sustainable energy future for Europe
- <u>EIT Digital</u>: driving Europe's digital transformation
- <u>EIT Health</u>: providing EU citizens greater opportunities to enjoy a healthy life
- <u>EIT Raw Materials</u>: developing raw materials as a major strength for Europe
- <u>EIT Food</u>: leading a global revolution in food and production
- <u>EIT Urban Mobility</u>: developing smart, green and integrated urban transport
- <u>EIT Manufacturing</u>: strengthening and increasing the competitiveness of Europe's manufacturing industry



# **3. Private funding – European Venture Capital and Business Angels**

If a startup decides that in the future it would like to collaborate with Venture Capital or Business Angels, it will certainly want to understand the market landscape.

Venture capital (VC) and business angels (BA) might be crucial for the development of digital and deep tech startups. VCs are professional groups that pool large sums of money from investors to fund high-growth startups in exchange for equity and often take an active role in the business. Business angels are individuals who invest personal funds in early-stage startups, providing smaller amounts of capital along with mentorship and valuable networks. Seed funding from business angels helps startups build prototypes and validate business models, while VCs provide larger investments for scaling and expansion. Each type of investor brings unique advantages and significantly impacts a startup's trajectory.

To help startups find these investors, comprehensive databases list VC firms and business angels, offering details on their investment preferences and past investments.

Below, we present several databases with hundreds of VCs and Business Angels. Most of them focus a significant part of their activities in Europe, but not exclusively.

#### EBAN membership Directory

EBAN (European Business Angels Network) is an umbrella organisation connecting business angel networks, investors, and early-stage funds across Europe. The Membership Directory includes angel networks, early-stage funds, and associates from various countries, providing a platform for collaboration and resource sharing. It's a valuable source of information for startups, but the members are primarily investors.

#### Invest Europe

The organisation publishes an annual survey that collects comprehensive and robust activity data on fundraising and investments from more than 1,750 private equity and venture capital firms in Europe. It may help to understand general activities in the European market. Invest Europe is the world's largest association of private capital providers, representing Europe's private equity, venture capital, and infrastructure investment firms, as well as their investors, including major pension funds and insurers. The association aims to promote a better understanding of private equity, enabling its members to invest capital and expertise into businesses and generate returns for investors, free from unnecessary regulation and constraints.

#### <u>OpenVC</u>

On the OpenVC portal, there are several thousand companies that invest in early-stage startups. The search engine allows you to filter entities based on geography, the development stage of the startup, and the size of the expected investment.

#### <u>AirTable</u>

Similarly to the above, under the link, you can find another extensive list of VCs mainly from the Baltic region and Eastern Europe. You can quickly sort by the focus area of the VC. There are also examples of other capital investments made by these entities.



#### Polish Funding Ecosystem by Inovo Venture Partners v3

This database was created by Inovo Venture Partners. Although last updated in 2022 and made from a Polish perspective, it still contains over 200 VCs and interestingly, profiles of more than 54 Business Angels with their LinkedIn profiles are presented. Polish investors are marked as "local" under the VC tab, while others are marked as "foreign." The document also includes accelerators.

#### Mountain Ventures

Another database allows searching for VCs focused primarily on investments in Europe.

#### Sogrape Ventures – open call

In most of the presented databases, you will find a brief profile of the entity and their preferences. The market is highly specialised, so depending on the industry, you can find a well-matched entity. For example, this particular entity seeks to invest in startups that have innovative concepts, technologies, processes, and business models within the value chain of the wine industry specifically, and the beverage sector in general.



### 4. Community Events and Platforms

The European startup community holds tremendous potential. However, navigating the multitude of events, networks, and platforms that connect this community can be challenging. Below, we present an initial compilation where you can find events, networks and platforms.

Events are offering opportunities to connect with potential investors and partners, learn from successful entrepreneurs, and stay up to date on industry trends. While direct funding isn't typically provided at these events they will facilitate connections with future investors. We propose categorising the events based on their primary focus areas to better understand each one. Some events may overlap depending on their content and objectives.

#### **4.1 DeepTech Focused Events**

#### DeepTech Atelier (Latvia)

The Baltics' largest deep tech industry event brings together all stakeholders of the ecosystem: entrepreneurs, scientists and technology developers, investors, government, and public organisations. The two-day conference offers outstanding international speakers, pitch sessions, practical workshops, and excellent networking opportunities at B2B sessions.

#### DeepTech Summit & Challenge (Poland)

The most important event & deep tech startup contest in the CEE region hosted in collaboration with Hello Tomorrow & International Partners (CEE & EU). The Deep Tech CEE Challenge is an open call to all visionaries who are working on startups, scale-ups & projects based on R&D or hi-tech engineering (TRL 3-8) with high scientific or engineering risk and product-market fit risk, solving environmental, human, or industrial problems.

#### Hello Tomorrow Global Summit (France)

The Hello Tomorrow Global Summit in Paris stands as the pioneering global event exclusively crafted for scientists and deep tech founders from diverse industries. This summit goes beyond usual limits, bringing together more than 3,000 attendees, 100 speakers, and 125 exhibitors.

#### Healthcare Innovation World Cup

The 16th Healthcare Innovation World Cup<sup>®</sup> is looking for the next generation of smart health devices, medical wearables, digital biomarkers, electroceuticals, intelligent patches, and more. HealthTech and MedTech innovators worldwide are invited to take part free of charge (the 14th of September, 2024 is the deadline for submitting solutions).

#### 4.2 Events for All Startups, Including Tech

#### 4 Years From Now (4YFN) (Spain)

A startup event held in conjunction with the Mobile World Congress (MWC) in Barcelona, Spain. It focuses on connecting startups, investors, corporations, and public institutions to foster innovation and collaboration within the global tech ecosystem. 4YFN provides a platform for startups to showcase their products, pitch their ideas, and network with potential investors and partners. It features keynote speeches, panel discussions, pitching



sessions, workshops, and networking opportunities, making it a vibrant hub for entrepreneurship and technological advancement. The event aims to support startup growth, facilitate investment opportunities, and drive forward-thinking initiatives in technology and business.

#### Wolves Summit CEE (Warsaw, Poland)

Wolves Summit is an events and marketing platform connecting young tech and other startup companies from CEE and DACH with VC funds, innovation divisions of global companies and angel investors.

#### EBAN Congress

One of Europe's most prominent events for angel investors, entrepreneurs, and industry experts. Organised by the European Business Angels Network (EBAN), the summit brings together over 500 participants from around the globe. The event features insightful sessions, workshops, keynote speeches, and networking opportunities, focusing on the latest trends and challenges in the startup ecosystem.

#### Latitude59 (Estonia)

The Mission of Latitude59 is to employ the tools, talent, and know-how of the startup and tech community to tackle the crises the world faces today. From the Pitch Competition and Demo Area to the Karma Matchmaking and colourful program of Side Events – Latitude59 offers valuable opportunities to a startup at any stage of growth.

#### sTARTUp Day 2025 (Estonia)

At the sTARTUp Day participants can take part in various side events designed to ignite growth and propel their businesses forward. This event may help in connecting with investors, partners, and new valuable customers.

#### STARTUP DAY and STARTUP BBQ (Estonia)

Prominent events in Estonia's startup calendar, focusing on fostering entrepreneurship and innovation. STARTUP DAY is a large-scale conference held in Tartu, bringing together startups, investors, and industry experts for networking, pitching, and learning opportunities. It aims to connect entrepreneurs with resources and knowledge to scale their ventures. STARTUP BBQ, typically held in Tallinn, complements this by providing a relaxed environment for networking and informal discussions among startup enthusiasts, investors, and stakeholders in Estonia's vibrant startup community. These events play a crucial role in showcasing Estonia as a hub for startup innovation in the Baltic region and beyond.

#### Start-up Europe Awards (Belgium)

An initiative promoted by the European Commission, supported by the Committee of the Regions and the European Parliament. It's implemented by the Finnova Foundation in collaboration with Startup Europe. The SEUA serves as an open innovation tool, allowing companies to identify talented startups capable of solving current challenges across various domains.

#### Slush (Finland)

Slush is a world-renowned startup and technology event held annually in Helsinki, Finland. The event aims to connect startups, investors, and industry leaders from around the globe. The event features inspiring speakers, pitching competitions, workshops, and extensive networking opportunities. Attracting over 25,000 participants from more than 100 countries,



Slush has grown into one of the largest and most influential gatherings in the startup ecosystem. It provides a platform for innovation, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas, making it a cornerstone event for entrepreneurs and investors worldwide.

#### Web Summit (Portugal)

One of the largest and most influential technology conferences in the world, held annually in Lisbon, Portugal. Its mission is to connect the technology community with all industries, old and new. The event features an extensive lineup of speakers, including top executives, industry leaders, and innovators, covering a wide range of topics from technology and startups to politics and culture. Web Summit offers networking opportunities, pitching competitions, and workshops for its diverse audience, which includes startups, investors, corporations, and media. Attracting over 70,000 attendees from around the globe, Web Summit is a key event for fostering innovation and shaping the future of technology.

#### PODIM (PODIM Conference, Slovenia)

Startup and tech event which gathers entrepreneurs, investors, corporate representatives, and innovators from the Central and Eastern European region and beyond. The conference features keynote speeches, panel discussions, startup pitches, workshops, and networking sessions, aiming to foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and investment opportunities within the startup ecosystem.

#### TechChill (Latvia)

A leading tech and startup event that brings together entrepreneurs, investors, tech enthusiasts, and industry professionals to discuss the latest trends, innovations, and opportunities in the startup ecosystem. The event features keynote speeches, panel discussions, startup pitches, workshops, and networking sessions. TechChill aims to accelerate growth within the Baltic and European startup communities. It serves as a platform for startups to showcase their ideas, connect with investors, and gain valuable insights from experienced mentors and thought leaders in the tech industry.

#### DeepTech Atelier (Latvia)

A specialised event focusing on deep technology innovations and startups. It typically features a series of workshops, presentations, and networking sessions designed to bring together researchers, entrepreneurs, investors, and industry experts interested in cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, biotech, and advanced materials. It aims to accelerate the development and adoption of disruptive technologies that have the potential to drive significant societal and economic impact.

#### Startup Fair Lithuania

A significant event in the Baltic startup ecosystem, aimed at fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and networking among startups, investors, and industry leaders. Held annually in Vilnius, it serves as a platform for startups to showcase their ideas, connect with potential investors, and gain visibility in the international startup community. The fair features pitch sessions, panel discussions, workshops, and networking opportunities, making it a valuable event for anyone involved or interested in the startup scene in Lithuania and beyond

#### TechBBQ (Denmark)

One of Denmark's largest annual tech and startup events, held in Copenhagen. It gathers entrepreneurs, investors, corporates, and tech enthusiasts to network, collaborate, and



discuss the latest trends in technology and innovation. The event features keynote speakers, panel discussions, pitching sessions, and ample networking opportunities, making it a valuable platform for startups to showcase their ideas, attract investment, and forge partnerships. TechBBQ aims to strengthen Denmark's position as a hub for entrepreneurship and innovation in the European tech ecosystem.

#### VivaTech (France)

A premier technology and innovation conference held annually in Paris, France. It serves as a global meeting ground for startups, established companies, investors, and tech enthusiasts to explore cutting-edge innovations and trends. The event features keynote speakers from industry leaders, startup pitches, exhibitions of emerging technologies, and networking opportunities. VivaTech aims to foster collaboration between startups and established companies, drive digital transformation, and showcase Europe's role in the global tech landscape. It attracts a diverse audience from around the world, making it a significant platform for connecting, learning, and showcasing innovations in technology.

#### **4.3 Events Facilitating Networking Between Investors and Startups**

#### FiBAN Angel Day (Finland)

Organised by the Finnish Business Angels Network (FiBAN), is a key event for business angels, investors, and startups. It focuses on networking, sharing investment insights, and promoting collaboration within the startup ecosystem. The event includes keynote speakers, panel discussions, pitching sessions, and workshops, providing valuable opportunities for learning and connection. It plays a crucial role in supporting early-stage companies and enhancing the investment landscape in Finland.

#### Engaged Investments (Czech Republic)

A prominent investment conference organised by DEPO Ventures, held annually in Prague, Czech Republic. This event brings together business angels, limited partners (LPs), venture capitalists (VCs), and startup founders primarily from the Central and Eastern European region. It aims to foster collaboration, share investment insights, and enhance the regional startup ecosystem through keynotes, panel discussions, pitching sessions, and networking opportunities. The next edition is scheduled for October 23-24, 2024, offering a dynamic platform for investors and entrepreneurs to connect and grow.

#### **Big Angels Day (France)**

The key event for European and African business angels, organised by Bpifrance in collaboration with France Angels. Held as part of the Bpifrance Inno Génération (BIG) event, it aims to highlight the role of business angels in the early-stage startup ecosystem. The event features both virtual and physical meetings between investors and entrepreneurs, as well as online workshops covering topics like becoming a business angel, cross-border investment, and the role of women in business angels.

#### E.G.G. Investor Day Athens

The E.G.G. Investor Day event is one of the largest investors' events where , more than 40 startup/scaleup companies have the opportunity to interact with more than 100 representatives from Venture Capital Funds, Family Offices, and Crowd Funding platforms as



well as individual Business Angels, from Greece, Central & Eastern Europe, Israel, USA, Canada and the UK.

#### **4.4 Sector Specific or Industry Focused Events**

#### Startup Network Europe

- SNE Startup Conferences are annual events, where the local startup ecosystem gets together to: Hear insights shared by speaking founders and investors, exchange on the latest industry updates, form new partnerships with local & international stakeholders, network with peers.
- SNE Startup Meetups are occasions for hyper-local ecosystem networking. At our meetups, those in the local startup scene can: socialise with each other in a relaxed setting, meet new people your country's & city's startup community, meet visiting international founders & investors interested in your geography.
- SNE hosts online events that include a combination of the following elements: online conferences featuring keynotes and panels with startup ecosystem leaders, knowledge-sharing webinar sessions with subject-matter experts, bringing value for audiences in specific industries, access to online networking and matchmaking platforms.

#### 4.5 Platforms

They are providing customised support services such as mentorship, accelerator programs, and specialised tools to help startups expand their market reach and navigate the complexities of the startup landscape.

#### <u>F6S</u>

It is a global platform supporting digital and deep tech startups with tools for fundraising, talent recruitment, and community engagement. It connects startups to a vast network of investors, accelerators, and mentors crucial for growth. For example, startups can use F6S to apply for accelerator programs like Techstars, Ready2Scale or funding opportunities from venture capital firms like Sequoia Capital.

#### <u>Sploro</u>

Platform connects deep tech startups with European research facilities, stimulating collaboration and innovation. It helps startups access advanced research infrastructure and funding opportunities, such as Horizon Europe grants for joint projects. For instance, a biotech startup can use Sploro to collaborate with research institutes on pharmaceutical development, leveraging both expertise and funding to accelerate innovation. Sploro enhances startups' capabilities by bridging them to essential resources and funding crucial for growth in Europe's deep tech landscape.

#### **EuroQuity**

Platform EuroQuity is a platform that connects companies, including digital and deep tech startups, with investors and partners across Europe. It facilitates networking and access to funding opportunities, helping startups accelerate their growth and innovation. EuroQuity also provides tools for visibility and collaboration, supporting startups in building strategic partnerships and expanding their market reach.

Plug and Play Europe



It is a leading innovation platform that supports startups through accelerator programs, corporate partnerships, and investment opportunities. They collaborate closely with industry leaders to connect startups with resources, mentorship, and funding needed for growth. Plug and Play Europe focuses on various industries including fintech, health, and mobility, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship across the continent.



### **5. SUMMARY**

While a large portion of the document will not become outdated quickly, it will be updated and expanded in 2025. The updated document will certainly appear on the <u>Ready2Scale</u> website. Authors also encourage you to visit the websites of <u>Poznań Science and Technology</u> <u>Park, Civitta</u>, <u>EBAN</u>, <u>Tehnopol Science and Business Park</u>. These organisations work with startups daily and are available to answer any questions.

