STARTUP **SUPPORT IN** LATVIA

state programs, private support programs & more

The number of startups in Latvia has consistently grown over the last few years. And it has been largely possible due to the wide variety of support available for the local startup ecosystem players.

Whether you're currently working on your startup idea, need support to enable further business growth, or are ready to focus on your startup's export, the Latvian startup ecosystem has support for everyone.

Note: Please see abbreviations used in this infographic explained in the table below









SUPPORT OPTIONS FOR A STARTUP IDEA

YOU



Have an idea for a startup



Have a freshly established startup without a functioning product or solution



Are in the process of creating your first product or solution prototype

YOUR OPTIONS

WHAT IS IT? FUNDING & SUPPORT CRITERIA

ALTUM FOR NEW STARTUPS 2

A state-funded loan program for newly-established startups or startups-to-be

- ◆ Up to 150,000 EUR
- Funding for current assets, real estate projects, buying equipment, machines, shipping vehicles

A startup to-be-founded or an already existing startup <5 years old

PROTOTECH 2

A governmental support program

Provides prototype development assistance for science-intensive industry entrepreneurs, in collaboration with several local universities

- Up to 15,000 EUR
- Access to well-equipped prototyping labs
- ◆ Mentorship

- Not necessary to have an established business, can apply as an individual
- The idea has to represent the smart technology sector, show novelty and be sustainable, have high commercialization potential
- Competent and experienced team

FUNDING & SUPPORT

CRITERIA

UNILAB

A university incubator aimed at commercializing scienceintensive ideas and creating deeptech startups

Accepted teams enter a 4-month program, which ends with a demo day attended by potential investors and experts providing their feedback

- ◆ Up to 5,000 EUR
- Individualized 4-month program including expert support, help in idea and business development and commercialization
- 1+ team members are students at the RTU or UL
- 1+ team members have a STEM background
- The business idea is scientific/ technology intensive and is based on scientifically developed technology or research

MAGNETIC LATVIA PRE-INCUBATION PROGRAM (PINK)

A state-funded 6-month long preincubation program by the LIAA

Each program accepts 250 participants

Program is carried out by 11 regional Business Incubators and 9 support units, as well as the Creative Industries Incubator in Riga

- Support in business idea validation and development
- Support in business model development
- Mentorship and business training
- Access to coworking space and office equipment
- Access to wide network of industry professionals
- Have a business idea but no business yet

or

- Fresh businesses at the beginning of their entrepreneurship journey
- Business idea cannot be connected to trade, financial intermediation, commercial services, and gambling sectors

UL BUSINESS INCUBATOR

UL's business incubator, offering several pre-incubation programs primarily aimed at students

- Support in business idea validation and further development
- Coworking space
- Photo and video studio
- 3D printer, lasercutter
- Production space

1+ team members are students at the UI

RISEBA CREATIVE BUSINESS INCUBATOR

A business incubator by RISEBA University providing preincubation support to RISEBA students, alumni and employees

- Support and consultations for starting your business
- Mentorship and coaching
- Networking opportunities and coworking space
- Guest lectures, workshops, events
- Must be a RISEBA student with a business idea
- A 3-minute pitch presentation of the idea required when applying

FUNDING & SUPPORT

CRITERIA

B-SPACE INCUBATOR

A business incubator by RSU

Offers pre-incubation and incubation depending on the state of your idea

- Mentorship for business idea development
- Networking with experts and industry professionals
- Entrepreneurship skills development
- Idea validation and testing
- Access to common rooms with office equipment and more
- Pre-incubation open to anyone with or without a specific business idea
- Incubation open to teams of 2-5 people with a business idea
- 1+ team members are RSU students, employees, or graduates (within the last 3 years)

VENTSPILS PROTOTYPING HUB

One of the newest prototyping hubs in Latvia aimed at promoting the development and production of new products and business development in Ventspils

- Technical consultations in the development and production of prototypes and parts, incl. development of 3D models of parts
- Manufacturing parts and prototypes
- Access to a wide range of prototyping equipment

Open to the general public, no specific requirements

DARE 2

A co-creation space in Valmiera, offering a wide range of equipment for prototype and product development as well as creative processes

- 20+ machines and tools available for booking
- Assitance in equipment usage

Open to the general public, no specific requirements

MAKE RĪGA HACKERSPACE 2

A community-operated prototyping hub for tech enthusiasts in Riga

- 40+ pieces of equipment for prototyping that can be used by paying a monthly fee
- Monthly meetups

Must become an official Hackerspace member

FUNDING & SUPPORT

CRITERIA

ESI INCUBATOR

A 4-month-long student business innovation program that brings together academic forces and industry representatives to pass on their knowledge of sustainable and innovative business development to students

Besides the Incubator, ESI offers educational programs aimed at uni students

- ◆ A 4,500 EUR grant
- Mentorship for the idea and business development
- Assitance in prototyping
- ◆ A shared office space for the team
- Lectures, one-on-one meetings, seminars hosted by industry experts
- ◆ A team of 2-4 people
- 1+ team members are university students in Latvia
- A business idea

IGNITION QUALIFIERS PROGRAM

A 5-week program by the Commercialization Reactor, financed by LIAA, preparing next deep tech entrepreneurs to start their business journey

- Weekly 2-hour sessions, a bootcamp, and work groups led by experts
- Know-how about building a deep tech startup and commercializing scientific findings
- Opportunity to attend the annual Deep Tech Ignition Event

Wilingness and interest in building a deep tech startup

STARTUP WISE GUYS PRE-ACCELERATOR PROGRAM

An equity-free, no strings attached training program for early-stage startup founders

8 weeks of training aimed to prepare startups to apply for fulltime accelerator programs or firstround investment

- Business idea validation
- Access to a community of 350+ mentors and 200+ investors
- Weekly P2P meeting sessions
- Early-stage startup with at least two co-founders
- Working draft of an MVP
- In the process of building market research knowledge

SUPPORT OPTIONS FOR STARTUP GROWTH

YOU



Have a startup and a product or solution and need a loan for further growth



Have a startup that you want to upgrade or an idea for another product or solution



Are looking for funding, support with attracting investments, or business growth assistance

YOUR OPTIONS

WHAT IS IT?

FUNDING & SUPPORT

CRITERIA

INNOVATION VOUCHERS

State aid program for businesses, supporting the development of new products or technologies

Provides financial support in the form of vouchers to finance startup research, prototyping, industrial design, testing & certification, talent, and more 3 voucher types, worth 5,000 EUR to 25,000 EUR

- Startup registered in Latvia
- New or updated product that has proven demand or advantages for business growth
- New product or technology has a development plan

WHAT IS IT? FUNDING & SUPPORT

LATVIAN MOD GRANT PROGRAM 2

A grant program by Latvian MoD supporting SMEs that are developing innovations in defense or security sectors

The program accepts project proposals

Co-funding of up to 200,000 EUR per project

- An SME (startups included) operating in defense and security industries, registered in Latvia
- ◆ TRL 4 to 8

CRITERIA

- Submitted project must have a practical defense or security application and clearly identifiable export potential
- ◆ The length of the submitted project is <3 years

SME FUND 2023 ¹²

An EU grant scheme designed to help SMEs protect their intellectual property rights

- Up to 3,355 EUR per SME in voucher format
- Financial support for IP Scan, trademarks, and designs

SMEs (startups included) established in the EU

EIT SUPPORT PROGRAMS

50+ different support programs

Focus areas include climate, digital transformation, food, health, energy, raw materials, urban mobility, manufacturing

- Various funding options available depending on the selected support program (up to 500,000 EUR)
- Training, mentorship, networking opportunities
- Access to investment opportunities
- Access to tech and talent

Eligibility criteria depend on the selected EIT Support program – you can explore them further here

EIC ACCELERATOR

Accelerator funded by the EU that supports startups and spinout companies to develop and scaleup game-changing innovations

- Grant funding (non-dilutive) of up to 2.5M EUR for innovation development costs
- Investments (equity or convertible loans) of up to 15M EUR for scaling and other relevant costs
- Deep tech startup or an SME established in an EU Member State or Associated Country, ready to scale up
- A high-impact innovative product, service or business model that could create new markets or disrupt existing ones in Europe and beyond
- The product or solution is at least at TRL 5

WHAT IS IT? FUNDING & SUPPORT CRITERIA

ENERGY EFFICIENCY LOAN WITH CAPITAL DISCOUNT

Altum (state-funded) program, implemented under EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility

Provides businesses with financial support for actions and projects related to energy efficiency and renewable energy usage

- ◆ Loan of up to 5M EUR
- Repayment period up to 15 years
- Capital discount for repayment of the principal loan amount is up to 30% of the project cost and up to 1.5M EUR
- Micro enterprises, SMEs, and large companies
- Clear plan of action for energy efficiency-related actions or renewable energy production at your company
- Precise project cost calculation and technical documentation
- Supported actions/projects include improving energy efficiency or introducing a renewable energy technology at your company, and purchase of electric cars

LOANS FOR COMPANIES' ENERGY EFFICIENCY OR SUSTAINABILITY D

Altum (state-funded) loan program aimed to promote companies' growth by implementing measures to improve energy efficiency

- ◆ Loan of up to 2.85M EUR
- Own contribution of ≥ 10%
- ◆ Loan holidays of up to 12 months
- Fixed annual interest rate of 4.3% to 6.5%
- Eased collateral requirements
- SMEs
- Detailed project description including costs and sustainability assessment
- Supported energy efficiency or sustainability-related actions include renewable energy usage (solar panels, wind turbines, biomass), electric cars and related infrastructure, construction of a new energy-efficient class A or A+ building

SME GROWTH LOAN

Altum (state-funded) loan program aimed to contribute to growth of local SMEs

- ◆ Loans of up to 2.85M EUR
- Repayment period from 2 to 15 years
- ◆ Interest rate 3% + 6 EURIBOR
- ◆ Own contribution of ≥ 10%
- Micro enterprises, SMEs
- Must provide collateral or private quarantee
- No tax debts or financial difficulties

ENTERPRISE EUROPE NETWORK (EEN)

EEN is the world's largest network of contact points for entrepreneurship and innovation support, especially focusing on SMEs

Its goal is to help SMEs innovate and grow on an international scale

- Search instruments helping find international collaboration partners
- Latest information and updates related to international markets and export
- Advice on legislation and business aspects
- Information on available grants and funding from the EU
- Assistance in innovation and technology transfer, research commercialization

Eligibility criteria depend on the selected support format (available here)

FUNDING & SUPPORT

CRITERIA

BUILDIT ACCELERATOR

An accelerator for hardware and IoT startups that have an MVP or a working prototype

Offers an intensive 4-month program in Riga helping startups to become "investable" and connecting them to a wide network of industry professionals, investors, and more

- Mentorship, training, and support in developing a market-ready, fundable, and scalable product and business plan
- Pre-seed investment of up to 50,000 EUR for best-performing teams
- Contacts with Asian & European manufacturers and investors
- Option to be invited to the follow-on programme focusing on further development, including attracting investment
- Startup within the industries of hardware, IoT, mobility, productivity, smart living, energy, healthtech
- Have an MVP or working prototype
- Have a scalable business model
- A team of 2+ individuals with relevant experience
- Can apply from all around the world but will be asked to relocate to Riga during the program

ACCELERATION BY THE COMMERCIALIZATION REACTOR

A 6-month acceleration program for deep tech startups looking to bring their business to the next level of growth

- Up to 50,000 EUR in pre-seed investment
- Weekly group sessions and workshops, meetings with coaches
- Help with product development, market development
- Access to industry networks
- Possibility to be supplemented with a follow-up seed funding round (up to 250,000 EUR)
- A deep tech startup registered in Latvia
- Early-stage before sales with at least a laboratory prototype ready for demonstration – TRL 4 or higher
- Team has 1+ entrepreneurs and 1+ developers of the technology/ science

STARTUP WISE GUYS ACCELERATION PROGRAMS [3]

Europe's leading B2B startup accelerator for early-stage startups

Startup Wise Guys offers several acceleration programs throughout the year, primarily aimed at B2B SaaS startups' growth

- Collaboration and one-on-one sessions with a wide network of experienced mentors
- Workshops, sprint weeks with assignments
- Up to 200,000 EUR investment
- Possible follow-on investment
- Option to stay in touch with the Startup Wise Guys after the program and receive more support in your startup journey
- Criteria differ depending on the chosen acceleration program, however they mostly inculde:
- B2B SaaS startup with 2+ co-founders or team members
- Have a working MVP
- Are building initial customer traction, MRR or revenues
- Each program also announces preferred industries

URBAN MOBILITY PRE-ACCELERATOR [™]

A 2-month program for established mobility start-ups willing to scale their solution and grow

Hosted and managed by innovation movement VEFRESH

- ◆ Up to 5,000 EUR per team
- Lectures and workshops on important factors for the development of a startup hosted by industry experts
- Mentorship, advice and an individual approach to accelerate the growth of teams
- Incorporated mobility startup from Europe, especially Eastern Europe and the Baltics
- Idea or prototype stage

MAGNETIC LATVIA INCUBATION PROGRAM (INK)

Incubation program by implemented by 13 LIAA Business Incubators in Latvia

Participation in the program can last up until 4 years

- Mentorship, expert consultations, seminars
- Access to co-working spaces and startup community
- Help in product/service development, enhancing competitiveness and export potential
- 50% co-financing for the development of prototypes and design, bookkeeping, legal and marketing services, workspace rental costs, as well as purchasing materials and equipment
- ◆ A startup <3 years old
- Have a working prototype or a developed product

FUTURE HUB ACCELERATOR 2

A 2-month fast-track program by Helve aimed to foster cooperation between market-leading companies and startups and ensure sustainable innovation development

- Possibility to develop collaboration with corporate companies
- Startup mentorship, feedback, and guidance from global industry experts
- Support with idea testing, solution building
- Access to the European GreenTech community
- Green-tech startup aimed to accelerate one's growth
- Willingness to collaborate with enterprises and tackle challenges presented by market leaders

STARTUP EXPORT SUPPORT

YOU



Have a startup with a selling product or solution that you're looking to start exporting



Are interested in entering new markets and need financial or other kinds of support



Are interested in gaining international attention for your business through participation in events, associations, marketing and PR activities, etc.

YOUR OPTIONS

WHAT IS IT? FUNDING & SUPPORT CRITERIA

EXPORT CREDIT GUARANTEES BY ALTUM 2

A state guarantee securing exporters against the insolvency of a foreign customer or non-payment risks

- Covers commercial and political risks
- Covers the risk of the guarantor of the buyer's obligations – bank or buyer's associated company
- Serves as additional security for guarantees or a letter of credit issued by the buyer's bank in case of doubts about the bank's liquidity
- Serves as collateral in factoring or for obligations to a bank to secure financing for other current assets
- The amount of export credit guarantees is from 5,000 EUR to 2M EUR

- SMEs registered in Latvia, exporting to EU or OECD countries
- Not declared insolvent by a court order or no insolvency proceedings have been opened
- Are not subject of judicial protection proceedings
- No tax debts

FUNDING & SUPPORT

CRITERIA

PROMOTION OF SME INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS 2

State support provided by LIAA for activities connected to enhancing international competitiveness of local businesses

- 80% expenses coverage related to participation in LIAA's international trade missions and participation in business delegations accompanying government officials on international visits
- 100% expenses coverage related to participation in national stands organized by LIAA at international exhibitions and consulting by LIAA
- Up to 60,000 EUR per year for export activities such as participating in international exhibitions, matchmaking events, industry platforms, actions related to entering new markets, international PR and marketing activities, industry association membership fees coverage, and more

Micro enterprises, SMEs

VENTURE FACULTY 2

Venture Partnering Hub, providing various business development services to companies and corporations

Among that can be a great guidance option for startups looking to enter new markets and expand

- Startup consulting, including assistance in expansion and localization
- Startup support to those relocating to the Baltics
- Support in entering new markets, preparing for fundraising
- · Connections within EU and beyond

Primarily focus on startups representing fintech, crypto and blockchain, SaaS, micromobility and e-commerce industries

ABBREVIATIONS EXPLAINED

LIAA – Investment and Development Agency of Latvia

EU - European Union

SME – Small and medium-sized enterprises

MVP – Minimum viable product

TRL – Technology readiness level

SaaS – Software as a service

B2B – Business-to-business

P2P - Peer-to-peer

STEM – Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

UL - University of Latvia

RSU – Riga Stradiņš University

RTU - Riga Technical University

Latvian MoD – Latvian Ministry of Defense

EIT – European Institute of Innovation and Technology

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development