

Defence Tech Founders: Estonia Is Your Strategic Launchpad

Looking to scale fast, get funded, and operate from an EU and NATO member state?

Estonia offers a powerful mix of deeptech investment, global access, and startup-friendly infrastructure.



Why Estonia? Because Speed, Security, and Scale Matter

As a digital nation with a thriving startup ecosystem, Estonia offers defence tech founders:



Immediate access to EU and NATO innovation programmes



A gateway to €10M+ in dual-use funding opportunities



A secure jurisdiction to register and protect your IP



A government that welcomes foreign founders through e-Residency.



A tax system that is easy to navigate and delivers ROI fast



A flourishing defence tech community that fosters collaboration



Speedy incorporation and no red tape, akin to registering a Delaware corporation



We chose Estonia because it offers us **IP protection**, **EU market access**, and is a **NATO member**. We got into the DIANA accelerator and registered our company through e-Residency. Estonia provides us with security and the opportunity to scale.



— Oleksandr Plyakhtur
Founder, BeesAgainstMines

The Best Place to Scale

Estonia is **#1 in VC funding** in Europe and serves as a leading hub for venture capital investment, with a focus on deep-tech and dual-use technologies.

It's also **#1 for unicorns per capita in Europe**. Estonia consistently produces unicorns, making it a prime location for startups looking to scale rapidly.

And Estonia is **#1 for startups per capita in Europe**, too. With its robust entrepreneurial culture, Estonia is home to more startups per capita than any other country in Europe.

Startup Superpowers

Estonia, a Northern European country about the same size as Denmark, is home to 1.3 million, but it punches above its weight. Known for its thriving startup scene, Estonia has been a testbed for 10 unicorns: Skype, Playtech, Wise, Bolt, Pipedrive, Zego, ID.me, Gelato, Veriff, and Glia.

The government nurtures the startup ecosystem and has introduced legislation to assist fast-growing companies. From introducing startup visas to eliminating cumbersome regulations, Estonia makes it easy for founders to launch, scale, and succeed. Estonia provides flexible visa options for global talent as well, which helps startups attract and retain international specialists.

An Active and Engaged Ecosystem

VC Funds

SmartCap, Estonia's state defence fund, invests €500,000–€10 million in military or dual-use tech startups that align with NATO goals. Darkstar, a private Estonian defence fund and ecosystem builder, invests up to €1 million in startups.

Defence Grants

The Estonian Ministry of Defence and Estonian Innovation Agency allocate ~€6 million annually to research programmes that support defence innovation.

Defence Estonia Cluster

Launched in 2024, the cluster has 30 member organisations. Its aim is to increase the export volume of the defence and security industry tenfold by the year 2030. It also seeks to develop new financing sources.

DIANA Accelerator

The accelerator offers funding, mentorship, and access to 182 test centres across 32 NATO countries for dual-use deep tech.

Force Transformation Command (under establishment)

Bridging modern technologies and the armed forces, ensuring defence innovations are not only developed but tested and scaled through close collaboration with military operators.

Vibrant Community

Estonia has one of the most active defence tech communities in Europe. Estonia also hosted its first-ever Defence Week in September 2025, bringing together founders, policymakers, and security experts to exchange ideas and solutions.

Legal Expertise

Estonia's legal and audit firms have deep experience in defence-related regulation, contracts, and compliance.

The Estonian Defence and Aerospace Industry Association

This body connects firms and clients, representing a technology ecosystem that grows 30 percent annually.

What e-Residency is and Why It's a Game-Changer

e-Residency of Estonia offers members a digital identity:

With 130,000+ e-residents from 174+ countries and 37,000+ companies created, it's your fast track to setting up a serious business.



Launch an EU company
100% online



Register and safeguard
your IP in a NATO-
aligned country



Access EU grants,
programmes, and
venture capital



Run your business from
anywhere in the world



Prepare documents
passport, photo, CV,
credit card



Apply online
fee: €150



Undergo review
by the Estonian Police
& Border Guard
(approx. 3–8 weeks)



Collect your digital ID
from your nearest
Estonian embassy



Launch your EU company
often within 1 business day

Act Fast.
Build Smart.

Apply now:

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Contact:

e-resident@gov.ee



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