

NATO DIANA

Established in 2023, the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) sits at the heart of NATO's modernisation agenda. Alongside, and closely integrated with the €1 billion NATO Innovation Fund (NIF), Europe's first multi-sovereign VC fund, DIANA forms a decade-long commitment to accelerate dual-use innovation, deepen the alliance's technological advantage, and sharpen deterrence across every key operational domain.

DIANA brings together academia, the private sector and government to address critical defence and security challenges. It does so by providing innovators with something they rarely receive in combination: funding, access to more than 180 test centres, deep tech accelerator support, business mentoring, and direct pathways to operational users. The aim is straightforward: to help Allied nations test, evaluate, validate and operationalise emerging technologies far faster than legacy procurement cycles allow.

The UK plays host to the European HQ of DIANA at the Imperial College London Innovation Hub in London's White City Innovation District – a space shared with the UK's Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA). DIANA also has a North American office in Halifax, Canada, as well as a regional hub in Tallinn, Estonia, highlighting NATO's strategic commitment to strengthening defence capabilities in Eastern Europe, reinforcing the alliance's eastern flank. On top of this, DIANA works with 20 affiliated accelerator sites and over 180 test centres worldwide.





Location of DIANA offices and affiliated accelerator sites.

DIANA's technology priorities remain aligned with NATO's Emerging and Disruptive Technology (EDT) strategy: artificial intelligence, autonomy, quantum technologies, biotech and human enhancement, space, hypersonics, novel materials and advanced manufacturing, energy and propulsion, and next-generation communication. The emphasis is firmly on dual-use deep-tech, an area where commercial and national security interests are now inseparable.

DIANA's first accelerator programme accepted 44 companies, developing capabilities including fuel-cell energy systems, cyber kill-switches, micro wind-turbines, optical communications and drone-identification tooling. With a geographically diverse cohort, nine of these companies follow the accelerator's programme at Tehnopol in Tallinn.

The second DIANA cohort, launched in late 2024 and now well underway, represents a significant expansion in both ambition and maturity. Hundreds of startups responded

to challenges themed around energy resilience, information advantage, contested logistics, space domain awareness, health resilience and advanced sensing. The second cohort reflects two major shifts: a much clearer pull from NATO customers and a more structured funding pathway.

Companies selected for Phase 1 receive up to €100,000 in contractual funding. Those progressing to Phase 2 can receive an additional €300,000 for further development, testing and demonstration. DIANA and NIF are now working more tightly together, meaning successful companies can be considered for equity investment from the Innovation Fund. The second cohort – which was [announced](#) in December 2025 with a focus on electromagnetic spectrum operations (EMSO) – therefore marks DIANA's shift from pilot phase to a scaled, repeatable innovation engine, something the UK, US and Eastern European Allies have been pushing for.



The NIF is increasingly central to DIANA's success. With €1 billion committed by 24 Allies, NIF is the world's first sovereign-backed VC fund focused entirely on defence-relevant deep tech. It invests in early-stage companies in fields aligned to DIANA's technology priorities often acting as patient capital where traditional VC can be seen as hesitant.

NATO faces the most complex threat environment since the end of the Cold War. Russia's continued aggression, accelerating Chinese technological capability, rapid advances in autonomous systems and cyber operations, and a contested economic landscape all require a faster, more coherent innovation pipeline.

By investing in and supporting pioneering innovators across the alliance, DIANA and NIF ensures that both NATO and its partners remain at the forefront of technological advancement. This commitment to fostering dual-use and deep tech solutions is essential to safeguarding our security and that of our allies, enabling us to respond effectively to emerging challenges and maintain a robust deterrence posture.

Therefore, where DIANA investment goes next, specifically the location of future testing centres as part of the programme, will be highly telling in the context of the location of emerging threats and will send a strong message of deterrence to NATO's adversaries.