

CALL FOR INTEREST

PARTICIPATE IN A START-UP IMMERSION WEEK IN PORTO

13 – 15 may 2026



IMMERSION WEEK : 13TH – 15TH MAY, PORTO

Grenoble Alpes Métropole is part of the European Scalability Network, the pilot action of the Interreg project SKALE2CT which continues its progress through its interregional acceleration system. From February to June 2026, the ecosystems from Porto, San Sebastian and Grenoble will select up to 4 start-ups to take part in immersion weeks into the other ecosystems:

Porto is home to one of the most vibrant entrepreneurship ecosystems in Europe:

- **A thriving community** that, together with the northern region of Portugal, hosts over 1,200 startups;
 - ➔ Key sectors include software development, healthcare, and marketing;
 - ➔ The Porto Metropolitan Area is also home to 10 unicorn offices.
- **A leading hub for talent creation and research & development (R&D):**
 - ➔ More than 80 higher education institutions and R&D centers with over 12,500 researchers;
 - ➔ Portugal's number one region for patents and private investment in R&D;
 - ➔ The University of Porto ranked 1st in the 2023 Portuguese Entrepreneurial University Ranking.
- **The region attracts significant investment:**
 - ➔ Startups in northern Portugal are valued at approximately €8.9 billion (27% of the total Portuguese ecosystem);
 - ➔ Since 2020, they have raised over €2 billion, accounting for 40% of the total funding secured by the Portuguese ecosystem;
 - ➔ More than 90 national and international investors are actively engaged in the region

It will take place during the SIM Conference (May 14-15). The event is designed to connect entrepreneurs, startups, and investors, both nationally and internationally. In 2024 it brought together over 2,000 participants, 400 startups, 150 investors, and 100 national and international speakers.

+ Each immersion week will last 2,5-3 working days and will include:

- A presentation/immersion to the ecosystem.
- An Agenda set with key agents from the ecosystem.
- Participation in the entrepreneurship and investment event.
- Study visits.
- B2B programme.
- Meeting with potential investors.
- A specialized acceleration service.

All costs (travels; accommodation; meals) are included and are taken in charge by Grenoble Alpes Metropole through the INTERREG project for 1 to 2 persons per selected start-up up to 2000€ max per start-up.

COMPANIES PROFILE

- + Company Age:** 1 – 7 years (1-10 if Health Sector)
- + Stage:** Post pre-seed / Post-angel
- + Preference 1 round Funding Raised** (Having received first grants).
- + Field:** DeepTech (see eligible sectors below)
 - Artificial Intelligence / Machine Learning
 - Robotics & Automation
 - Quantum Computing
 - Biotechnology / Synthetic Biology
 - Advanced Materials & Nanotechnology
 - Space Technology
 - Clean Energy / Climate Tech
 - Semiconductor / Hardware
 - Autonomous Systems
 - Blockchain Infrastructure
 - Photonics / Optics
 - Advanced Manufacturing
 - Others
- + Preference Minimum 2 full-time staff**
- + Preference Strong technical founder with advanced degree (PhD preferred) or equivalent experience**

Status of the project

- + Preference Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of 3-6**
- + Preferably with Patents filed or granted (provisional acceptable)**
- + Current basic product and Clear technology roadmap for next 18-24 months**
- + Working MVP or functional prototype.**
- + Defined unique value proposition.**
- + Experience in an accelerator programme (priority for local ones).**

EUROPEAN SCALABILITY NETWORK

ESN- European Scalability Network Interreg Europe co-funded project is currently developing a trilateral interregional accelerator specialized service between three European referent ecosystems in innovation and entrepreneurship: Grenoble (France), Porto (Portugal) and San Sebastian (Spain).

ECOSYSTEMS

→ Grenoble ecosystem

Grenoble Alpes innovation ecosystem is an European model for innovation as recognized by The 2023 European Deep Tech Report as 4th European Capital for deeptech development. Moreover, the urban area is considered as the second location in France for the development of start-ups, with around 750 start-ups created and 470 still in activities since 2000. In total, local start-ups have raised about 4billion € over the past 3 years.

Grenoble Alpes Métropole has been awarded the title of European Capital of Innovation 2026.

→ Porto ecosystem

Porto's entrepreneurial ecosystem is a driving force in Portugal's startup scene, with 23% of Portugal startups and scaleups and 18% of corporate and VC investors (dealroom.co, Jan. 2025). The metropolitan area is home to over 700 startups and 9,900 employees, in sectors like fintech, health tech and software development, including the technology centres of 8 unicorns, like Revolut, Anchorage Digital, Feedzai, Talkdesk and Sword Health.

The city of Porto was in the first place on the large cities of the "Future index", from The Financial Times 2025 ranking on foreign direct investment.

→ San Sebastian ecosystem

The city has successfully transformed into a beacon of innovation and opportunity (with an investment of 3.7% of its annual GDP allocated to R&D), creating a dynamic and cohesive ecosystem that integrates institutions, businesses, and communities. The city championed the shift to a knowledge-intensive economy (48% of its GDP), setting a benchmark for scalable urban innovation (Top 4 in business density in Spain) across Europe, becoming a European pole in biosciences and quantum.

San Sebastian has been recognised with the 2nd place in the European Capital of Innovation awards 2026.

PROJECT PARTNERS

The project partners are European referents fostering Innovation and Entrepreneurship in their respective ecosystems:

→ Grenoble Alpes Métropole

The innovation department of the Metropole is dedicated to animate and support start-ups development and attractiveness on its own territory as well as to coordinate and to promote the whole innovation ecosystem of each field of excellence (digital and nano electronic, healthtech, energy and proptech, cleantech and industry).

→ ANI (Agencia Nacional de Inovação de Portugal)

ANI takes on the role of aggregator hub for national innovation. Under the supervision of the Ministry of the Economy and Territorial Cohesion and the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, ANI is the platform that guarantees the alignment of technology-based R&D, Innovation and Entrepreneurship policies in the areas of Science and the Economy. Its main role is to promote the valorization of knowledge, namely through greater and better collaboration and coordination between companies and the SCTN.

→ UPTEC

The Science and Technology Park of the University of Porto (UPTEC) is a well-established innovation ecosystem that bridges academia and the market, making it an ideal partner for implementing a pilot action under the Interreg Europe programme. Since its foundation in 2007, UPTEC has supported over 800 entrepreneurial initiatives across technology, life sciences, and creative sectors, contributing to the creation of approximately 6,500 direct and indirect jobs – 86% of which are highly qualified.

→ Fomento San Sebastian

Fomento San Sebastian is the municipal economic development agency in charge of Donostia - San Sebastian socio-economic development strategy. Since 2017, it has accelerated more than 160 companies through its EKINN+ acceleration programme (European Enterprise Promotion Awards 2025 finalist). Those companies have lifted more than 50 million euros in investments.



Company name:

Contact name

Name and surname:

Email adress:

Phone number:

Name of people travelling:

DeepTech field of activity

Are you working with any incubator?

Do you have any patents?

Briefly describe your business activity

What problems/needs are you addressing?

What is the origin of the idea? How long have you been working on it, and with what resources?



Briefly describe your potential/geographic market & target customer

What is interesting for you in the Portuguese innovation ecosystem?

•Any comment or specific question?

Signature _____

CALENDAR :

10 April: Limit to send your application at innovation@grenoblealpesmetropole.fr

Travel & accomodation booking: week 13th April

Preparation of the immersion week (B2B meetings ; program presentation...):
week 13th April

EUROPEAN SCALABILITY NETWORK (PILOT ACTION - SKALE2CT)

SMEs/Start-ups selection process

Condition to be met for compliance with state aid rules

SELF-DECLARATION TEMPLATE

[Internal clarification]

Objective of this self-declaration: by signing this self-declaration, the SME/start-up selected to participate in the project activities (i.e., immersion weeks) declares that it is not an "undertaking in difficulty". The self-declaration document will also include an explicit reference to ensure that the SME/start-up is informed about the state aid framework applicable to participation in these activities.

Name-Surname:

ID card:

Position in the company:

ON BEHALF OF:

Company name:

Tax identification number:

Trade name:

Address:

Municipality:

Postal code:

Email address:

In accordance with the terms and conditions/invitation (or other, select what applies in the case of each partner) to participate in the activities that will take place during the immersion weeks held in Porto/Grenoble/San Sebastián within the framework of the Pilot Action "European Scalability Network" (SKALE2CT project, Interreg Europe-EU), by signing this self-declaration,

DECLARES

- 1** That he/she knows and accepts the conditions and obligations established in the terms and conditions/invitation and that the data provided by the entity in its application form/acceptance of the invitation are truthful.
- 2** That all statements of responsibility, as well as all documentation submitted, are truthful.
- 3** That he/she has read and accepts without reservation the Privacy Policy which, without prejudice to the provisions of the terms and conditions/invitation, is transcribed at the end of this self-declaration and which is extended to the documentation used for the participation in the activities of the Pilot Action "European Scalability Network".

Notice: this means that the partner's "Privacy Policy" (GDPR) is included at the end of the document.

- 4** That he/she is aware that the activities of the Pilot Action "European Scalability Network", as part of the SKALE2CT project (project ID: 01C0291), are co-financed by the EU's Interreg Europe program.
- 3** That he/she is aware of the state aid framework applicable to participation in the activities of the Pilot Action "European Scalability Network", as reflected in the terms and conditions/invitation.

Notice: This means that the terms and conditions/invitation will also include an explicit reference to inform the SME/start-up about the state aid framework applicable to participation in these activities.

AND MAKES THE FOLLOWING RESPONSIBLE DECLARATION:

- 1** That he/she meets the requirements stipulated in article(s) xxx of the terms and Conditions / in the invitation to participate in the activities of the Pilot Action "European Scalability Network".
- 2** (add any other general topic you wish to include in the declaration -only if necessary)-...
- 3** That he/she is aware that participation in these activities (e.g. Immersion Weeks) implies coverage by name of the partner of the travel&accommodation costs at the expense of the Pilot Action, and also the access to specialized business accelerators services, connection with city stakeholders, etc., which represent an economic advantage (non-financial benefit) that would not have been obtained in the absence of the Pilot Action. Therefore, although these activities may be considered as indirect state aid granted to SMEs/start-ups, he/she also understands that they may be covered by article 20 of Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 -the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)-, which is a European Commission regulation that declares certain categories of state aid compatible with the EU's internal market, exempting them from prior notification and approval by the European Commission.

- 3 That the SME/start-up he/she represents is not an “undertaking in difficulty” as defined in article 2 (18) of Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 (GBER) in its latest version, and that, therefore, this exemption regulation would apply to it.

“Art. 2 (18) ‘undertaking in difficulty’ means an undertaking in respect of which at least one of the following circumstances occurs: (a) In the case of a limited liability company (other than an SME that has been in existence for less than three years or, for the purposes of eligibility for risk finance aid, an SME within 7 years from its first commercial sale that qualifies for risk finance investments following due diligence by the selected financial intermediary), where more than half of its subscribed share capital has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses. This is the case when deduction of accumulated losses from reserves (and all other elements generally considered as part of the own funds of the company) leads to a negative cumulative amount that exceeds half of the subscribed share capital. For the purposes of this provision, ‘limited liability company’ refers in particular to the types of company mentioned in Annex I of Directive 2013/34/EU (1) and ‘share capital’ includes, where relevant, any share premium. (b) In the case of a company where at least some members have unlimited liability for the debt of the company (other than an SME that has been in existence for less than three years or, for the purposes of eligibility for risk finance aid, an SME within 7 years from its first commercial sale that qualifies for risk finance investments following due diligence by the selected financial intermediary), where more than half of its capital as shown in the company accounts has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses. For the purposes of this provision, ‘a company where at least some members have unlimited liability for the debt of the company’ refers in particular to the types of company mentioned in Annex II of Directive 2013/34/EU. (c) Where the undertaking is subject to collective insolvency proceedings or fulfils the criteria under its domestic law for being placed in collective insolvency proceedings at the request of its creditors. (d) Where the undertaking has received rescue aid and has not yet reimbursed the loan or terminated the guarantee, or has received restructuring aid and is still subject to a restructuring plan. (e) In the case of an undertaking that is not an SME, where, for the past two years: (1) the undertaking’s book debt to equity ratio has been greater than 7,5 and (2) the undertaking’s EBITDA interest coverage ratio has been below 1,0.”

In this context, and according to article 1.4. c) of GBER, he/she is also aware that “this Regulation shall apply, by derogation, to undertakings which were not in difficulty on 31 December 2019 but became undertakings in difficulty during the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021.”

City, (date)

Signature of the legal representative and company seal: