

Call for start-ups active in sustainable urban mobility in EIT RIS countries to conduct a residency at the Valletta Design Cluster



The Valletta Design Cluster as part of the EIT Urban Mobility RIS Hub Malta is offering two start-ups in one or more of the EIT RIS countries the opportunity to benefit from a residency of between two and eight weeks at the Valletta Design Cluster ('VDC'). The residency will allow the selected start-ups access to a working space and a Makerspace within the VDC, the opportunity to explore the local urban mobility ecosystem in Malta and to interact with the EIT Urban Mobility RIS Hub Malta network to expand its business and work on their projects related to sustainable urban mobility.

The Maltese Transport context

Malta is a country with an area of just 316km² and consists of three main islands, two of which are inhabited by a population of 516,000 (National Statistics Office, 2021). Since the early 90s, Malta has experienced rapid growth in motorization and a decline in public transport use and in active mobility (walking and cycling).

Domestic transport is predominately on land. Private car ownership and usage is high in Malta, although the average journey length is only 5.5km. Results from the latest National Household Travel Survey in 2021 revealed that 84% of trips in Malta are made using private cars. This is an increasing value from 59.4% in 2010, with public transport only servicing 5.74 % of trips at the time of the study. Survey respondents clarified that the main reason for not using public transport is poor bus service punctuality and reliability. In October 2022, Malta's bus service became free of charge for all Maltese residents, which has led to a significant increase in bus trips. However, punctuality and reliability remain a challenge. Active mobility only accounts for 8.2% of all trips (7.7% by walking and 0.5% by cycling). Pollution, lack of road safety and poor quality of infrastructure are the main issues identified for limiting the shift to walking & cycling. Being an island country, Malta is also connected by sea. Ferries from/to the sister islands of Gozo and Comino are available from two main points on the island of Malta, and other ferries are available to connect the capital city Valletta to the towns of Sliema and Bormla within the main harbour area.

Several initiatives are in play to change the current transportation landscape with objectives such as introducing 6,500 electric cars on the road and reducing off-peak deliveries. Over the past five years, there has been a significant increase in the use of e-scooters on the roads, including the rise of several e-scooter rental companies. Due to public complaints related to the nuisance presented by abandoned e-scooters on the sidewalks and streets, a ban on rental e-scooters came into effect in March 2024. Private scooters are still permitted based on conditions set by the local transport authority.

Opportunities for start ups in Malta

On May 9th and 10th, Malta will be hosting the annual EU Startups Summit, an exclusive in-person showcase of European start ups and entrepreneurs. With more than 50 innovative companies exhibition, 80 high level speakers and 2000 participants, this Summit is a great opportunity to network and learn.

In October, the local Malta Startup Festival is organised by Malta Enterprise which leads the national ecosystem for start-ups. From match-making to talks, exhibits and a pitch competition to local investors, the Malta Start Up Festival is a great introduction to Malta for start ups interested in entering the local market.

Target Participants

The call will select a maximum of 2 start-ups, represented by up to two persons each. To be eligible for the call, the start-up must be established at least 2 years before the submission of the application in one of the following countries or regions

- Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Türkiye or Ukraine (EIT RIS Countries except Malta), or
- Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Réunion, Martinique, Mayotte, Saint-Martin (France); the Azores, Madeira (Portugal); the Canary Islands (Spain) (EIT RIS Outermost Regions)

and must work in the field of sustainable urban mobility.

We are looking for start-up teams with business ideas that can help solve mobility-related problems. This may cover a wide range of topics including but not limited to traffic congestion, introducing innovative approaches for faster commuting, accelerating the transition to low- or zero-emission forms of transport.

Objectives and Expected Outcomes

The opportunity is offered to support the start-up in the development of its business and network by facilitating its connection to the Maltese sustainable urban mobility ecosystem. Applicants are requested to submit a residency proposal which will present their objectives for the residency with a focus on the local context. The proposal should focus on a clear, scalable business idea in the field of sustainable urban mobility which can be adapted to the Maltese context.

Applicants are expected to provide a clear **action plan** featuring at least one specific milestone and a timeline to present how they see their project develop before, during and after their stay in Malta.

Throughout their residency, the selected start-up will be asked to:

1. Meet with at least 5 stakeholders of their choice who can support the expansion of its business during the stay. The EIT Urban Mobility RIS Hub Malta can help identify relevant stakeholders;
2. Prepare a final report of a maximum of 1,500 words evaluating their experience during the residency including describing the work done, the stakeholders met and the expected future developments after the end of the project.
3. At the end of the residency, deliver one presentation to the public on its work and the milestone/s they have achieved during their residency to present the results of the research carried out while on the residency in Malta;

The start-up is also encouraged to engage with participants in one of the events organised or suggested by the EIT Urban Mobility RIS Hub Malta during the stay to introduce their organisation and the residency project, and to network with the stakeholders of the Hub.

What we provide

- A grant of 1000.00 EUR for each start up
- Accommodation at the Valletta Design Cluster during your stay (one or two private bedrooms within a shared townhouse)
- A workspace within the Valletta Design Cluster
- Support to familiarise yourselves with the local context in Valletta and Malta
- Assistance in establishing connections with key stakeholders
- The results of the research conducted by the start-up may be published on the VCA website (VDC section).

What we do not provide

- Financial support beyond the Eur 600 grant; insurance; VISAs.

Where

The Valletta Design Cluster is a hub for cultural and creative practice open in Valletta, Malta. The space is administered by the Valletta Cultural Agency which has been part of the EIT Urban Mobility RIS Hub Malta since 2020. It offers a wide range of facilities including a Makerspace, a Coworking Space, a Foodspace, a Roof Garden and Creative Studios. The Valletta Design Cluster also facilitates engagement with and among its members, who form a network of practitioners active in different sectors including arts and culture, food, environment and placemaking, social entrepreneurship and impact, making and design. Find more information about the VDC [here](#).

When

A minimum of 2 weeks and a maximum of 8 weeks between April and November 2024.

How to Apply

Interested parties may apply by submitting an application available at <https://forms.office.com/e/yYzbPcN8zN>

The application must be filled online by not later than 19th April 2024 at noon (CET). Applicants must provide a link using online file transfer facilities to the following documents as part of their submission:

- Legible scan of an identification document of the legal representative of the start-up
- Legible scan of the Start Up registration document or equivalent document proving the registration of the start-up in one of the RIS countries at least two years before the submission of the application
- CVs for the Start Up representatives at the Residency
- Start Up Profile showing its remit, objectives and mission
- Start Up Press Pack
- Gantt chart with measurable milestones

In case of difficulties with file transfer, the documents can also be sent via email to vdc@vca.gov.mt

Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Selection Process

The start-ups will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Relevance of the start up proposal to the residency theme and the local context
- Plan for the residency and expected results
- Extent of outreach to, and involvement of, local communities, professionals and stakeholders
- Extent of innovation

Deadline for submission is the 19th April 2024 at noon.

The results will be communicated by email to the applicants by 26th April 2024. The selected applicant will be required to sign a contract with the Valletta Cultural Agency to formalise the terms and conditions related to the residency. Applicants ranking third may be and offered a residency at the Valletta Design Cluster on reduced terms.

Any questions? Reach out to us on vdc@vca.gov.mt

EIT Urban Mobility is an initiative of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). EIT Urban Mobility has been working since 2019 to encourage positive change in the way people move around cities in order to make urban space more liveable. EIT Urban Mobility aims to become the largest European initiative transforming urban mobility by EIT co-funding projects and initiatives for up to € 400 million between 2020-2026. Learn more on eiturbanmobility.eu .