



Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA)

Why DIANA?

Innovators from across the Alliance are shaping the world of tomorrow. By launching the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA), NATO is providing innovators with a pipeline to actively shape the future security and defence environment together.

How will DIANA work?

DIANA works directly with leading innovators – from early-stage start-ups to more mature companies – to seek commercially-focused technological breakthroughs to solve defence and security challenges by accelerating the development of dual-use deep tech.

Technological areas of interest to the DIANA challenge programmes include big data, artificial intelligence (AI), autonomy, quantum, biotechnologies and human enhancement, energy and propulsion, novel materials and advanced manufacturing, hypersonics and space.

NATO will work with the public and private sectors, as well as academia and civil society, to establish an unprecedented footprint across more than 20 Allied nations. DIANA will leverage a network of more than 10 accelerator sites and more than 60 test centres in innovation hubs across the Alliance to accelerate dual-use solutions at Technological Readiness Level (TRL) 4 or higher. DIANA's regional offices will be located in London and Canada with a regional hub in Tallinn.

What will DIANA do?

DIANA will leverage its acceleration programme and test centre network to bring operational end-users (problem owners) together with the Alliance's best and brightest start-ups, scientific researchers, and tech companies in order to develop the most impactful dual-use technological solutions for the Alliance. The top solutions will win rapid access to government and military buyers in 30 Allied nations. Innovators that are accepted into DIANA will gain access to:

- the competitive DIANA Accelerator Program at accelerator sites across the Alliance, with non-dilutive grants over a maximum of 12 months;
- business mentorship and education on product-market fit for defence and security, guided by DIANA's mentorship network that will shepherd innovators toward success in the commercial and defence environment and connect them to end-users;
- state-of-the-art testing opportunities at DIANA's network of deep-tech test centres, where entrepreneurs can de-risk, demonstrate and validate their proposed dual-use technological solutions; and

- the possibility to access a vetted capital community and attract follow-on development and rapid adoption contracts with Allies, supported by DIANA staff.

In addition, DIANA will collaborate closely with the NATO Innovation Fund, which will invest EUR 1 billion in deep tech developments of strategic importance to the Alliance.

When will DIANA be operational?

DIANA will kick off pilot activities in April 2023. It will launch three Challenge Programmes and achieve Initial Operating Capability (IOC) during 2023. Once it achieves full operating capability (FOC) in 2025, DIANA will have the capacity to interact with hundreds of innovators each year across an even wider network of accelerator sites and test centres.

SUGGESTED LINES TO TAKE FOR ENGAGEMENT ON DIANA WITH ALLIED INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS

Which technology areas DIANA will focus on?

DIANA will focus on the following technology areas: big data, artificial intelligence (AI), autonomy, quantum, biotechnologies and human enhancement, energy and propulsion, novel materials and advanced manufacturing, hypersonics and space – specifically where they are dual-use (commercial and defence) and deep tech in nature, and where they can be used to solve challenging defence and security problems.

Which start-ups are eligible to participate in DIANA programmes, and how are they selected?

Eligible start-ups will be headquartered and domiciled in an Allied country. They must provide dual-use, deep tech solutions at Technological Readiness Level (TRL) 4 or higher.

Start-ups will be selected primarily based on whether they respond to DIANA's specific challenge, as well as the operational applicability, technological feasibility, commercial viability, and transformational nature of the solution they propose. For each DIANA challenge, up to 20 start-ups will be selected to participate in the competitive accelerator programme. The selection will be led by the DIANA team, with inputs from a range of experts, including operational end-users, the NATO scientific and technical community, as well as affiliated test centres and accelerators.

What kind of support will DIANA offer to start-ups?

DIANA will offer a comprehensive package of support to the start-ups selected to participate in its accelerator programmes. These include:

- Grants – Start-ups will receive grants to help cover their costs during DIANA's accelerator programme.
- Mentorship and education – Start-ups will be given access to mentors from big tech companies and major defence contractors, operational end-users (often military problem-owners) and government procurement experts. These mentors will help start-ups adapt their technological solutions to meet the needs of Allied end-users, and to efficiently navigate their adoption and procurement processes.
- Testing opportunities – Start-ups will benefit from access to a network of over 60 test centres spread across the Alliance. DIANA intends to provide privileged access to its affiliated test centres, along with dedicated financial support.
- Connections to investors – DIANA will actively expose participating start-ups to trusted Allied investors.
- Access to 30 markets in NATO nations – Start-ups will be given exposure to representatives from all Allied defence and security markets.

How many challenge programmes will DIANA run? How will they be communicated to Allied innovation communities? What are the timelines for DIANA's first Challenge Programmes?

In 2023, DIANA will run three challenge programmes. By 2025, DIANA will run up to ten challenges per year.

The challenge programmes will be communicated to DIANA's primary target audiences via its own channels (website, LinkedIn, etc.), and via relevant amplifiers (press engagements, DIANA's network of over 60 affiliated test centres and 10 accelerators spread throughout the Alliance, Allied governments, relevant research universities, etc.).

The call for applications for DIANA's first challenge programmes will launch in April 2023. The selected cohort will be presented during the NATO Summit in Vilnius in July 2023. The accelerator programme will kick off in autumn 2023.

How will DIANA help Allied nations to quickly use disruptive technologies to solve defence and security problems?

DIANA will seek to solve major defence and security challenges by bringing Allied military and governmental end-users (who own the problems) together with dual use, deep tech innovators.

DIANA will support innovators in this process by providing access to mentors, procurement specialists and a trusted venture capital community. DIANA's Rapid Adoption Service (RAS) will help Allied national defence and security entities to rapidly procure the most promising solutions from DIANA's innovators. The RAS will also provide agile adaptation pathways for start-ups, Allies and industry to further develop promising technologies in order to provide operational impact and promote commercial success.

How will DIANA help Allied innovators to protect strategic technological developments?

Start-ups in DIANA's acceleration programme will be trained in how to conduct business due diligence to protect themselves from hostile investment and acquisition.

How can big tech companies and large security and defence contractors get involved in and support the efforts of DIANA?

Established companies, whether active in big tech or security and defence, will be invited to support DIANA's start-ups by offering mentorship, by providing investment, and by acting as system integrators – when requested by participating start-ups.

How will DIANA connect innovators with the end-users within Allied defence forces?

DIANA will seek to solve major defence and security challenges by bringing Allied military and governmental end-users (who own the problems) together with dual-use, deep tech innovators.

Allied military and governmental end-users will define serious defence and security challenges that need solutions; DIANA will centre its challenge programmes around solving these problems.

In DIANA's accelerator programme, end-users will mentor the selected start-ups to help them adapt their solutions to Allied military needs. Innovators will also be granted access to end-users in DIANA's affiliated test centres, in military exercises, training, and test-ranges with the purpose of experimenting with the novel technological solutions.

In addition, Allied military end-users will collaborate with start-ups contracted through the Rapid Adoption Service (RAS) by interested Allied countries to help the start-ups further mature their technological solutions.

How will DIANA help innovators attract additional sources of funding?

DIANA will de-risk investments by third parties in participating start-ups by conducting business and technological due diligence, and by demonstrating to investors that the solutions offered have significant market opportunities. In addition, DIANA will provide its innovators with regular exposure to a community of trusted Allied investors throughout each Challenge Programme.

What are DIANA's interlinkages with other innovation initiatives?

DIANA intends to engage and consult with key players in all Allied innovation ecosystems to ensure synergies of efforts. DIANA will actively engage with Allied national innovation initiatives, promoting exchanges between programmes and cross-pollination of ideas. In addition, DIANA will seek two-way engagement with NATO partners, in particular the European Union, as appropriate, in order to identify additional technological solutions for NATO nations to develop and adopt.

What are the interlinkages between DIANA and the NATO Innovation Fund?

DIANA and the NATO Innovation Fund (NIF) will be two legally separate entities. DIANA will be governed and funded by all 30 Allied countries, while the NIF will be governed and funded by its 22 participating nations.

The NIF's investment strategy mandates the Fund to prioritise investments in companies accelerated through DIANA that are domiciled in any of the 22 nations participating in the Fund.