

# Innovating resilient futures – Accelerating dual-use startups at NATO DIANA

Tiia-Maria Jaakkola, VTT Dual-Use LaunchPad

27/04/2026 VTT – beyond the obvious

# VTT's research for the defence sector and commercialization of defence and dual-use innovations



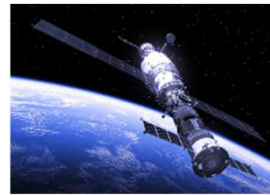
**Next-generation communication systems**



**Artificial intelligence**



**Quantum technologies**



**Space**



**Energy and propulsion**



**Novel materials and manufacturing**



**Hypersonic systems**



**Autonomous systems**



**Biotechnology and human enhancement**



**VTT LaunchPad 2019-**  
Internal spinoff incubator



**VTT Dual-Use LaunchPad 2025-**  
NATO DIANA accelerator programme

# Finland's DIANA Structure

## DIANA Accelerator

By VTT Dual-Use LaunchPad

- Main focus is to accelerate development of new deep tech and dual-use innovations and businesses in the field of Advanced Communication Technologies
- Coordinated by VTT, in collaboration with Helsinki University, Aalto University and DEFINE program.
- Started in January 2026

## DIANA Test Centers

- Secure Connectivity, Space and Quantum (SCSQ)  
Test Centre with secure connectivity, space and quantum technology facilities for dual-use testing, coordinated by VTT.
- 6G (6GTC)  
5/6G Test Network, with services, facilities, and processes jointly provided by the University of Oulu and VTT.

Collaboration




Aalto University



UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

TECHNOPOLIS



DEFINE

Tesi  
BUSINESS  
FINLAND

DIGITAL  
DEFENCE  
ECOSYSTEM  
ENTER  
ESPOO

FiBAN  
FINNISH BUSINESS ANGELS NETWORK

# Finland is one of the 16 accelerator sites in 2026



# NATO DIANA accelerator programme focuses on the Allied nations defence needs

- NATO DIANA accelerator programme equips start-ups with the skills and knowledge to navigate the world of defence, security and dual-use innovation.
  - 6 months programme
  - TRL level 5-7
  - Focuses on adoption
  - 3680 applications for 2026
    - 150 selected
    - 6 teams to Finland in 2026
- 10 challenge areas 2026:**
- Energy & Power
  - **Advanced Communication Technologies**
  - Contested Electromagnetic Environments
  - Human Resilience and Biotechnology
  - Operations in Extreme Environments
  - Maritime Operations
  - Resilient Space Operations
  - Critical Infrastructure & Logistics
  - Autonomy & Unmanned Systems
  - Data Assisted Decision Making

# NATO DIANA accelerator programme offering for companies

- Non-dilutive financial support for technology development and demonstration (100k€ + funding for testing and validation)
- Entrepreneurs can validate their technological solutions in ~190 testing centres
- Access to expert mentoring
- Opportunities to showcase technology in real-world operational settings
- Routes to market within the NATO framework and across 32 Allied markets
- Possibility to advance to NATO DIANA Phase 2: Tailored innovator centric 6-month adoption plan (300k€)

## Rapid Adoption Service (RAS)

- DIANA innovators can benefit from the Rapid Adoption Service framework that enables nations to directly award prototyping contracts to DIANA innovators without long procurement processes.
- This enables significantly shorter adoption cycles and is a unique value proposition that NATO DIANA offers to companies wishing to sell directly to nations.

# NATO DIANA Curriculum Overview

**Cluster 1** - January 19 – 23: Defence market & business models, local use-case validation

**Cluster 2** - February 10 – 12: NATO & Innovation – Organized by NATO DIANA, Munich

March 5 Introduction to Finland's Defence Ecosystem by Business Finland

**Cluster 3**- March 16 –20: Go-to-defence-market strategy, Pitching & Demos to Government and Industry

**Cluster 4** - April 20 – 24: Selling strategy, Intro to Wargaming and OPEXes, Scenario-Based Exercises, Copenhagen (Collaboration with Danish Accelerator)

**Cluster 5** – May 12: Local Demo Day, Helsinki

**Cluster 6** - June 15 – 19: Investor & Industry Days, Paris

# Benefits of DIANA programme to startups

- Selected companies = the top 4%.
  - Selected technologies needed in NATO
  - Interest from investors
- Access and contacts to a defence ecosystem in a NATO country (as well as in Finland)
- Help and contacts from defence, business and technical mentors
- Technology validation and funding for it
- Access to operational exercises when TRL 7+
- Rapid Adoption Service

# VTT Dual-Use LaunchPad team

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## the obvious

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