



# Advisory Board

Call for applicants

[www.esnalliance.eu](http://www.esnalliance.eu)

E S N A

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## Background

The European Startup Nations Alliance (ESNA) is a new European structure that comes as a direct consequence of the March 2021 Digital Day ministerial declaration<sup>1</sup> on “EU Startup Nations Standards of Excellence (SNS)” launched by Commissioner Breton under the Portuguese Presidency of the EU Council. This declaration calls for further commitments from Member States and EEA countries to implement agreed practices at national level.

First announced as a key action in the European Commission’s SME Strategy<sup>2</sup>, and then subsequently developed into an initial set of standards by the European Commission together with the Member States, this declaration has been signed by 26 EU Member States (all except Hungary) and Iceland at this Digital Day. The SNS outlines best practices in eight different areas that already exist in some EU countries and allow, inter alia, setting up a startup in one single day for less than 100 EUR, processing visa applications for talents from third countries in less than a month, making stock options taxable only when they vest and not before, amongst other relevant practices that if widely adopted can substantially improve the entrepreneurship framework across Europe.

While consensually agreed as the way ahead for a more competitive and sustainable future, the adoption of these practices is not without challenges, which may differ from country to country. The uneven pace of adoption in different countries can hamper the cohesion envisaged for the European Digital Market and add to the fragmentation that already plays against startups’ scaleup and global growth within Europe. As such, there is a clear need to regularly monitor progress of Member States and adhering countries in achieving the Startup Nations Standards and to provide targeted support to national institutions responsible for national startup ecosystems. With that goal, it has been decided under the Portuguese presidency of the European Council the creation of a new European Startup Nations Alliance (ESNA) established in Lisbon, and with the mission to accelerate the growth of European entrepreneurship. The goal of ESNA is not that of replacing or duplicating other networks or agencies, but instead to occupy a currently empty space and actively contribute to the adoption, across all of Europe, of the set of practices assembled in the Declaration on the EU Startup Nations Standard of Excellence as well as to develop best practices into deployable policies based on analysis of data gathered from members on a digital platform, providing up to date key information of the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

The launch and set-up of ESNA is funded by the European Commission, DG CNECT, through the Horizon Europe contract N° 101072644. One of the governing bodies foreseen in the strategy for ESNA creation and in the contract with the European Commission is an Advisory Board that steers the Board of Directors in their management activities towards the accomplishment of the strategic goals, as defined above. More precisely, the group shall assist the Board of Directors in the following tasks:

- a) to provide feedback and comments on reports, deliverables and products produced by ESNA;
- b) to provide the ESNA Board of Directors with insights and advice on how to ensure the ESNA strategic objectives of i) Gather data from members and provide up to date key information on the ecosystem through a data driven open platform and analytics; ii) improve National Policy Frameworks of Member States through monitoring of SNS adoption and best practice benchmarking, sharing and exchange; and iii) promote a proactive and open communication strategy on the European entrepreneurship agenda and policies

<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_21\\_1186](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_21_1186)

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/communication-sme-strategy-march-2020\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/communication-sme-strategy-march-2020_en.pdf)





- c) to exchange market data and information<sup>3</sup> to support outreach activities, to leverage the European startup ecosystems;
- d) to provide other input and advice relevant for the delivery of the ESNA objectives.

The group will comply with all applicable EU and national regulations, including EU competition rules, in particular Article 101 TFEU, in both its setting-up and its activities.

**ESNA is now calling for applications with a view to selecting members for the ESNA Advisory Group.**

## Features of the Advisory Board

### Composition

The group shall be composed of up to 30 members. Members shall be individuals and organizations operating within the context of startup ecosystems in the European Union and the European Economic Area, willing to contribute to the adoption, across all of Europe, of the set of practices assembled in the Declaration on the EU Startup Nations Standard of Excellence as well as to develop best practices into deployable policies for promotion of entrepreneurship and competitiveness of European startup ecosystems.

In the case of organizations, Members shall nominate their representatives and shall be responsible for ensuring that their representatives provide a high level of expertise. In particular, members' representatives shall be senior enough to speak on behalf of the members and have direct reporting links to the executive decision-making level and able to operate with its authority. ESNA may refuse the nomination by an organization of a representative if it considers that nomination inappropriate in the light of the requirements specified in the call for applications. In such case, the organization concerned shall be asked to appoint another representative.

### Appointment

Members shall be appointed by the ESNA Presidency Board from applicants complying with the requirements referred to in chapter 4 of this call and who have responded to the call for applications. Members shall be appointed for two years. They shall remain in office until the end of their term of office or replaced. Their term of office may be renewed.

Members, who, in the opinion of the ESNA Board of Directors, do not comply anymore with the conditions set out in this call, who are no longer capable of contributing effectively to the expert group's deliberations, or who resign, shall no longer be invited to participate in any meetings of the group and may be replaced for the remainder of their term of office.

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<sup>3</sup> The exchange of information will not cover proprietary, privileged or commercially-sensitive information. It concerns only publicly available market information





## Rules of engagement and operation of the group

The group shall be chaired by a one of the members of ESNA Board of Directors or a senior representative duly mandated by the same Board of Directors. The group shall act at the request of ESNA.

Meetings of the Group shall be held on ESNA premises or on other locations designated by ESNA (e.g. during General Assemblies), virtually, or in hybrid mode depending on the circumstances. The meetings of the Group shall be regular, in principle twice per year. ESNA shall provide secretarial services directly or via a contractor.

Members should be prepared to attend meetings systematically, to contribute actively to discussions in the group, to be involved in preparatory work ahead of meetings, to examine and provide comments on documents under discussion, and to act, as appropriate, as 'rapporteurs' on ad hoc basis. As a general rule, working documents will be drafted in English and meetings will be also conducted in English. Minutes on the discussion on each point on the agenda and on the opinions delivered by the group shall be meaningful and complete. Minutes shall be drafted by the secretariat under the responsibility of the Chair. As far as possible, the group shall adopt its opinions, recommendations or reports by consensus. In the event of a vote, the outcome of the vote shall be decided by simple majority of the members. The members that voted against or abstained shall have the right to have a document summarising the reasons for their position annexed to the opinions, recommendations or reports.

In agreement with ESNA the group may, by simple majority of its members, decide that deliberations shall be public. Participants in the activities of the group and sub-groups shall not be remunerated for the services they offer. Travel and subsistence expenses incurred by participants in the activities of the group and sub-groups shall not be compulsory reimbursed by ESNA.

The members of the group and their representatives, as well as invited experts and observers, are subject to the obligation of professional secrecy. The Group will be set up and its activities carried out in full compliance with EU competition rules. With regards to the activities of the Group, competition will in particular be safeguarded by reporting on meetings, discussions, information exchange and agreements reached and making these available to the ESNA on request. On a proposal by and in agreement with ESNA, the Group shall adopt its rules of procedure by simple majority of its members, on the basis of a standard model of rules of procedure to be proposed by the Group Secretariat.

ESNA may invite experts with specific expertise with respect to a subject matter on the agenda to take part in the work of the group or sub-groups on an ad hoc basis. ESNA may set up sub-groups for the purpose of examining specific questions on the basis of terms of reference defined by ESNA. Sub-groups shall operate in compliance with the rules of procedure and shall report to the group. They shall be dissolved as soon as their mandate is fulfilled.





## Application procedure

Interested individuals and organisations are invited to submit their application to ESNA in English language.

Organisations shall indicate the name of their representative in the group. An application will be deemed admissible only if it is sent by the deadline and includes the documents referred to below. All documents submitted by applicants should be duly filled in, legible, signed and numbered sequentially.

### Supporting documents

Each application shall include the following documents:

- a) a cover letter explaining the applicant's motivation for answering this call and stating what contribution the applicant could make to the group;
- b) selection criteria form duly filled in documenting how the applicant fulfills the selection criteria listed in chapter 4 of this call;
- c) an ownership and control form dully completed for the organization.

Applicants shall also provide a curriculum vitae (CV) of the individuals indicated as their representatives, preferably not exceeding three pages. All CVs shall be submitted in the European format (<https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculumvitae/templates-instructions>).

Additional supporting documents may be requested at a later stage.

### Deadline for application

The duly signed applications must be sent by email to [admin@esnalliance.eu](mailto:admin@esnalliance.eu) by April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023, at the latest. The date of the email will be the date of sending.

## Selection criteria

ESNA will take the following criteria into account when assessing applications:

- a) willingness to participate in the advisory board activities and strategic capacity to propose new policies or evaluate current ones in the field of startup support across Europe
- b) meaningful experience in startup ecosystem development and support.
- c) good knowledge of English language
- d) absence of control by a Startup Ecosystem Management organisation that is presently a member of appointed to become a member of ESNA<sup>4</sup>; 'Control' means the ability to exercise a decisive influence on a legal entity directly, or indirectly through one or more intermediate legal entities.

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<sup>4</sup> See full list in Annex I





## Selection procedure

The selection procedure shall consist of an assessment of the applications received against the selection criteria listed in chapter 4 of this call, followed by the establishment of a list of the most suitable applicants, and concluded by the appointment of the members of the group by the Presidency Board of ESNA, after recommendation by the Board of Directors or their representatives.

When defining the composition of the group, ESNA shall aim at ensuring, as far as possible, a high level of expertise, as well as a balanced representation of relevant knowhow and areas of interest, while taking into account the specific tasks of the group, the type of expertise required, as well as the relevance of the applications received. Where the number of eligible applicants exceeds the maximum number of members (30), particular attention shall be paid to the representation of the widest possible range of stakeholders' type and size. In addition, the geographical distribution and gender balance of the group's members shall also be considered.

For any further information please send an e-mail to [admin@esnalliance.eu](mailto:admin@esnalliance.eu)

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## Annex I – List of Current and Appointed Members of ESNA as of 31/12/2022

**Members**

 <b>FFG</b> <small>Forschung wirkt.</small>	 <b>STARTUP GAL</b>	 <b>incibe_</b>	 <b>economie</b>
Austria	Portugal	Spain	Belgium
 <b>BESCO</b> <small>Bulgarian Startup Association</small>	 <b>CZECH INVEST</b>	 <b>BUSINESSFRANCE</b>	 <b>START-UP SLOVENIA</b>
Bulgaria	Czech Republic	France	Slovenia