



# RES4CITY STARTUP EUROPE ACCELERATHON

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**STARTUP  
EUROPE**

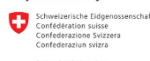


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## 1. CONTEXT

### What is the Res4city Startup Europe Accelerathon?

It is a methodology of acceleration of **innovative projects** driven by Finnova that aims to **find solutions** and funding, through a competition of applied open innovation that brings together the innovative ecosystem in the circular economy sector and accelerates ideas and concepts related to **challenges in clean energies in cities**, and which integrate circularity.

For this purpose, an online competition methodology is established with training, mentors, jury, and a European acceleration Ticket prize with the aim of presenting the project to a European funding program. The Challenges follows the indications of the United Nations SDGs and supports the **Res4City** themes, looking for innovative digital ideas for social pedagogy in energy efficiency in cities.

### What is Startup Europe Awards (SEUA)?

The Startup Europe Awards (SEUA) are a methodology promoted by the **European Commission** and implemented by the **Finnova Foundation** in collaboration with **Startup Europe**. They constitute a platform to add value to the **entrepreneurship ecosystem** and to help startups to grow and position themselves in the market while promoting public-private collaboration.

By participating in **Startup Europe Accelerathon**, projects are linked to the Startup Europe Awards platform, achieving greater dissemination and European recognition, and becoming part of the European awards network.

## 2. PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

This Accelerathon will be open to participants **from all over the world**, who can be students, entrepreneurs, researchers, start-ups, universities, public sector organizations and entities in general (public and private) on the condition that they are committed to the proposed challenges. The Accelerathon will be conducted **online**, so participants must have a computer and internet connection to participate in the Accelerathon.

### Presentation of candidatures

The deadline for submission of applications will begin on **November 15, 2023**, and will end on **February 15, 2024**, at 23:00 p.m. (Spanish peninsular time).

Applications must be submitted electronically using this form: <https://form.jotform.com/233112688186056>

### Challenges

RES4CITY Startup Europe Accelerathon is looking for ideas, projects or proposals that provide solutions to the following challenges:

#### **CHALLENGE 1: Utilize smart energy storage to improve the availability and reliability of EV charging infrastructure.**

##### **Status Quo Problem:**

- In 2022, the European energy crisis and high electricity prices have promoted the high demand for Europe energy storage.
- Plummeting gas supply led to a surge in energy prices in Europe.
- The average monthly wholesale electricity price in the EU has reached a peak of more than 400 Euros/MWh, with a CAGR of 346%. Under this situation, the high economy of Europe energy storage has been recognized by the market.

##### **Description of Challenge:**

Various reports predict that most non-renewable energy resources may run out before or during the first half of the next century i.e., 2100. Studies have shown that the transition to EVs will result in a 25% increase in electricity demand over current levels by 2040.

As the vehicle fleet electrifies, one of the major challenges is the availability and reliability of charging infrastructure. This is where smart energy storage solutions step in to revolutionize EV charging.

**Description Guiding Principles (To help you with your research, we suggest that you read about):**

- Smart energy storage solutions optimize energy flow, ensuring efficient and cost-effective EV charging.
- These solutions should reduce grid strain during peak demand and stabilize the power grid.
- Benefits include optimized energy consumption, enhanced grid resilience, improved customer experience, and reduced peak demand charges.
- Energy storage solutions seamlessly integrate with existing infrastructure, offering flexibility and scalability.
- The use of energy storage solutions accelerates the transition to a greener and more sustainable transportation ecosystem.

**CHALLENGE 2: Realize efficient soil and land management through shifting business operations in line with the principles of the circular economy.**

**Status Quo Problem:**

- Soil, a non-renewable resource, sustains life on Earth by supporting around 95% of global food production and providing the ecosystem.
- Unsustainable management practices and climate change are threatening the natural capital of soils, particularly in the Mediterranean region.
- According to UNWTO (2017), international tourist arrivals to the Mediterranean marine Basin is estimated to have grown from 58 million in 1970 to more than 349 million in 2015 and are projected to reach 500 million by 2030. This massive inflow of people exacerbates environmental pressures and risks of land degradation.

**Description of Challenge:**

Land degradation costs an estimated USD 40 billion annually worldwide, without considering the hidden costs of increased fertilizer use, loss of biodiversity, and unique landscapes.

Returning biological material back into the soil will reduce the need for replenishment with additional nutrients.

Recovering all the nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium from food, animal and human waste streams globally could contribute nearly 2.7 times the nutrients contained within the volumes of chemical fertilizer currently used.

How to realize efficient soil and land management through shifting operations in line with the principles of the circular economy is where the prior challenge lies for businesses.

**Description Guiding Principles (To help you with your research, we suggest that you read about):**

- Collection and reverse logistics companies support end-of-use products being reintroduced into the system.
- Product remarketers and sales platforms that facilitate longer use or higher utilization of products.
- Parts and component remanufacturing, and product refurbishment offer specialized knowledge and services.

**CHALLENGE 3: Design green hydrogen production projects.**

**Status Quo Problem:**

- Air pollution has become a key issue in Europe. Close to 30 million Europeans live in areas with small particle concentrations at least four times the WHO guidelines.
- Almost all residents in seven eastern European countries – Serbia, Romania, Albania, North Macedonia, Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary – have double the WHO guidance. More than half the population of North Macedonia and Serbia live with four times the WHO figure. In Germany, 3/4 of the population lives with more than twice the WHO guidance.
- Traffic, industry, domestic heating, and agriculture are the main sources of PM2.5 and the impact are often felt disproportionately by the poorest communities.

**Description of Challenge:**

Green hydrogen produced from renewable energy is being considered as one of the promising solutions to achieve Net Zero plans, as hydrogen-powered fuel cell electric vehicles emit none of these harmful substances—only water (H<sub>2</sub>O) and warm air.

However, Green hydrogen projects will require significant amounts of renewable energy and water as inputs for electrolysis, and this will likely put pressure on land allocation for hydrogen production and water supplies. Designing thoughtful green hydrogen production projects which properly manage impacts on water supply and land used has become a pressing challenge for businesses.

**Description Guiding Principles (To help you with your research, we suggest that you read about):**

- The current cost of producing green hydrogen is still higher than other forms of hydrogen.
- Future demand for green hydrogen is not guaranteed.
- Public acceptance of green hydrogen projects should be considered.

### 3. ACCELERATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT<sup>1</sup>

**Modality:** ONLINE (Except for the final event of the grand finale and awards ceremony).

#### a) Accelerathon Info Session

An information session will be held on the development of the accelerathon, the terms and conditions of participation, the benefits, and other important points about the program in question. This will be done to clarify any doubts that may arise to those registered and to possible people interested in registering. It is scheduled for January 2024, a date to be defined.

#### b) Teambuilding

The acceleration program will begin on March 1, 2024, with a phase of socialization, networking, and **teambuilding** dynamics for participants to generate links according to the chosen challenge. Teams formed by people registered individually will be able to consolidate in this phase and teams registered as such will be able to strengthen their synergies.

#### c) Training and Competition

Subsequently, in April, May and June of 2024 will begin the mentoring and competition phase, where the teams will compete with the support and mentoring of experts to create a proposal (Concept Note) based on the chosen challenge. In addition, all participants receive training on European Funds in Finnova's gamified training platform, EU Training Platform. This methodology has been applied in the past with positive results ([www.accelerathon.eu](http://www.accelerathon.eu)).

#### d) Pre-selection

The third and final phase of the Accelerathon development will take place in June, where a shortlist of finalist teams will be selected.

During the acceleration process, the following stakeholders will be considered:

- **Team:** composed of **3 to 5 people** either by registration (if registration is done in a team of 3 to 5 people) or by connection within the program (if individual registration is done).
- **Coordinator:** the European projects and communication technician of the Finnova Foundation, Manuela Granada Montoya, will be in direct communication with the teams during the development of the Accelerathon for management issues (such as communication tools and deadlines, among others).
- **Mentor:** a person with expertise in one or more fields who can bring their knowledge to their teams. They conduct three points of control: planning, follow-up and problem solving.

#### e) Presentation of pitch finalists and award ceremony

<sup>1</sup> Dates may be subject to changes.

Physical event in Brussels in October 2024 which pitching, and award ceremony takes place.

## Timeline

- Registration: 15 November to 15 February 2024
- Info Session: January 2024
- Team building: February 2024 - March 2024
- Competition: March 2024 - June 2024
- Semifinal: June 2024 (online)
- Grand Final: First half of October 2024 (on-site event in Brussels)

## TIMELINE



## 4. EVALUATION

The evaluation of the participating proposals will be conducted by a jury of experts based on the following variables:

- **RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT AND VIABILITY (UP TO 25 POINTS)** The proposal is relevant for objectives and priorities of the challenge. Assessment of a realistic and context-applicable solution.
- **QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION (UP TO 30 POINTS)** The extent to which: the project objectives are clearly defined, realistic and address needs and goals of the participating organizations and the needs of their target groups; the proposed methodology is clear, adequate, and feasible. The coherence of the proposal with the challenges.
- **IMPACT (UP TO 25 POINTS)** The extent to which: the project proposal includes concrete and logical steps to integrate the project results in the regular work of participating organizations; the project has the potential to positively impact its participants and participating organizations, as well as their wider communities; the proposal describes how the materials, documents and media produced will be made freely available and promoted through open licenses, and does not contain disproportionate limitations; the project proposal includes concrete and effective steps to ensure the sustainability of the project.
- **IDEA AND DEGREE OF INNOVATION (UP TO 20 POINTS)** Magnitude of the problem addressed by the proposed solution and its fit, as well as its degree of innovation.

The maximum score to which the candidates can aspire will be one hundred points.

It is expected to receive a minimum of 50 registered people, there being no maximum number, who will form teams of between 3 and 5 participants.

Among all the proposals received, three winners will be selected, one per challenge.



## 5. IDEAL AWARD

### European Acceleration Ticket

The European acceleration ticket, valued at €6,000, are services provided by the experts of Startup Europe Accelerator, Finnova Foundation's top-tier accelerator since 2011, to turn the winning proposal into a European project.

Specifically, the winning teams will receive the following from Finnova:

- **Mentoring and support in the preparation of a European project**

Participants will be helped to convert their proposal (Concept Note) into a pilot program eligible for European funding:

- a) Finnova experts will carry out together with the team an analysis of the calls where the company is eligible. Finnova will inform about different options and the most appropriate option will be decided by mutual agreement.

*Finnova's working hours: 2.5 hours - (Analysis time + a videoconference meeting)*

- b) Once the call has been chosen, Finnova Foundation will support the team in the definition of the proposal, advice for the definition of the consortium and other relevant aspects for the writing of the proposal, which will be carried out by the winning team.

*Finnova's working hours: 2.5 hours - (Analysis time + two meeting by videoconference).*

- c) Finnova will review the final written European proposal and advise the company on the best strategies to obtain the grant.

*Finnova's working hours: 3 hours - (Review time - Two will be done)*

- **Communication/Networking services support**

Finnova will provide its team of communication and marketing experts with the necessary tools to support the team's communication actions: dissemination in the entrepreneurship database, visibility, and diffusion in Startup Europe Awards and Finnova channels. Likewise, assistance and relationship management will be provided in the EU framework and in the creation and management of networks of contacts through the opportunity to attend events related to the topic of your proposal.

- **Stay in Brussels**

Finnova will offer the possibility to stay in its offices in Brussels, so that the winning team can be in contact with the European ecosystem in Brussels. Finnova will provide advice on how to apply for possible grants to cover living expenses, travel, etc. **In no case** will Finnova cover living expenses, travel or other expenses related to the stay.