



Slovakia strengthens its space ambitions by launching a European Space Agency business incubator

#esabicsk

→ THE EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY



KOŠICE, SLOVAKIA – As of September 2025, Slovakia will significantly boost its space technology sector with the launch of the European Space Agency Business Incubation Centre (ESA BIC) Slovakia. This strategic initiative will be implemented by a national consortium led by the East Slovak Space Cluster (ESSC) in partnership with the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava (STU) and the University of Žilina (UNIZA). The project represents a key step on Slovakia's path toward full membership in the European Space Agency, with the goal of building a thriving ecosystem for space-focused startups.

The main objective of ESA BIC Slovakia is to identify and support the 25 most promising space-tech startups over the next five years. The first open call for applications will be announced at the end of 2025. Each selected company will receive a comprehensive support package for two years, which includes a financial incentive of up to €60,000, 50 hours of expert business coaching, 20 hours of technical support, and 10 hours of legal and intellectual property advice. To further strengthen this support, the consortium has also established an Advisory Board composed of leading Slovak and international space companies, which will provide startups with invaluable strategic advice and access to important industry contacts. The program will operate through a harmonized multi-hub model, leveraging established innovation ecosystems in Košice, Bratislava, and Žilina to ensure nationwide coverage and accessibility for entrepreneurs across the country.

The establishment of ESA BIC Slovakia is in line with the long-term strategy of the Slovak Space Office, which is focused on growing national capacities in the space sector. By providing a springboard for high-tech companies, the incubator will transform innovative ideas into viable businesses, create high value-added jobs, and strengthen Slovakia's position as a competitive player in the European space economy.

The European Space Agency Business Incubation Centre (ESA BIC) is the largest network for space innovation in Europe. Its main mission is to inspire and support entrepreneurs in transforming business ideas linked to space into successful and viable companies.

ESA BIC incubators provide startups with comprehensive support for a period of up to two years. This includes a financial incentive without loss of company share, access to the technical expertise of ESA and its partners, tailor-made business coaching, and entry into an international network of innovators, investors, and industry leaders. The ultimate goal is to bridge the gap between space technologies and commercial markets, thereby supporting innovations that create new jobs and strengthen the European economy.

NATIONAL CONSORTIUM



East Slovak Space Cluster (ESSC)

As the consortium leader, the East Slovak Space Cluster is strategically positioned to set the direction for the national space agenda from the dynamic technological hub in Košice. The ESSC brings together leading academic, research, and industrial institutions in the region, including the Technical University of Košice, Pavol Jozef Šafárik University, the Slovak Academy of Sciences, and Deutsche Telekom IT Solutions Slovakia. This strong synergy provides startups with unique access to multidisciplinary expertise, cutting-edge research infrastructure, and strong corporate partners. The ESSC is committed to being a catalyst for regional and national transformation, building strong links between industry and research, and helping Slovak innovators succeed in the global space economy. By leading ESA BIC Slovakia, the cluster will be at the forefront of developing a sustainable and internationally connected space ecosystem.



Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava (STU)

The Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, which serves as the hub for Western Slovakia, brings decades of proven experience in supporting deep-tech companies. Its University Technology Incubator, InQb, founded in 2004, is one of the longest-running and most successful in Slovakia, having supported more than 95 companies that have collectively generated revenues exceeding €64 million. STU plays a key role in the commercialization of cutting-edge research and has built an extensive network of partnerships that includes global leaders such as ESET, IBM, and Google.



UNIVERSITY
OF ŽILINA

University of Žilina (UNIZA)

The University of Žilina will serve as the ESA BIC center for Central Slovakia, leveraging its strong focus on technology transfer and applied research. Through its Technology Incubator, UNIZA has a successful history of guiding projects from idea to realization, with notable achievements such as the aerospace startup Straton Technologies. The university excels at fostering entrepreneurship among students and researchers through targeted programs and access to modern laboratories, including facilities for optical communications, laser technologies, and advanced electronics. UNIZA's active collaboration with local, national, and international innovation partners ensures that startups receive comprehensive support.

ADVISORY BOARD



3IPK

3IPK, founded in Slovakia in 2019, develops blockchain-based software for the space and defense industry, focusing on data integrity, authenticity, and traceability in Earth Observation and supply chains. The company has proven its expertise through multiple successful European Space Agency contracts. It has also expanded into national and European defense initiatives, strengthening its portfolio. 3IPK's participation in top European space accelerators like Seraphim, SpaceFounders, and Cassini shows its ambition to grow within the European space community. A major milestone was achieved with Thales Alenia Space and Microsoft on the Imagin-E mission, where 3IPK's solution ran on the International Space Station to secure hyperspectral data.



Aliter Technologies

Aliter Technologies is a Slovak-Canadian company specializing in information and communication technologies, supporting organizations and governments with secure and efficient data communication and sharing. The company develops solutions in tactical communications, builds information infrastructure, and provides both on-site and cloud security. Its quality is recognized by global leaders such as AIRBUS, BAE Systems, Ericsson, and General Dynamics. With more than 300 completed projects, Aliter Technologies has contributed to rescue operations, special units, electromobility, and multinational information management initiatives. As a NATO-registered supplier and the first Slovak ICT company with a BOA agreement with the NATO Communication and Information Agency, its certified products meet US military MIL-STD standards.



DLA Piper

DLA Piper is a global law firm with more than 4,200 lawyers in over 90 offices across 40+ countries, providing fully integrated legal services worldwide. Its clients include multinational corporations, Fortune 500 companies, Global 1000 enterprises, governments, and public sector bodies, with over half of the Fortune 250 and nearly half of the FTSE 350 among them. The firm operates seamlessly across five continents, combining international reach with deep knowledge of local laws, languages, and cultures. Its global presence enables strategic advice on issues shaped by geopolitical and legislative changes, such as Brexit, COVID-19, and new international policies. DLA Piper's strength lies in its international network, sector-based approach, and full-service capabilities, covering all areas of law from daily corporate matters to complex cross-border negotiations.



GEODETICCA VISION

GEODETICCA VISION is a GeoAI company specializing in the fusion of Earth Observation data, Artificial Intelligence, Geospatial Technologies, and High-Performance Computing. Founded in 2008, the company brings over 15 years of experience in geospatial data collection, processing, analysis, AI model development, and their integration into Web-GIS applications and services. As both Prime Contractor and Subcontractor in several ESA projects, GEODETICCA VISION has built a strong track record in developing applied GeoAI solutions for downstream services. Our ongoing mission is to converge all our technologies and experience into a scalable Earth Digital Twin platform.



Groundcom.space

Groundcom.space s.r.o. is a technology-focused company founded in 2020 that specializes in satellite communication infrastructure, with the mission to build and operate a global network of ground stations for small satellites in low Earth orbit. Operating under the Ground Station-as-a-Service (GSaaS) model, it provides cost-effective and scalable solutions for satellite constellation operators, particularly in Earth observation and the Internet of Things sectors. In addition to network services, the company designs and manufactures its own ground station systems for VHF, UHF, S-band, and X-band frequencies. With expertise spanning hardware design, software integration, production, and operational support, Groundcom delivers both standalone ground station systems and mission-critical satellite communication services. Its ground stations are built for deployment in challenging environments, featuring remote control, monitoring, and autonomous operation to ensure high reliability without direct supervision.



ICKK – Innovation Center of the Košice Region

ICKK, the Innovation Centre of the Košice Region, is a Slovak organization established on August 4, 2021, as an interest association of legal entities involving the Košice Self-Governing Region, the City of Košice, the University of Pavel Jozef Šafárik, the Technical University of Košice, and the University of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy, aimed at fostering the development of the regional innovation ecosystem, boosting innovation potential, and creating sustainable growth conditions for new businesses to curb brain drain. Led by CEO Peter Breyt, ICKK supports startups through acceleration programs, modern coworking spaces like the Startup Campus on Strojárska Street, talent development in secondary schools, and assistance for SMEs in international business expansion, while connecting innovation actors, science, research, education, and technology.



INOVIA – Innovation Centre of the Žilina Region

INOVIA was founded in 2021 as an association of legal entities, with founding members including the Žilina Self-Governing Region, the City of Žilina, and the University of Žilina. Its mission is to strengthen regional competitiveness, attract young talent, and foster sustainable development through innovation. Since its establishment, INOVIA has supported nearly 100 companies by helping them define strategies, solve challenges, connect with experts, access funding, and bring new solutions to market. It also develops the entrepreneurial ecosystem through technology transfer, networking, competitions, and events for entrepreneurs, start-ups, students, and public administration. INOVIA is a member or co-founder of major networks such as the CEE Startup Network, YNOVATE, and Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), ensuring strong connections across Europe.



M2M Solutions

M2M Solutions is an innovative technology company focused on developing supply chain management solutions based on Industry 4.0 standards. With over a decade of rapid growth, its solutions have been implemented in more than 12 countries worldwide. The company's development team covers the full cycle from product design to implementation in transport and internal logistics, aiming to reduce inventory, optimize warehouse processes, and deploy intelligent contactless systems. Its technologies enable efficient supply chains while minimizing environmental impact. In recent years, M2M Solutions has also expanded into the space industry, contributing to unique aerospace projects.



Needronix

Needronix s.r.o., a family-owned Slovak company based in Bratislava, specializes in designing and manufacturing high-quality, compact components for CubeSats and SmallSats, including sun sensors and space-grade RF components, with a focus on innovation, reliability, and low power consumption. As Slovakia's only NATO DIANA test center for space technology, it played a key role in integrating the country's first satellite, skCUBE, and the GRBAlpha nanosatellite, the world's first to detect gamma-ray bursts. Collaborating on multiple European Space Agency projects and mentoring young innovators, Needronix drives Slovakia's space industry growth through international partnerships and a spinoff, Needronix CZ s.r.o., in Prague, focused on aerospace research and development.



Orbitaly Solutions

Orbitaly Solutions is a consulting company with a mission to help businesses succeed in the space industry. It supports startups in developing the business side of their ventures, with a focus on guiding them in getting customers, building strong business cases, and applying for grants and public funding. The company brings extensive expertise in bridging the gap between technical innovation and market adoption, ensuring that promising ideas become commercially viable. By leveraging its network and industry know-how, Orbitaly Solutions empowers entrepreneurs to navigate the challenges of scaling in a highly competitive sector.



Satlantis

Satlantis, a New Space company headquartered in Bilbao, Spain, specializes in developing high-performance optical payloads and full end-to-end solutions for small satellites (SmallSats), focusing on Earth observation and universe exploration technologies. Founded in 2013 as a spin-off from the University of Florida and relocated to Europe in 2014, the company designs innovative, compact imagers like the iSIM series for high-resolution imaging in visible-near infrared (VNIR) and short-wave infrared (SWIR) spectra, enabling applications in sectors such as energy, environment, security, defense, and agriculture. With a team of around 45 experts, Satlantis has launched multiple missions since 2020, including demonstrations on the International Space Station and CubeSats for methane detection and infrastructure monitoring, while achieving 55% revenue growth to €18 million in 2023 through international partnerships and contributions to European Space Agency projects.

Touch4IT

Touch4IT

Touch4IT is a strategic technology consultancy with a strong presence in Europe and the U.S., working with organizations from emerging leaders to Fortune 500 companies to solve complex challenges and deliver secure, scalable digital solutions. Its end-to-end services cover digital strategy, product design, and custom software development, with a focus on measurable outcomes and long-term value. The company specializes in cloud-native platforms, AI-driven automation, enterprise applications, and systems that boost operational efficiency across industries such as healthcare, aerospace, logistics, manufacturing, and retail. Proven results include a telehealth platform used by over 1 million patients and aerospace solutions that reduced MRO turnaround time by 23%. Touch4IT holds ISO 9001, ISO 27001, SOC 2 Type II, HITRUST, and HIPAA certifications, ensuring compliance and security while delivering clarity, trust, and execution excellence.



UpVision

UpVision provides top-tier airspace management and airspace access services for efficient drone use. We simplify the complex issue of safe navigation and the integration of drones into applications and services. UpVision develops dual use technologies that facilitate teaming between pilots, system operators and other cooperating systems. Our focus is on innovative safety concepts, a high level of automation, secured technology and advanced operational procedures.



YEESS

YEESS (Young European Enterprises Syndicate for Space) is an international non-profit association founded in 2021 in Brussels, Belgium, by a group of emerging European space startups and SMEs—including founding members like Satlantis, ANYWAVES, EXOTRIL, and PANGAEA AEROSPACE—to represent and accelerate the New Space sector across Europe. The syndicate advocates for greater integration of innovative young companies into public procurement, fair competition with established players, transparency in space contracts, and broader utilization of space technologies to address global challenges, while fostering collaboration between institutions, primes, and SMEs. With over 13 members as of recent updates, YEESS engages in policy lobbying, attends major events like the European Space Conference, and promotes sustainable public investments in space, aiming to enhance Europe's competitiveness in the €9 billion space market through hybrid sector partnerships and direct interfaces with bodies like the ESA.



Zaitra

Zaitra, a Czech space tech startup founded in 2020 in Brno, develops AI-powered onboard data processing solutions for satellites, enhancing mission autonomy and optimizing Earth observation data by filtering noise and reducing bandwidth usage. Its flagship product, SKAISEN, enables AI-based cloud screening, and its high-performance data processing units support missions like VZLUSAT-2, Biomission19 on the ISS, and SLAVIA CubeSat. Zaitra secured €1.7 million in pre-seed funding in 2024 from Sunfish Partners, Czech Founders VC, and others, driving innovation in the Czech space sector with cost-effective, high-tech solutions.



Zero One Hundred

Zero One Hundred is a Slovak venture capital firm based in Bratislava, founded around 2019, that invests in early-stage startups (pre-seed to Series A) across Central and Eastern Europe and the Middle East, with a focus on innovative, high-growth companies in sectors like proptech, healthtech, and fintech. Backed by experienced private investors and institutions such as Slovak Investment Holding, it manages a €22 million first fund (Zero Gravity Capital) that has invested in over 28 portfolio companies, including Reado (real estate sales predictions), Powerful Medical (ECG analysis), Simplicity (municipal communication tools used in New York and Miami), and recently Vestberry (VC fund management platform, which raised €2.2 million in 2025 with Zero One Hundred's backing). In 2022, the firm launched its second €60 million fund to expand regionally, including LP commitments to other CEE VCs, while also operating under the 0100 Ventures umbrella for venture building, international VC conferences (like the Zero One Hundred Conference series), co-working spaces, and innovation consulting, driving ecosystem growth in Slovakia and beyond.

Supporting organisations



Media contact

Marek Košuda

ESA BIC manager

marek.kosuda@tuke.sk

+421 944 272 056