

# Malta's Thriving Startup Ecosystem: Opportunities for Japanese Collaboration

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In 2024, Malta secured the fourth position in the Europe Startup Nations Alliance's (ESNA) Startup Nations Standard Report, underscoring its commitment to fostering innovation. The country excelled in talent attraction and digital transformation, achieving perfect scores in these categories.

## Malta's Growing Startup Landscape

Malta offers a robust support system for startups. The national economic development agency, Malta Enterprise, plays a crucial role in supporting start-ups in their establishment and growth. Over the past five years, Malta has actively focused on attracting innovative startups through Malta Enterprise and other supportive entities. Beyond funding, Malta Enterprise provides strategic guidance and resources. To streamline startup activities, it has created the 'StartinMalta' platform, serving as a single point of contact for both established and prospective startups in Malta.

Malta Enterprise is currently working on launching a start-up framework aimed at addressing challenges and unlocking the ecosystem's full potential. Since 2020, Malta Enterprise has approved 66 projects across various sectors such as FinTech, MedTech, and robotics,

allocating €30 million and generating over 145 high-quality jobs under the Start-up Finance Scheme.

Other government agencies further bolster the startup ecosystem. The Malta Digital Innovation Authority (MDIA) runs DiHubMT, an initiative offering incubator services, and access to advanced equipment. Additionally, Residency Malta, in collaboration with Malta Enterprise, offers the Start-up Residence Programme, which provides support to co-founders, key employees, and their families to reside and grow their start-up in Malta. Furthermore, the Maltese government has launched a €10 million venture capital fund, administered by Malta Venture Capital, to stimulate local investment in startups.

## Strategic Events and Networking Opportunities

Start-ups visiting Malta are often impressed by the wealth of networking opportunities available. The Start-up Festival, the flagship event of Malta Enterprise, has been held annually for the past four years, establishing itself as a key strategic platform and an entertaining gathering for startups and this year a bigger event is being planned for October 2025 to celebrate the 5th anniversary of the Start-up Festival ([www.startupfestivalmalta.com](http://www.startupfestivalmalta.com)). Furthermore,



startup festival, 2024

Malta Enterprise has supported the organization of the renowned 'EU Start-ups Summit,' which, for the second consecutive year, will take place in Malta, attracting an international audience and providing valuable opportunities for the local ecosystem.

## Collaboration Between Maltese and Japanese Start-ups

The relationship between Japan and Malta has evolved significantly over the years, transitioning from diplomatic exchanges to broader collaboration in trade, culture, and technology. As both nations foster closer economic ties, new opportunities for collaboration between Maltese and Japanese startups are emerging, offering mutual benefits in innovation, investment, and global market expansion. For Japanese startups and investors seeking a strategic foothold in Europe, Malta presents a compelling proposition.

Japanese startups, renowned for their technological expertise and innovative solutions, can leverage Malta's startup ecosystem, particularly in key sectors such as FinTech, MedTech, and digital innovation. Malta's regulatory environment and emphasis on digital transformation create an ideal backdrop for joint ventures.

Additionally, Malta's location in the Mediterranean provides Japanese startups with seamless access to European, African, and Middle Eastern markets. Conversely, Maltese companies can benefit from Japan's advanced technological landscape. Through cross-border partnerships, both nations can drive innovation, expand market reach, and share valuable insights into emerging technologies.

With EXPO 2025 set to take place in Osaka, Japanese startups have a unique opportunity to engage with their Maltese counterparts, potentially forming lasting collaborations that foster business growth and innovation.

## Conclusion

Setting up a startup in Malta offers numerous advantages. Strategically positioned at the crossroads of Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, the country serves as a gateway to diverse markets. As a member of the European Union and the Schengen Area, Malta provides access to



Valletta, the capital of Malta

an important economic network. Its pro-business regulatory framework, tailored to support emerging industries, enhances its appeal further. Additionally, Malta boasts a highly skilled, English-speaking workforce, making it an ideal destination for companies looking to scale operations in Europe.

Malta's dynamic startup ecosystem, combined with its strategic location and strong ties with Japan, makes it an attractive destination for Japanese entrepreneurs and investors seeking expansion into Europe. As both nations continue to deepen their economic relationship, the potential for mutually beneficial collaborations in the startup sector remains significant, presenting an exciting avenue for growth, innovation, and global success.

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