

Lithuania's Startup Ecosystem: A Fast-Growing Innovation Partner for Japan

**Innovation Agency Lithuania
Embassy of Lithuania in Japan**

The past year marked an unprecedented surge in Lithuanian high-tech engagement with Japan. In May, more than 20 Lithuanian companies specializing in smart-city technologies joined the Minister of Economy and Innovation on an official business mission. This momentum continued in June, when over 40 Lithuanian companies participated in a high-level Business Forum in Tokyo, held during the visit of the President of the Republic of Lithuania. The forum spotlighted dual-use technologies, space, biotech, and food tech, and resulted in key cooperation milestones: the Innovation Agency Lithuania signed a Joint Statement with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and a memorandum of understanding with the open-space innovation platform CrossU. These agreements laid the groundwork for deeper bilateral R&D collaboration in space technologies, culminating in a successful Lithuanian business mission to Nihonbashi Space Week in October.

Over the past decade, Lithuania has quietly but decisively emerged as one of Europe's most dynamic startup ecosystems. According to the latest Dealroom report, the total value of Lithuanian startups has grown 39-fold since 2014—from EUR 419 million to EUR 16 billion. In 2024 alone, the ecosystem expanded by a further EUR 2 billion, underscoring its resilience at a time when global venture investment has slowed.



Startup Fair

This sustained momentum is now gaining international recognition. In Dealroom's Global Tech Ecosystem Index 2025, Vilnius was named the fastest-growing tech city in the European Union and ranked 13th globally for ecosystem growth. Meanwhile, StartupBlink's Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025 places Lithuania 19th worldwide, with Vilnius continuing to climb among global startup cities. Together, these rankings confirm Lithuania's transition from an emerging market to a mature exporter of innovation.

For Japanese corporations seeking agile technology partners, co-development opportunities, and access to advanced European innovation, Lithuania offers a compelling proposition.

A Compact Ecosystem with Global Impact

Lithuania's strength lies in its ability to generate outsized results relative to its size. Over the past five years, the value of Lithuanian startups has increased 6.8 times—the fastest growth rate in Central and Eastern Europe. On a per-capita basis, Lithuania now ranks second in the region for startup value creation, reflecting high productivity, strong technical talent, and effective ecosystem coordination.

Four Lithuanian startups—Vinted, Nord Security, Cast



Startup Meetup

AI and Baltic Classifieds Group—have reached unicorn status, each valued at over EUR 1 billion. Beyond these leaders, companies such as Kilo Health, PVcase, Ovoko, and TransferGo are widely regarded as future unicorns, signalling a deep and diversified pipeline of scale-ups.

The success of Vinted, now valued at EUR 5 billion, has had a particularly strong multiplier effect. Former Vinted employees have gone on to found at least 26 new startups, reinforcing a virtuous cycle of entrepreneurship, experience transfer, and global ambition.

Investment Focus: Fintech, AI, and Sustainability

In 2024, Lithuanian startups raised EUR 128 million in investment. While total funding declined in line with global trends, early-stage investment remained robust, highlighting investor confidence in long-term growth. Fintech attracted the largest share of capital, followed by e-commerce and transport, while artificial intelligence, circular economy solutions, and payment technologies emerged as the most active segments.

Lithuania is now ranked 3rd globally and 1st in Europe for cybersecurity, and holds a strong position in technology commercialisation and global sales capabilities. This combination of technical depth and market readiness makes Lithuanian startups particularly attractive for collaboration with established Japanese corporations.

Government support also plays a key role. Through initiatives such as the national START plan and international accelerator programmes, Lithuania actively supports startup internationalisation, co-innovation, and global market entry. START is a visa and relocation program tailored for non-EU citizens who aim to create value through innovative startups, providing them with streamlined access to residence permits in Lithuania, business setup assistance, and an extensive network of industry connections.

Unicorn Spotlight: Nord Security

<https://nordsecurity.com/>

With a mission to protect privacy, secure digital freedom for everyone and prevent surveillance online, Nord

Security is a world-leading cybersecurity provider that is trusted by millions. It is also one of Lithuania's 3 unicorn startups, with a current valuation of over \$3 billion.

This commitment to digital freedom is reflected in Nord Security's growing ecosystem of B2C and B2B solutions. Its flagship product, NordVPN, is the world's most popular VPN service. It is also home to password management tool NordPass and encrypted cloud storage product NordLocker. Its recent product additions include NordLayer, a network security platform, NordStellar, a threat exposure management platform, NordProtect, which protects against identity theft, and Saily, a global eSIM service.

As a cybersecurity company, Nord Security aims to raise awareness of online threats and support digital safety education. They offer solutions to people and organizations in Japan helping them make informed choices about protecting their privacy and data, and encourage safer everyday online habits through their products, as well as expert insights, research, and practical guidance.



Startup Spotlight 1: Delta Biosciences

<https://www.deltabiosciences.com/>

Delta Biosciences is an innovative R&D company operating across two tightly linked verticals—life sciences and space—and, critically, at their intersection. In life sciences, the company studies medicine shelf life and degradation mechanisms while also discovering and developing new radiation countermeasures, including proprietary radioprotective compounds designed to mitigate radiation-driven damage. In space, Delta extends this same drug-development and stability science into real mission conditions, while also acting as an enabling partner for others by designing payloads, integrating

partner samples, and conducting in-orbit experimentation to generate flight-grade scientific evidence.

In 2026, Delta plans to begin a three-year mission aboard the International Space Station that will fly over 100 chemical molecules—including Delta’s proprietary candidates, partner molecules, and well-known reference medicines—to generate in-orbit degradation profiles and inform the next generation of radiation-resistant formulations. This mission, one of two launches planned by the company next year, is conducted in collaboration with the European Space Agency. Delta’s progress is further fueled by partnerships with the German Aerospace Center and the GSI Helmholtz Centre for Heavy Ion Research for complementary ground-based radiation studies, as well as by participation in NASA Space-H. In 2025, the company also deepened its engagement with Japan through two visits—one as part of the Lithuanian President’s delegation and another for Nihonbashi Space Week in Tokyo—while actively developing partnerships with multiple Japanese entities.

Startup Spotlight 2: Super Garden

<https://www.supergarden.lt/en>

Another Lithuanian company exploring collaboration opportunities in Japan is Super Garden, an innovative food-tech company specializing in advanced freeze-drying technology. Using natural ingredients, Super Garden develops nutrient-dense snacks, functional nutrition products, and next-generation food solutions with long shelf life and minimal processing.

In recent years, the company’s R&D has expanded into space and extreme-environment nutrition, including projects with the European Space Agency. This work positions Super Garden at the intersection of food science, biotechnology, and advanced processing—fields that align closely with Japan’s strengths in food innovation and quality.

Japan is a strategic market for Super Garden, not only for commercial expansion but also for R&D collaboration. The company is actively seeking partnerships in alternative proteins, functional ingredients, and advanced food processing, aiming to combine Lithuanian freeze-

drying expertise with Japan’s leadership in food science. With prior experience engaging Japanese stakeholders through international innovation platforms, Super Garden sees strong potential for long-term co-development and market entry partnerships.



A Natural Partner for Japanese Innovation

Lithuania’s startup ecosystem is compact, highly connected, and globally oriented. Founders benefit from favourable regulation, competitive operating costs, and a deep pool of engineering and life sciences talent. At the same time, the ecosystem is increasingly outward-looking, positioning itself as a reliable partner for international corporations.

For Japan, Lithuania offers more than emerging startups—it offers co-creation opportunities, proven engineering quality, and a shared commitment to sustainability, precision, and long-term value creation. As Lithuania strengthens its international presence, partnerships with Japanese companies are set to play a growing role in shaping the next chapter of its innovation story.

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