



# THE EIT COMMUNITY IN THE EU OUTERMOST REGIONS

## THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

The [European Institute of Innovation and Technology \(EIT\)](#), is an independent body of the European Union, created in 2008, and tasked with strengthening Europe's ability to innovate. It does by supporting the development of dynamic, long-term, European partnerships among leading companies, research labs and higher education institutions. These partnerships, called [EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities \(KICs\)](#), are each dedicated to finding solutions to a specific global challenge, from climate change, digitalisation, and sustainable energy and raw materials to healthy living, urban mobility, manufacturing and food. Together with the EIT, they form the EIT Community.

The EIT is Europe's largest innovation ecosystem, with over 2,500 partners. The EIT Community works together to power innovators and entrepreneurs across Europe to turn their best ideas into cutting-edge products and services, create jobs and produce sustainable and smart growth for all. This is done by offering a wide range of innovation and entrepreneurship activities, including education courses that combine technical and entrepreneurial skills; tailored business creation and acceleration services; and; innovation driven research projects. These activities help bring new ideas and solutions to the market, turn students into entrepreneurs and, most importantly, deliver innovation.

## SUPPORTING INNOVATION ACROSS EUROPE

Against the backdrop of persisting regional disparities in innovation performance in Europe, the EIT launched a [Regional Innovation Scheme \(RIS\)](#) in 2014 to widen its regional outreach to modest / emerging and moderate innovator countries according to the [European Innovation Scoreboard \(EIS\)](#), as well as, from 2021, the EU Outermost Regions. Through the EIT RIS, steered by the EIT and implemented by its KICs, the EIT has significantly expanded its activities across Europe and offers opportunities for EIT RIS countries and regions to engage in EIT Community activities. Today, ten years since the launch of the EIT RIS, the EIT stands proudly as one of the strongest instruments under Horizon Europe in addressing Europe's innovation divide.

Based on its strong track record, the EIT is both evidently well-placed, as well as firmly committed to support the innovation ecosystems of the EU Outermost Regions to harness their strengths and overcome their challenges. In this context, in February 2024, the EIT has published a [Strategy](#), outlining its vision for the EU Outermost Regions and providing steering guidance to the EIT KICs to better adapt the toolbox of existing, effective instruments to the EU Outermost Regions as well as design new, bespoke initiatives.



## EXAMPLES OF EIT ACTIVITIES IN THE EU OUTERMOST REGIONS

Whilst, to date, the EU Outermost Regions participation in EIT Community activities remains unbalanced and below potential, a basis on which to build already exists. This section outlines some recent examples of EIT activities implemented in the EU Outermost Regions, including success stories emerging from these territories.

### Supported by [EIT Health](#)

- [Osteobionix](#)

Osteobionix is a start-up based in Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, and a spin-off of the Canary Islands Technological Institute (ITC).

It designs and manufactures innovative, clinically validated, high-quality, cost-effective custom implants and instruments for orthopaedic, trauma, spine, thoracic and craniomaxillofacial surgery. The start-up uses porous metal and biopolymer 3D printing to support surgeons in finding patient-specific solutions in a wide variety of medical conditions.

The start-up received support from EIT Health's [Bridgehead programme](#) in 2023 and eventually won the Healthy Longevity Catalyst Award for the best solutions for healthy ageing. EIT Health provided Osteobionix with access to incubators and accelerators, supported its efforts to access new markets in Europe quicker, provided it with access to its network of partners, clients, and infrastructure and helped it understand new regulatory systems. Osteobionix was also offered direct smart financing (€50,000), seasoned expertise, insight and strategic business support.

Building on this support, Osteobionix now works with different Spanish hospitals (including, Sant Joan de Deu Hospital, the Corachan Clinic and the Teknon, located in Barcelona) and provides its services in biomedical engineering projects aimed at bone reconstruction. Osteobionix enjoys annual revenues exceeding €1 million and has registering annual growth of 45% on average between 2019 and 2021.

- [Rethink Medical](#)



Rethink Medical, based in Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, developed an innovative solution branded as T-Control® which enables patients to open and close the flow of urine in a safe and easy manner, without the need for additional devices. One in every four men over 70 will suffer from acute urinary retention associated with different kind of illnesses and certain medical interventions. Rethink Medical offers them choice regarding when, how and how long the catheter bag should be used, based on personal preferences and specific medical conditions. It improves quality of life, social inclusion and healthy ageing.

The start-up received several rounds of support from EIT Health. In 2017, it received €50,000 in smart financing from [EIT Health Spain Headstart](#). This was followed by another grant of €11,500 in seed funding and a €25,000 prize from the [EIT Health InnoStars Awards](#) in 2021. Apart from funding support, Rethink Medical received intense mentoring, matchmaking and training from the EIT Community.

Building on the EIT's support, in 2018, Rethink Medical received €50,000 from the [European Innovation Council](#) (EIC) Pilot. This was followed by €1.5 million from the EIC Accelerator in 2022. In 2023, it was awarded €10,000 by the Canary Islands Startup Destination and additional in kind support worth €7,200

Rethink Medical collaborates with the Canary University Foundation of Las Palmas within the framework of the [Diginnova programme](#) in order to reinforce its contribution to the research and digital transformation in the Canary Islands.

### Supported by [EIT Urban Mobility](#)

- [Meep](#)

Meep is a Spanish start-up that provides digital solution that integrates and connects different transportation services, creating sustainable, connected mobility ecosystems. It is a ready-to-go and quick-to-customize platform, which is scalable and adaptable to different types of users. The start-up provides its services to Alsa, Avanza, Globalvia, Malta Public Transport, Cyprus Public Transport and Aena as well as Renfe, Transportes Metropolitanos de Barcelona, Barcelona Turisme, Zaragoza City Council, Alcobendas City Council, Sevilla Metropolitan Transport Consortium, micromobility (Voi, Bolt, Spin, Cooltra, Lime, Donkey Republic).

Meep conducted a pilot in Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, in 2021. The [Las Palmas City Challenge](#) saw the implementation of a tool to help the automatization of the logistics in the public bike sharing system. The tool would need to have a map with the distribution of the bikes that generate alerts with the empty or completed stations.



As a result of this, the Meep mobile app and data tool are already on the market. The Meep mobile app encourages a modal shift towards more sustainable and improved mobility, and a behavioral shift towards multi-modal trips. Through Meep, users can search for, book and pay for trips within a single transaction – eliminating the need for multiple apps. Users can combine several modes of transportation, both public and private and free-floating and stationary, to complete a single journey, allowing for more efficient, personalized city travel.

### Supported by [EIT Climate-KIC](#)

- [InnoFinRES](#)

The aim of the InnoFinRES (Innovative financial models to support a transition to renewable energy sources) Project conducted in 2022, in which the Consejo Insular De La Energía De Gran Canaria was a key partner, was to create a novel financing model to facilitate the transition to Renewable Energy Sources (RES). The model will be based on best practices for community financing and impact investing for local government. By retrofitting a kindergarten with Photovoltaic hybrid collectors, the viability of the novel technology will be demonstrated by showing actualized savings over a period of time. The project enabled local governments, including in Gran Canaria, to approach retrofit and decentralised energy from a new financial perspective by offsetting the costs of such interventions through crowdsourcing and similar partnerships and using the effectuated savings to push further the transition to RES. Scalability will be ensured by offering the process for creating the model as a product to other local governments and similar entities.

- [EnerBuild](#)

The 2022 EnerBuild project aimed to mitigate climate change by optimising energy consumption by means of smart building technologies and industrial, as well as by monitoring the environment and air quality in the building for compliance with standards. The project envisages combined deployment of the industrial Internet of Things (IoT) platform HiPerWare by BPS International (Germany) and the Intelligent Maintenance Management Platform ('IMMP') by Infraspak (Portugal) at a pilot building provided by the Cabildo de Gran Canaria. The combined solution will track and analyze utility systems of the pilot building by collecting Big Data on their operation, with the creation of a live digital twin, detecting abnormal behavior and providing data-based optimization recommendations. These recommendations will be managed by the innovative IMMP by Infraspak, leading to significant improvement in energy consumption, reduction of equipment downtime, and optimising operational performance.

### Supported by [EIT Food](#)

- [EIT Food Startup Awareness Events](#)



Working with Cr dit Agricole Martinique-Guyane, EIT Food organised a series of Startup Awareness Events in Martinique in 2022. The main goal of the events was to introduce EIT Food opportunities and scout for potential participants of EIT Food entrepreneurship programmes. The events also aimed to bring together the members of the local agrifood ecosystem and initiate the discussion about the current state and challenges of the ecosystem in relation to innovation and entrepreneurship, including representatives of business, academia and public authorities. During the workshops participants developed a set of skills including Entrepreneurship and Problem Solving from [EIT Food Competency Framework](#). They learned about the main elements of entrepreneurial and startup building processes, identified major challenges to turn them into business ideas, developed the ideas regarding various marketing related tasks and pitched them to potential investors.

**Supported by [EIT RawMaterials](#)**

- [La Palma Research Centre](#)

La Palma Research Centre, an independent think-tank on geosciences is a key partner of EIT RawMaterials. La Palma Research Centre has been centrally involved in several EIT RawMaterials projects, including the ones listed in the table below:

Project Title	Project Type
Encouraging Girls to Study Geosciences and Engineering	Wide Society Learning
MOBI-US: structured mobilities for ESEE raw materials master programmes	RIS Capacity Building
UNEXMIN Upscaling	Upscaling
TIMREX - T-Shaped Master Programme for Innovative Mineral Resource Exploration	Master Education
Raw Materials Value Chain	Master Education

**Supported in the [EIT Community Strategic Regional Innovations Project](#)**

The [EIT Jumpstarter](#) is the flagship pre-acceleration programme of the EIT Community Strategic Regional Innovations Project, which has trained more than 970 talents since 2017, and helped create more than 97 start-ups. The ventures created offered more than 940 new jobs and attracted over €56 million in external investment. In 2019, in 2019, EIT Jumpstarter won the Best Association Training Initiative Award of the European Association Awards.



- **Deep Waves**

DeepWaves is an early-stage start-up based in La Réunion which won 2<sup>nd</sup> prize in the 2023 edition of the EIT Jumpstarter under the EIT RawMaterials Category. DeepWaves is a science-based deep-tech startup focused on revolutionising the natural resources exploration and mining industry. They utilise novel computational modelling and advanced machine learning techniques to reduce mineral exploration costs, accelerate prospecting, and pinpoint untapped reserves and deposits of natural resources.

Through the EIT Jumpstarter, DeepWaves received €8,000 in cash prize money and smart financing. The EIT Community will closely follow DeepWaves and continue to support its growth and success.

Supported by [EIT Global Outreach Hub Israel](#)

- [Domingo Alonso Group](#)

Domingo Alonso Group (DAG), a Las Palmas, Gran Canaria-based automotive business group specialising in mobility services; currently operating in more than 30 markets. The company is an alumnus of the Innovate Canarias, organised in collaboration with the EIT Hub in Israel. As a result, they created an Innovation Department in the company within 1.5 years after graduation. Today, the company is experiencing rapid digitalization and the use of new technologies, which has a significant impact on the local ecosystem. In March 2024 DAG, together with the partner, created the first shared services technology purchasing centre in the Canary Islands. This centre is expected to carry out more than 4,000 operations for the international operations of DAG. In 2024 the company will open an innovative auto terminal at the Port of Las Palmas. With an investment of more than 26 million euros, this innovative building will incorporate cutting-edge technology and digitalization solutions to guarantee maximum efficiency in its operations. The autoterminal is self-sustainable and designed for carbon neutrality. With the capacity to store more than 6,000 vehicles, the autoterminal integrates the latest advances in logistics, technology and sustainability.

- [Astilleros Canarias S.A](#)

Astilleros Canarias S.A. (ASTICAN) is a privately owned ship repair yard, based in Las Palmas, Gran Canaria focused on the repair, maintenance, and conversion of all types of vessels, structures, marine renewable energy devices and offshore units. In collaboration with Innovate Canarias, they received strategic support within the Disrupt Me Programme of EIT Hub Israel. EIT Hub Israel helped them identify technological areas of interest and supported them in tailor-made scouting and matchmaking with the Israeli ecosystem, especially start-ups in the field of energy efficiency, waste management, water and maritime operational efficiency. As a result, the company has accelerated its efforts in innovations towards greater sustainability and marine life preservation. They introduced the measurement system of the carbon footprint of the regulated dry-docking of ships in order to improve environmental efficiency in ports.



## Supported in the [EIT HEI initiative](#)

The EIT HEI Initiative is a joint activity of the EIT community, which recognises Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as the pivotal actors in regional and European innovation ecosystems. The EIT HEI Initiative is uniquely designed to enhance the innovation capacity and entrepreneurial mindset of HEIs and foster collaboration between academia, industry, research institutions, public authorities and governmental organisations. Through competitive calls for proposals, the initiative offers non-reimbursable grants to consortia formed by HEIs and their partners to work on innovation and entrepreneurship, but also on other dimensions of strategic interest for Europe, such as deep tech.

- [INCORE Project](#)

The €1.3 million, 2021-2023 [INCORE project](#), lead by [EIT InnoEnergy](#), boosts innovation and entrepreneurial capacity in HEIs in Europe's Outermost Regions by seizing region-specific contextual and business opportunities.

INCORE's Innovation Vision Action Plan (IVAP) intended to expand the ability of HEIs to innovate and better integrate with their regional innovation ecosystems. Central to INCORE IVAP was improving the framework conditions for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs, in particular high-tech start-ups) and HEIs to co-create new value, businesses, products, and services.

The project resulted in: a detailed assessment of the capabilities and potential of the involved higher education institutions; mapping of existing needs; and overall scenarios and a strategic roadmap, including a harmonised model to support small and medium-sized enterprises, which is currently being implemented in the outermost regions. In addition, nearly 140 students and over 30 academic and 70 non-academic staff members were trained in the field of collaboration between HEIs and the business world. The tailor-made workshops were carried out in Madeira, the Canary Islands, Réunion, and Lisbon (held by the higher education institutions), and the support to three start-ups from the Azores, Canary Islands and Madeira were also provided, enhancing their business plans and go-to-market strategies.

Along these joint actions, each partner has also started implementing their own individual activities. These include creating a new research centre for innovation and entrepreneurship in Madeira, a new chair and scientific area for sustainability and entrepreneurship in the Canary Islands, and a series of conferences and workshops on innovation and pedagogy for students and academic staff in Réunion.