

EU|BIC Knowledge Exchange Visit Programme: Building Bridges Across Innovation Ecosystems

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Call for Applications

Organised by: European Business & Innovation Centre Network (EBN)

Supported by: EU|BIC Community

Context & Background

The European Business and Innovation Centre Network (EBN) is a leading not-for-profit organisation committed to driving innovation and entrepreneurship across Europe and beyond. Through its certified EU|BIC programme, EBN fosters regional economic, sustainable, and social development by supporting thriving startups and SMEs.

The **Knowledge Exchange Visit Programme** is designed to strengthen collaboration within the EU|BIC community by promoting **knowledge sharing, best practices, and innovation capacity building**. It offers a unique opportunity for EU|BICs and EU|BIC Associate Members to engage as either **Visiting Organisations or Host Organisations**, facilitating **mutual learning, practical exposure, and impact-driven partnerships**.

This programme enables participants to benefit from a **diverse range of exchange formats** tailored to their needs, including:

- **Workshops on specialised topics**, led by peer industry experts.
- **Site visits** to startups, innovation hubs, research centres, corporate partners, and investors.
- **Networking sessions**, allowing participants to build valuable relationships across the EU|BIC community.
- **Knowledge-sharing activities**, such as roundtable discussions, case study presentations, and ecosystem mapping exercises.
- **Staff Exchange & Co-working Opportunity**, where Visiting Organisations can **work alongside their hosts within the same office space**, engaging in **informal exchanges, operational insights, and collaborative projects**.
- **Hands-on innovation sessions**, including joint prototyping, design sprints, or pilot project collaborations.

- **Tailored mentoring and coaching**, providing Visiting Organisations with direct access to local expertise.

By participating, organisations can engage in **immersive learning experiences**, gaining both strategic and operational insights to enhance their innovation support services.

Please note that this is a **self-funded initiative**, and both Host and Visiting Organisations are expected to **allocate a budget to support their participation**, covering logistics, travel, and related expenses. The programme is facilitated by EBN but requires financial commitment from participating organisations.

Programme Objectives

The programme aims to:

- ✓ Enhance the innovation capacity of the **EU|BIC Community** by facilitating **peer learning and best practice exchange**.
- ✓ Foster **international collaboration** on thematic areas critical to regional and global challenges, such as **green transition, digital transformation, and inclusive entrepreneurship**.
- ✓ Support the **internationalisation and scaling** of innovative solutions developed within **EU|BIC ecosystems**.
- ✓ Strengthen knowledge-sharing through **co-working experiences**, allowing Visiting Organisations to **gain practical insights by working from the Host Organisation's office and engaging in daily operations**.
- ✓ Enable organisations to engage in **collaborative project development**, prototype new services, and explore **new business and innovation opportunities**.

Demonstrated experience

For Host Organisations:

- Must be a member of the EU|BIC Community (certified EU|BIC or an EU|BIC Associate Member).

- Demonstrated expertise in at least one of the priority thematic areas, including:
 - Green innovation (e.g., renewable energy, sustainable production).
 - Digital transformation and Industry 4.0.
 - Inclusive and impact-driven entrepreneurship.
 - Access to finance and scaling innovation.
- Capacity to host visiting organisations, including space, logistics, and workshop facilitation.
- Be open to staff exchange and co-working, allowing Visiting Organisations to integrate into their office environment for hands-on learning.

For Visiting Organisations:

- Must be a member of the EU|BIC Community (certified EU|BIC or an EU|BIC Associate Member) looking to:
 - Address specific challenges within their ecosystem.
 - Benchmark best practices.
 - Develop international partnerships.
 - Possibility to engage in staff exchange and co-working for an immersive learning experience.
- Priority will be given to organisations demonstrating clear goals aligned with the programme's thematic focus.

Programme Components

1. Preparation & Planning:

- Participating organisations will collaborate with EBN to define objectives, topics, and desired outcomes for the exchange.

2. Knowledge Exchange Visit:

- Host Organisations will facilitate a 1–2-day programme comprising:

- Workshops on specific topics.
- Site visits to local innovation hubs, startups, or key partners.
- Networking sessions and knowledge-sharing activities.
- Staff Exchange & Co-working Opportunity: To foster deeper collaboration, Visiting Organisations will also have the opportunity to work from the Host Organisation's premises, integrating into their daily activities. This will allow for informal exchanges, direct exposure to operational practices, and strengthened peer-to-peer learning.

3. Follow-Up Activities:

- Participants will be required to share insights and lessons learned through individual follow-up with EBN secretariat.
- EBN will collect feedback to improve future iterations of the programme.

Host Organisations will be providing prior to the visit detailed agenda covering workshops, visits, and networking activities.

How to Apply

Applications are open for **both Host and Visiting Organisations**.

Submission Requirements:

1. For Host Organisations:

- Organisational profile and expertise.
- Proposed thematic focus for the visit.
- Statement of capacity to host (e.g., facilities, logistics, available budget).

2. For Visiting Organisations:

- Organisational profile and challenges to address.
- Preferred thematic focus and learning goals.
- Anticipated outcomes and post-visit plans.
- Available budget

Application Deadline: 15 April 2025

Evaluation Criteria

- Relevance of proposed themes to EU|BIC community goals.
- Clear articulation of objectives and outcomes.
- Capacity and commitment to fostering impactful exchanges.

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Microsoft Forms

Timeline

- Application Deadline: **15th April 2025**
- Knowledge Exchange Visits: June – December 2025

Why Participate?

This programme aligns with the **EU|BIC community's** commitment to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship through **peer learning, international collaboration, and ecosystem development**. By taking part in the **Knowledge Exchange Visit Programme**, your organisation will gain **unique opportunities** to:

- **Strengthen Innovation Capacity** – Gain first-hand insights from leading EU|BICs, benchmark best practices, and enhance the quality of your business support services.
- **Expand Your Network** – Build lasting relationships with key innovation leaders, entrepreneurs, investors, and policymakers across Europe, opening doors to future collaborations.
- **Experience Hands-on Learning** – Move beyond theoretical discussions by **participating in workshops, site visits, and co-working opportunities**, enabling practical exposure to operational best practices.
- **Enhance Internationalisation & Scaling** – Explore new markets, engage with international partners, and leverage global opportunities to support the growth of startups and SMEs in your ecosystem.
- **Co-create and Innovate** – Engage in **joint problem-solving, pilot projects, and innovation sprints** with other EU|BICs, driving the development of new solutions in **green transition, digital transformation, and impact-driven entrepreneurship**.
- **Gain Recognition & Visibility** – Position your organisation as an innovation leader within the **EU|BIC community**, showcasing your expertise and impact on a European stage.
- **Foster Long-term Impact** – Take away actionable insights and strategies that can be directly applied to improve your regional innovation ecosystem, strengthening both local and international partnerships.

JOIN US IN SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INNOVATION !