A strategic opportunity for Sweden

Why this matters now

Europe is exceptionally strong in research, universities, and early innovation. We educate world-class engineers and scientists. We generate breakthrough research. We create promising deep-tech startups. Yet too few of these companies scale into globally competitive businesses. The problem is not talent. It is not science. It is structure.

Fragmented markets, limited late-stage capital, uneven regional capacity, and insufficient cross-border integration make it harder for European companies to grow at scale. As a result, many of our most promising ventures expand elsewhere. At a time when leadership in complex technologies increasingly defines economic strength, resilience, and strategic autonomy, this gap matters. Deep-tech scale is no longer just an innovation issue, it is a competitiveness issue.

The EU call ”European Startup and Scaleup Hubs Pilot” (ESSH) is a direct attempt to address this. Its ambition is bold but clear: to connect Europe’s strongest startup ecosystems into a truly integrated, cross-border alliance a “Champions League” of innovation hubs.

Only one consortium will be selected with a total budget of 40M€ for a 2-year pilot.

The Consortium Rise Europe

Rise Europe is uniquely positioned to win this call. Founded in 2023 by some of Europe’s most advanced innovation ecosystems, Rise Europe was not created for this application. It already exists as a functioning collaboration between Europes leading hubs.

The consortium brings together 18 of Europe’s strongest startup and scaleup environments, coordinated by UnternehmerTUM in Munich. The member hubs are anchored in leading technical universities and research institutions, including Technical University of Munich (DE), ETH Zurich (CH), University of Oxford (UK), Imperial College London (UK), KTH Royal Institute of Technology (SE), Aalto University (FI) and TU Delft (NL)

The consortium has invited five high-performing hubs from widening countries, strengthening both excellence and cohesion while expanding its reach and competitiveness.

These are ecosystems with real track records in venture building, scaling companies, and attracting capital. The strength of the consortium lies in its maturity. Trust is already built. Collaboration is already structured. The network is already active.

This is not a loose platform, it is an operational alliance ready to scale further.

Why Sweden’s Presence Matters

For Sweden, participation is strategically important. If we are not part of the selected consortium, we risk standing outside the core structure that will shape Europe’s next generation of deep-tech scaleups.

The Swedish hub, ESSH Stockholm, brings together KTH Ventures (lead), KTH Innovation, Kista Science City and Sting. Anchored in Stockholm, the hub serves and connects deep-tech actors

nationwide. Public commitment is strong: KTH Royal Institute of Technology, the City of Stockholm and Region Stockholm have confirmed co-funding, and dialogue continues with national actors such as Vinnova.

Sweden has the talent, research depth and entrepreneurial culture. But scaling deep tech today requires structured European integration. Being part of this alliance ensures Swedish startups gain direct access to shared infrastructure, cross-border talent, corporate and public demand, growth-stage capital networks, and EU instruments such as the EIC.

Ultimately, this is about ensuring that Sweden remains within Europe's inner circle when it comes to scaling complex technologies.

Why This Is Relevant for Family Offices

The call requires that 50% of the co-funding is confirmed through Letters of Intent at submission. Public actors have stepped forward; what remains is committed private capital.

Family offices are uniquely positioned to engage at this level. You understand that long-term competitiveness and sustainable value creation go hand in hand. While this is a two-year pilot, the ambition is much broader: to strengthen the structure that enables European deep-tech companies to grow, remain, and scale in Europe.

A co-funding contribution of €100,000 or more offers the opportunity to help shape a flagship European initiative from the outset, align with leading universities and high-performing ecosystems, support Sweden's strategic role in Europe, and contribute to long-term value creation beyond individual investments. This is not about backing a single company, but about improving the conditions that allow many companies to succeed.

Participation provides unique engagement with Europe's evolving deep-tech landscape, with early visibility into emerging technologies and ecosystems. It also carries strong signal value and embeds you within a trusted network of Europe's leading innovation hubs.

To submit a competitive proposal, the consortium must provide formal Letters of Intent confirming committed co-funding. We therefore require confirmation of participation, in the form of a signed LOI, no later than 27 February. This timeline is firm. Without confirmed commitments by then, the Swedish hub cannot be fully included in the final proposal.

The European deadline is 10 March 2026. The window for securing private commitment is now.

A Defining Moment

This is a rare opportunity to help shape Europe's next generation deep-tech ecosystem, as a founding partner, not a bystander. Public institutions are committed, the consortium is strong, and the case is clear. What is now needed is decisive private engagement.

We would welcome a conversation and any opportunity to provide the material needed to support a decision before **27 February**.

This pilot is not only about funding, but also about securing Sweden's seat at the table where Europe's future deep-tech support structures will be shaped.