



## HOW THE EU HELPS ISLANDS

Europe's island communities face a series of challenges, including limited access to resources and services, environmental threats, and ageing populations. With EU support, these can be transformed into opportunities that create jobs, boost local economies and improve lives. The EU-funded NONAGON project is one such example.

## Azores science and technology hub generates jobs

An EU-funded project has developed a science and technology park in the Azores, helping innovative local entrepreneurs to start up and creating nearly 200 jobs in these remote Portuguese islands. The site also provides space for conferences and coding classes for youngsters.

The Azores archipelago is known for its breath-taking natural beauty. It welcomes visitors from around the world who marvel at its rugged coastlines and many other attractions, some of which are listed as World Heritage sites by UNESCO.

As one of two autonomous Portuguese regions, the Azores are located in the North Atlantic some 1 500 kilometres from the mainland. For local technology-focused entrepreneurs and start-ups, that factor can be a major hurdle. It can mean limited access to resources and experts to help them find their footing and start successful businesses.

The EU-funded **NONAGON** project has helped change that with the creation of the Azores' first-ever science and technology park. The bright, state-of-the-art building in the city of Lagoa on the island of São Miguel opened its doors in 2015 and, at full capacity, currently hosts 30 companies.



*'The technology-based business incubator is at the NONAGON Science and Technology Park's core. It features co-working spaces, training rooms, and an auditorium. And, with the creation of 181 jobs to date, it has seen considerable success.'*

## Booming tech business incubator

The technology-based business incubator is at the NONAGON Science and Technology Park's core. It features co-working spaces, training rooms, and an auditorium. And, with the creation of 181 jobs to date, it has seen considerable success.

It offers entrepreneurs in the science and technology sectors a wide range of support for up to four years – from helping them develop their business ideas to the setting up of micro and small enterprises.

The park has created a virtual incubation programme due to popular demand that provides support and services to entrepreneurs not physically at the site.

As a way of putting itself on the map, the park has been promoting several events in partnership with regional, national and international organisations – including the NASA International Space Apps Challenge, a hackathon linked to the US space agency.

The park's spaces for events, such as the training rooms and auditorium, have seen an uptick in demand, including for hosting coding clubs for children aimed at fostering an interest in technology among the local community's youngest members.



© Nonagon

## NONAGON

**Project full name:** NONAGON Science and Technology Park

**Sectors:** Research and innovation, Technology, Economic development

**Project website:** <https://nonagon.pt/>

**Total cost:** EUR 18 837 106

**EU CONTRIBUTION:** EUR 7 633 409

**Fund:** European Regional Development Fund

**PROGRAMME:** Proconvergencia

**Project start/end:** 2007 to 2014

