Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP)

Boosting investment for innovation

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April 2025

STEP
In a nutshell

- **Not a new fund:** pooling funding from 11 EU existing programmes towards critical technologies in strategic sectors for EU competitiveness

- **Efficient:** use of existing networks/processes

- **Articulation** direct/indirect/shared managed funds

- **Regulation** entered into force on 1 March 2024

- **A pilot for a new Competitiveness Fund** as announced by Commission President

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STEP
Scope*

STEP OBJECTIVES

STEP OBJECTIVES	STEP CONDITIONS
Supporting the **development or manufacturing** of critical technologies or safeguarding and strengthening their respective **value chains**	Bring an **innovative**, cutting-edge element with significant economic potential to the Single Market
	↑ **OR** ↓
Addressing shortages of **labour and skills**	Contribute to **reduce or prevent strategic dependencies** of the Union

STEP SECTORS

EXAMPLES
(indicative & non-exhaustive)

CRMA

Digital and deep tech innovation → Artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, advanced connectivity

NZIA

Clean and resource efficient tech → Carbon capture and storage technologies, heat pumps

Bio tech → Molecular biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, crop biotechnology

NZIA: Net-Zero industry Act
CRMA: Critical Raw Materials Act

***STEP Guidance note <u>published</u> on 13 May 2024**

STEP
Tools

Pooling
of EU funding across 11 EU programmes and dedicated calls for STEP sectors.

STEP Seal
Label for high-quality STEP projects supporting them to access funding.

STEP Portal
that consolidates all funding opportunities for STEP sectors financed by the EU budget.

One-Stop Shop
Entry point for any question to the STEP Taskforce and support from NCPs.

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STEP
11 EU programmes supporting STEP

5	**EU PROGRAMMES** Funding and STEP Seal awarded by the Commission
Horizon Europe	EU4 Health
Innovation Fund	European Defence Fund
Digital Europe Programme	

Award of STEP Seal

PROJECTS' FAST TRACK TO OTHER FUNDING

6	**EU PROGRAMMES** Funding allocated by Member States and financial institutions (e.g., EIB)
European Regional Development Fund	Cohesion Fund
European Social Fund +	Just Transition Fund
Recovery & Resilience Facility[1]	InvestEU[2]

[1] Performance based programme managed by the European Commission and implemented by the Member States
[2] Implemented through the EIB group & other implementing partners – not awarding the Seal

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How does the STEP Seal work?

1 — Award under 2 conditions:

STEP-specific calls for proposals

- Innovation Fund
- Horizon Europe
- **Digital Europe Programme**
- EU4Health
- European Defence Fund

+

Excellence of the project

Project complying with the minimum quality requirements of the call for proposals

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2 — Publication on STEP Portal

Award of STEP Seal

Valid throughout duration of project

Unless:
- Project has not started within 5 years of award
- Project relocated outside EU

3 — Benefits per programme

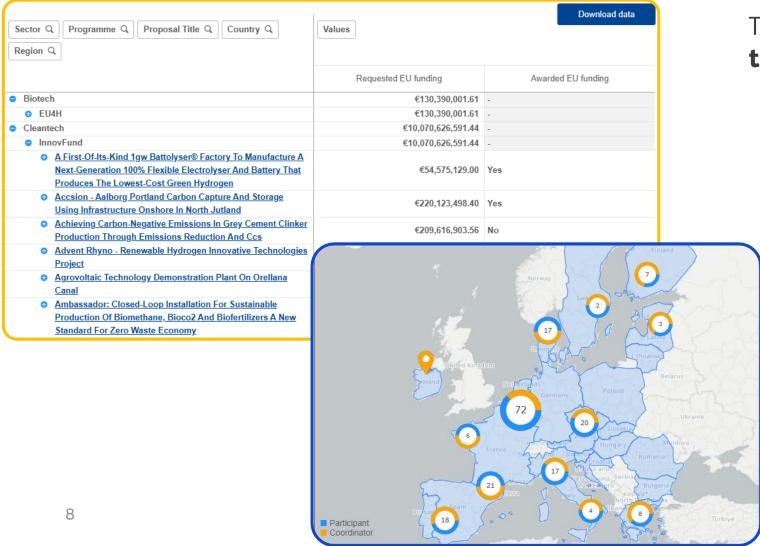| Programme	Benefit
Cohesion policy funds (ERDF, ESF+)	Managing Authorities can directly award support to projects, provided they align to the scope of ERDF or ESF+ and contribute to the programmers' objectives
National Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)	Project to be considered as a priority for funding when revising RRPs – possibility to provide alternative or cumulative funding
Modernisation Fund	Project may be considered as a priority for funding
InvestEU	To be taken into account by EIB and Implementing Partners during the policy check process
Other Union funds or programmes	Project could be granted (combined) support

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Advantages of STEP Seal in EDIH completion call

- **Increased visibility of project** through **STEP Portal and dissemination** activities of the STEP Task Force

- **Active promotion** of the quality and strategic importance of project for Commission towards:

  - **Public investors**: public authorities managing national or EU funds or the EIB Group

  - **Private investors**: private investors will do their own due diligence on the companies, the Seal is recognized as a quality feature and may help to raise capital in the markets.

- **Access to advisory services** for seal holders by entities cooperating with Commission, e.g., EIT Digital

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Projects' dashboard & interactive map

The Commission **publishes and promotes the following information**:

- Project number
- Project acronym
- Project title
- Project abstract
- Project location
- Programme name
- Topic to which you submitted your application
- Legal name and address of the applicant(s)
- Requested EU funding
- Awarded EU funding (Yes/No)

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Thank you

Contact us at EC-STEP-PARTNERS@ec.europa.eu

More info on STEP: strategic-technologies.europa.eu

Public consultations on the next MFF: EU funding for Competitiveness

Citizens' panel on a new European budget: more info here

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