



# Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP)

**Lessons learnt from the 1<sup>st</sup> wave of reprogramming**

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<https://strategic-technologies.europa.eu>

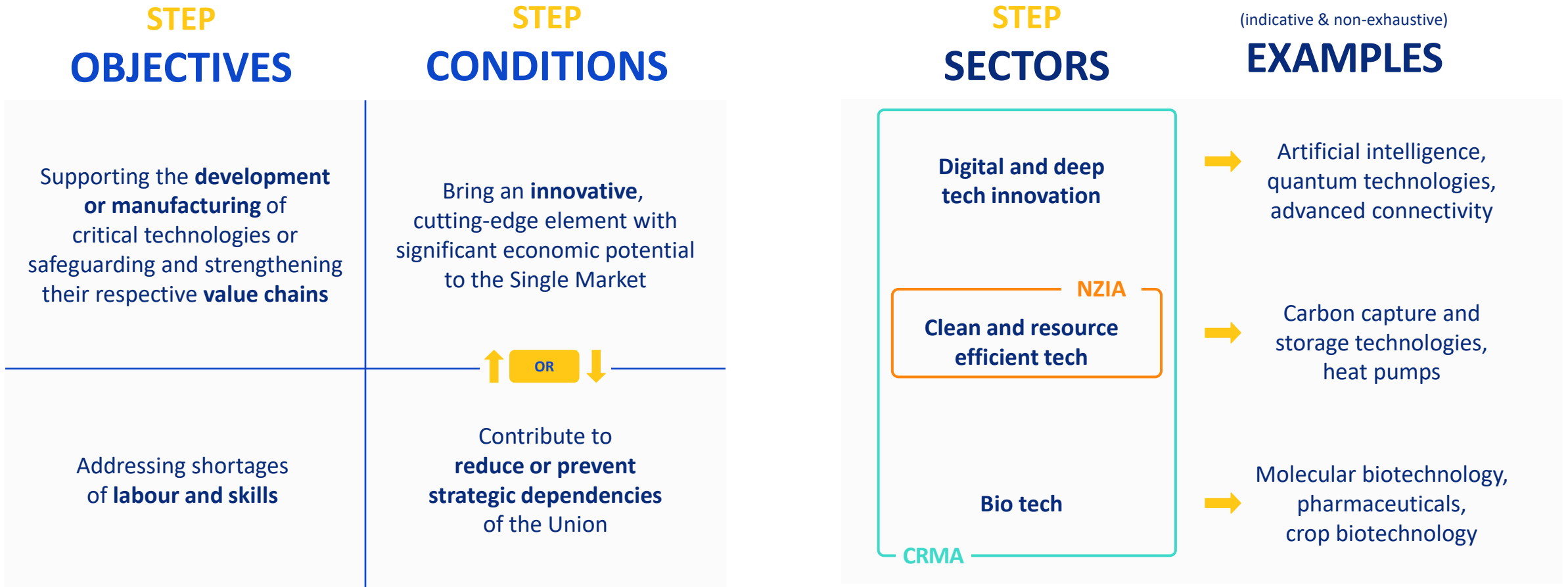
## STEP

# In a nutshell



- **Not a new fund:** pooling funding from 11 EU existing programmes, with a top-up of €1.5bn for defence
- **Efficient:** use of existing networks/processes
- **Articulation** direct/indirect/shared managed funds
- **STEP Seals** awarded to high-quality projects
- **Connecting with implementing partners** (EIB, EIF, NPBIs)
- **A service-oriented team** to support STEP sectors
- **User-centric portal**
- **A pilot for a new Competitiveness Fund** as announced by Commission President
- **Regulation** entered into force on 1 March 2024

# STEP Scope\*



# STEP Tools



**Reprogramming**  
of EU funding with 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



**One-Stop Shop**  
The single-entry point for any  
contact/question on STEP for industry  
and managing authorities.

# STEP Portal

Central access point for users to strengthen EU competitiveness





# STEP Portal : Central access point for users

Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform

- Home
- About
- Get funding
- For project promoters
- For managing authorities
- For investors
- Be inspired
- Stay in touch

**Fund your future**  
Explore current funding opportunities for strategic technologies

[Learn more >](#)



- ▶
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

## EU Industry | Competitiveness | Strategic Technologies

The Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP) was set up by the EU to support the European industry and boost investment in critical technologies in Europe. STEP raises and steers funding across [11 EU programmes](#) to three target investment areas:

**STEP OBJECTIVES**

- ▶ Support the **development and manufacturing** of critical technologies, safeguarding and strengthening their respective **value chains**
- ▶ Address shortages of **labour and skills**

# STEP

## Portal : Central access point for users



### Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform

Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform												
Home   About   Get funding   For project promoters   For Managing Authorities   For investors   Be inspired   Stay in touch												
All sectors			Digital and deep tech				Clean tech			Biotech		
Sector	Topic	Programme	L...	Opening date	Deadl...	Budget Mio.	Call for proposals	Status				
<b>Totals</b>												
Biotech	<a href="#">EIC STEP Scale Up</a>	Horizon Europe (EIC)	EU	26/11/24	16/12/25	€ 300.00	<a href="#">EIC STEP Scale Up</a>	<a href="#">Apply</a>				
Clean tech	<a href="#">EIC STEP Scale Up</a>	Horizon Europe (EIC)	EU	26/11/24	16/12/25	€ 300.00	<a href="#">EIC STEP Scale Up</a>	<a href="#">Apply</a>				
Deep/digital	<a href="#">EIC STEP Scale Up</a>	Horizon Europe (EIC)	EU	26/11/24	16/12/25	€ 300.00	<a href="#">EIC STEP Scale Up</a>	<a href="#">Apply</a>				
Clean tech	<a href="#">Innovation Fund 2024 - Batteries - Manufacturing of electric vehicles battery cells</a>	Innovation Fund (INNOVFUND)	EU	03/12/24	24/04/25	€ 1,000.00	<a href="#">INNOVFUND-2024-BATT-EV-CELLS</a>	<a href="#">Apply</a>				
Clean tech	<a href="#">Innovation Fund 2024 Net Zero Technologies – Clean-tech manufacturing</a>	Innovation Fund (INNOVFUND)	EU	03/12/24	24/04/25	€ 700.00	<a href="#">INNOVFUND-2024-NZT-CLEAN-TECH-MANUFACTURING</a>	<a href="#">Apply</a>				
Clean tech	<a href="#">Innovation Fund 2024 Net Zero Technologies – General decarbonisation – Large-Scale Projects</a>	Innovation Fund (INNOVFUND)	EU	03/12/24	24/04/25	€ 1,200.00	<a href="#">INNOVFUND-2024-NZT-GENERAL-LSP</a>	<a href="#">Apply</a>				
Clean tech	<a href="#">Innovation Fund 2024 Net Zero Technologies – General decarbonisation – Medium-Scale Projects</a>	Innovation Fund (INNOVFUND)	EU	03/12/24	24/04/25	€ 200.00	<a href="#">INNOVFUND-2024-NZT-GENERAL-MSP</a>	<a href="#">Apply</a>				
Clean tech	<a href="#">Innovation Fund 2024 Net Zero Technologies – General decarbonisation – Small-Scale Projects</a>	Innovation Fund (INNOVFUND)	EU	03/12/24	24/04/25	€ 100.00	<a href="#">INNOVFUND-2024-NZT-GENERAL-SSP</a>	<a href="#">Apply</a>				
Clean tech	<a href="#">Innovation Fund 2024 Net Zero Technologies – Pilot projects</a>	Innovation Fund (INNOVFUND)	EU	03/12/24	24/04/25	€ 200.00	<a href="#">INNOVFUND-2024-NZT-PILOTS</a>	<a href="#">Apply</a>				
Biotech	<a href="#">Biotechnology driven low emission food production systems</a>	Horizon Europe (EIC)	EU	29/10/24	18/12/24	€ 50.00	<a href="#">EIC Accelerator Challenge</a>	<a href="#">Apply</a>				

- Open calls in direct management:  
**€3.95 bn in 13 calls**
- Open calls in MS (DE):  
**€215mn in 3 calls**

# STEP Seal

Supporting high-quality projects to strengthen EU competitiveness





# STEP

## The STEP Seal 1/2



### PROGRAMMES CONCERNED

Digital Europe Programme

European Defence Fund

EU4Health

Horizon Europe

Innovation Fund

### CONDITIONS FOR ATTRIBUTION

Project complying with the minimum quality requirements

+

Contributing to STEP objectives

=

### PUBLICATION ON STEP PORTAL



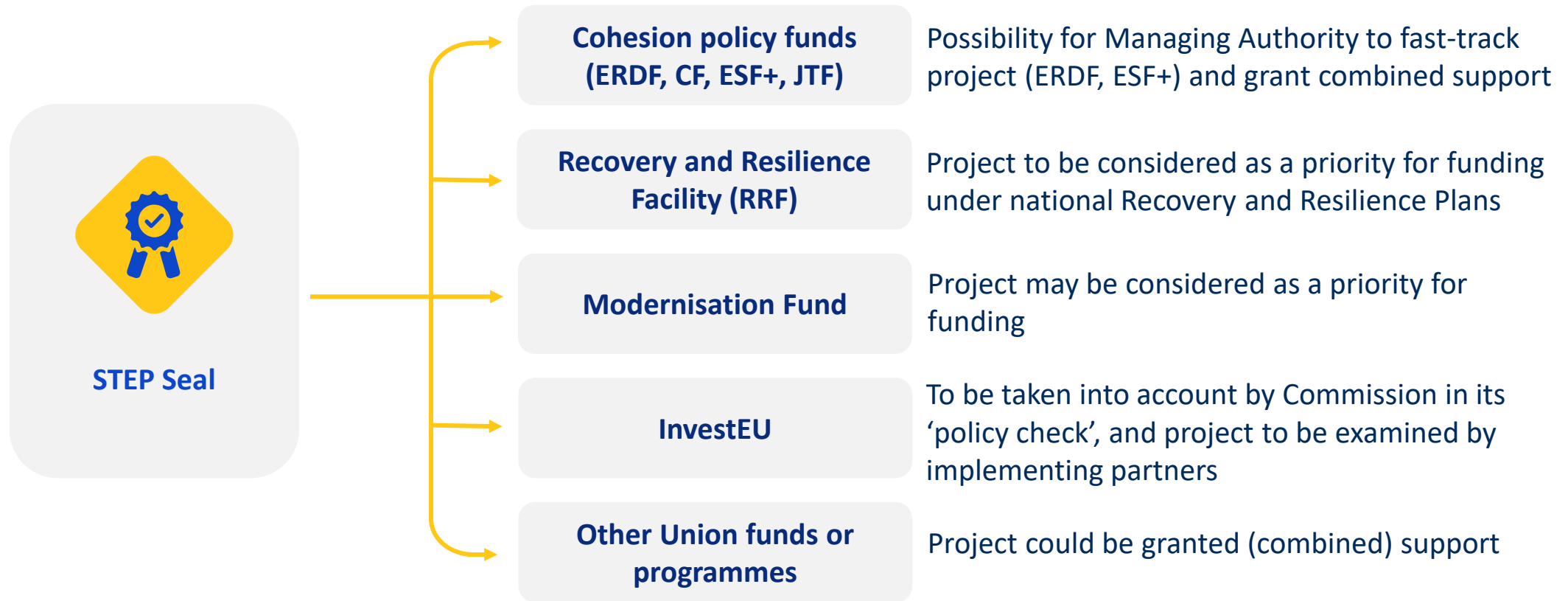
Award of STEP Seal

# STEP

## The STEP Seal 2/2



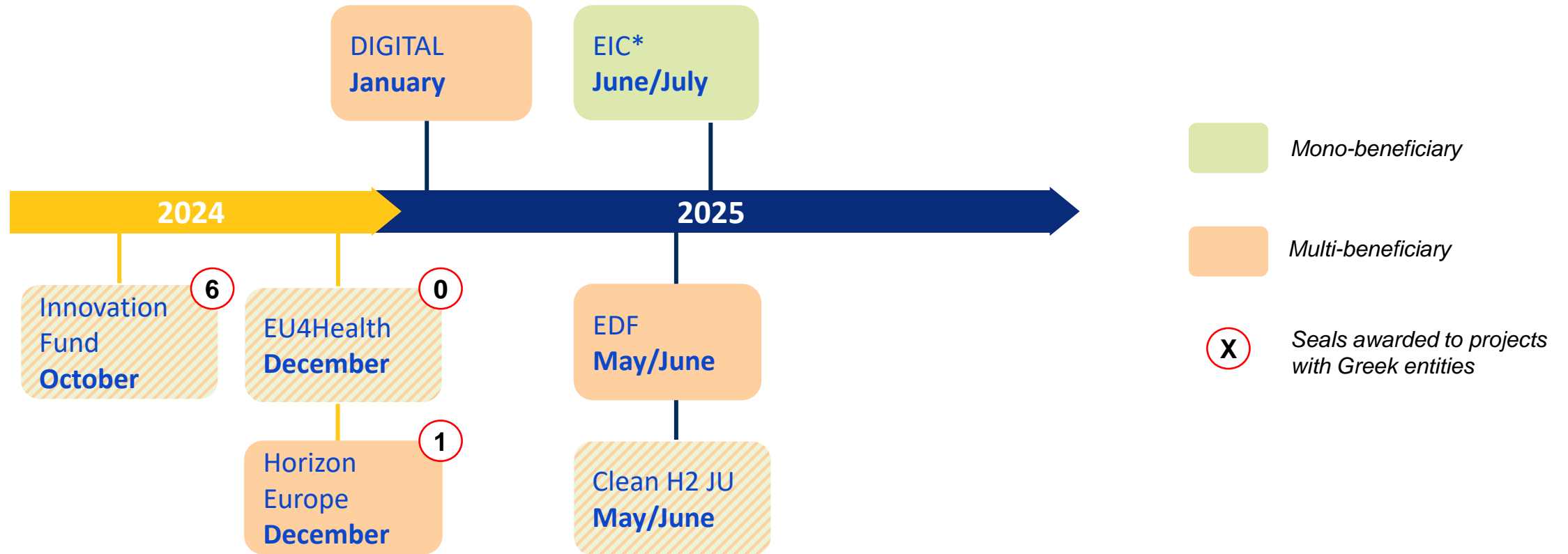
### BENEFITS PER PROGRAMME





# STEP

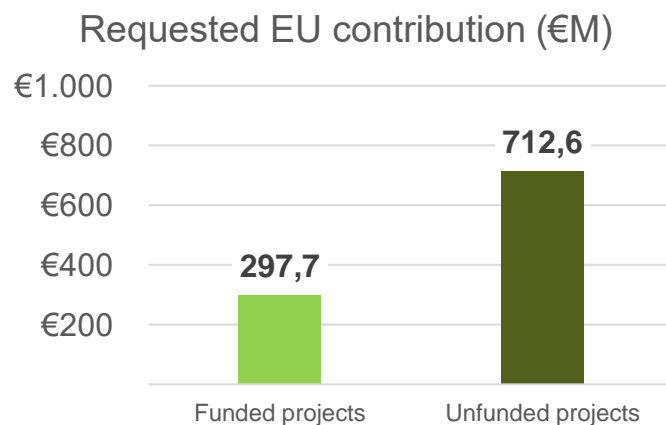
## Seals' expected timeline



\*First cut-off

# STEP

## Seals awarded under the Innovation Fund 2023 call



- Funding GAP of IF funded projects not fully covered → usually need for additional public support
- Project size range (EU requested contribution):
  - Unfunded: EUR 107 million to EUR 340 million
  - Funded: EUR 18 million to EUR 245 million
- Projects on decarbonisation of energy intensive Industries, critical and raw materials, components for electrolyzers

# STEP

## The STEP Seal dashboard



Country EL / Ellada		Values			
Sector	Programme	Proposal Title	Region	Download data	
				Proposal Budget (in EUR million)	EU Funding (in EUR million)
-	Cleantech			€1,010.31	€297.73
-	InnovFund			€1,010.31	€297.73
+		<a href="#">Advent Rhino - Renewable Hydrogen Innovative Technologies Project</a>		€34.53	€34.53
+		<a href="#">Creation Of An Innovative And Cost-Efficient Co2 Management Solution To Heavy Industrial Emitters Through A Liquefaction Export Terminal, Leveraging On The Ccs Hub Approach</a>		€267.54	€0.00
+		<a href="#">Developing An Integrated Production Line For Bauxite, Gallium And Alumina In Greece</a>		€107.04	€0.00
+		<a href="#">Innovative Ccus Technologies, Transforming Carbon Emissions Into Synthetic Fuel (Ejet) For Aviation</a>		€338.00	€0.00
+		<a href="#">Installing A Radiation Curing Coil Coating Line At A New Elval Colour Facility Designed For The Coating Of Products Made Out Of Aluminium</a>		€18.20	€18.20
+		<a href="#">Lith.Os Cell: Establishing Dedicated Lithium Operations In South Europe To Serve The Ess And Industrial Mobility Markets</a>		€245.00	€245.00
-	Digital/deep tech			€0.62	€0.62
-	HORIZON			€0.62	€0.62
+		<a href="#">European Space-Grade Optical Transceivers For High Speed Intra-Satellite Interconnects And Free Space Lasercom Links</a>		€0.62	€0.62

# Mobilising funds towards STEP

State of play end December 2024

# STEP

## 11 EU programmes supporting STEP



# 5

### EU PROGRAMMES<sup>(1)</sup>

Funding and STEP Seal awarded by the Commission

Horizon Europe<sup>(2)</sup>

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<sup>(3)</sup>

InvestEU<sup>(4)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> Direct management: EU funding is managed directly by the Commission; shared management: the European Commission and national authorities jointly manage the funding; indirect management: funding is managed by partner organisations or other authorities inside or outside the EU

<sup>(2)</sup> European Innovation Council

<sup>(3)</sup> Performance based programme managed by the European Commission and implemented by the Member States

<sup>(4)</sup> Implemented through the EIB group & other implementing partners – not awarding the Seal

# STEP

## State of play of reprogramming as of December 2024



	STEP-aligned published calls 2024		Examples
<b>Direct management</b>	Innovation Fund*	€7,400M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Quantum space gravimetry technology maturation</li><li>Development of novel antivirals to reduce strategic dependencies</li><li>Secured and adaptive underwater communications for uncrewed underwater systems (UUSs)</li><li>Cleantech manufacturing</li></ul>
	EU4Health	€129M	
	Horizon/EIC**	€584.3M	
	DEP	€25M	
	European Defence Fund	€382M	
	<b>€8,52bn in ~30 calls</b>		

	STEP reprogramming 2024		Examples
<b>Indirect and shared management</b>	<b>Cohesion funds</b>	1st wave: 35 programme amendments totalling EUR 6.2 bn across 9 MS [DK, DE, ES, FR, IT, LV, LT, NL, RO]*** 2nd wave (2025): around 35+ programme amendment expected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Jutland (DK): technology and business development within Power to X (electricity conversion from surplus renewable energy), electrolysis and hydrogen solutions</li><li>Campania (IT): Trainings for a new class of skilled quantum computer professionals</li></ul>
	RRF	None so far	
	InvestEU****	Option not used yet by Member States	

\* 2023 and 2024 calls. The entire scope of the IF is considered as aligned with STEP  
\*\* This does not include upcoming calls on Horizon Pillar II, since they will be published by mid-2025

\*\*\* Amounts to be confirmed only after assessment of alignment with STEP  
\*\*\*\*STEP incentive to channel up to 6% of RRF envelope to the MS compartment in InvestEU for STEP investments – thus mobilising funds beyond the RRF deadline





# Mobilising funds towards STEP: Cohesion Policy

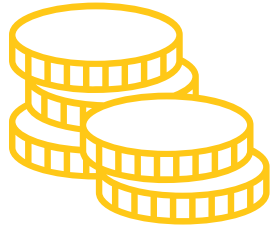


## STEP

# The incentives under cohesion policy



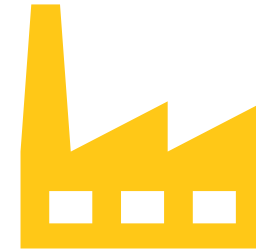
**ERDF/CF/ESF+** the creation of a dedicated STEP priority is needed to benefit from:



30% pre-financing  
(for amendments  
prior to 31/03/2025)

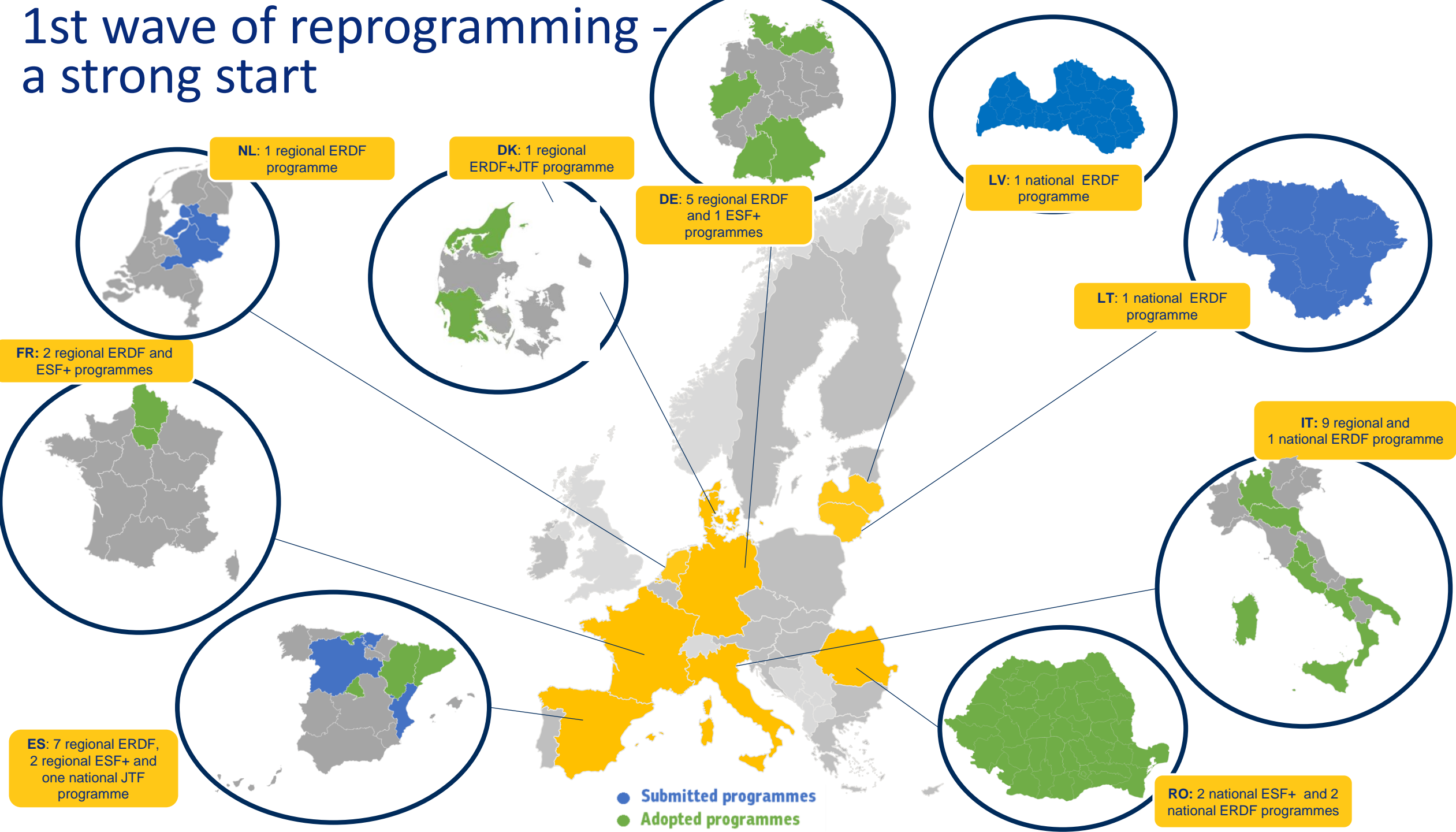


100%  
cofinancing  
for STEP  
priorities



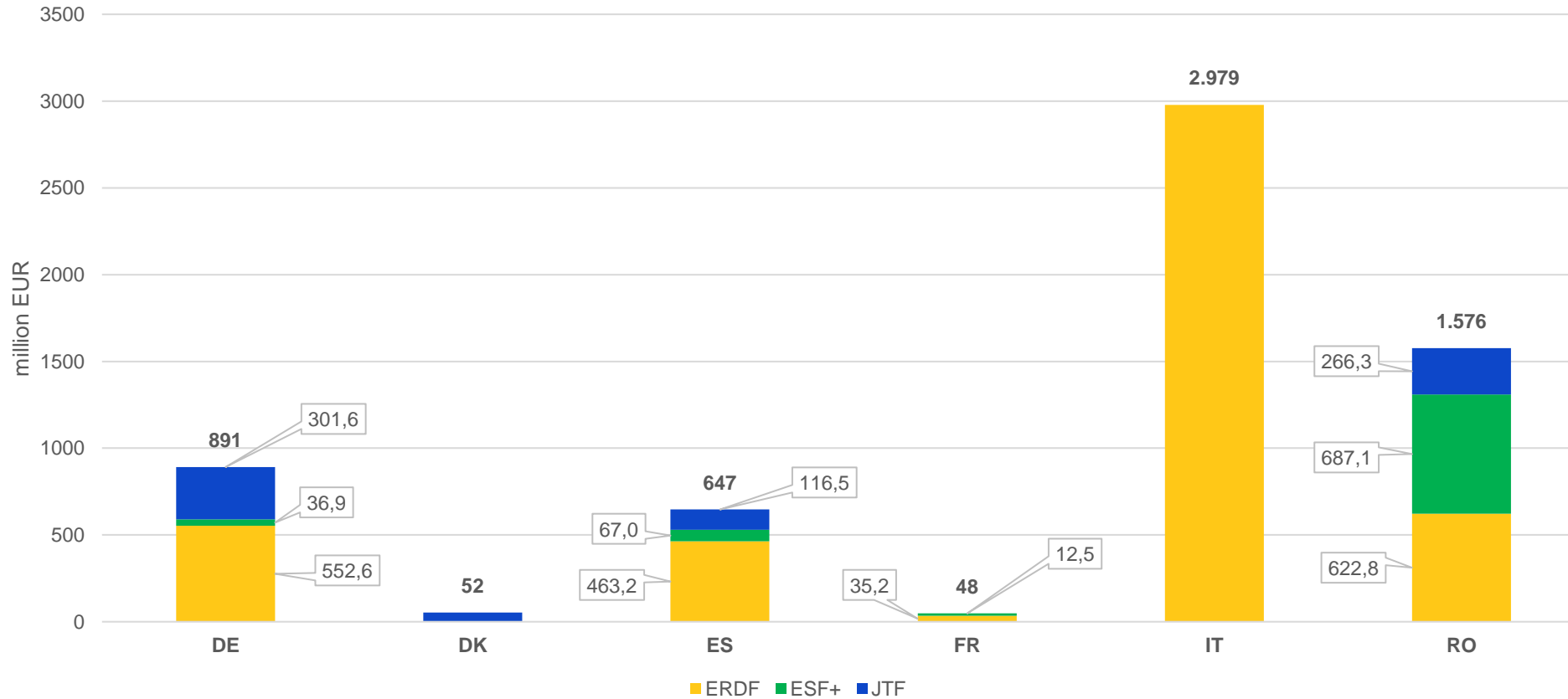
Support for  
enterprises  
other than  
SMEs

# 1st wave of reprogramming - a strong start





# STEP uptake state of play





# Process – how to amend

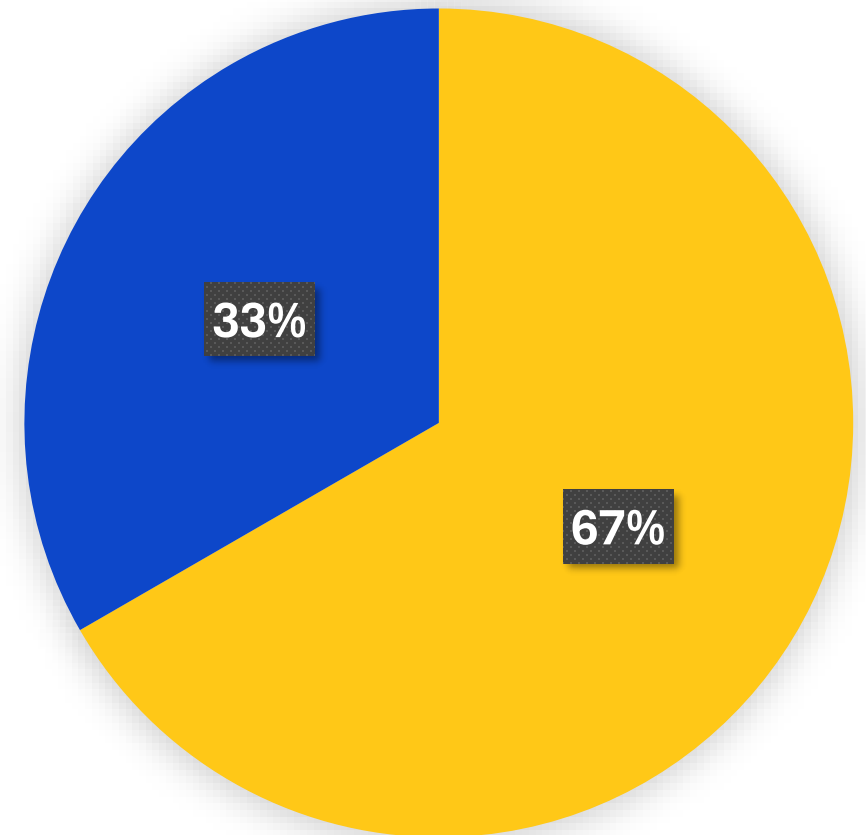
All options were considered:

- Bottom up – open calls looking for STEP projects (RO);
- Looking into RIS3, existing priorities for STEP projects (ES);
- Reflecting the main principles in the programme text; projects to follow by usual selection procedures (IT).
- Informal consultation with DG BUDG possible – **before official submission!**



# Seals in the programme amendments

- Seals mentioned or considered under 8 ERDF programme amendments
- 7 IT and 1 DE programme
- Expecting to see more after the publication of the upcoming batches



■ No ■ Yes

# Skills



- Skills in almost **half of ERDF** amendments.

- **ESF+**



- 7/33 programme amendments (EUR 838 million).
- Separate ESF+ priority; mostly related to Specific Objective 4.7 on lifelong (adult) learning (70.5%).



- Other supported areas: access to employment, adaptation of workers and enterprises, education and training systems.
- **Broad audience** (adults/professionals but also women, youth, unemployed, students).
- Trainings and education programmes in specific critical technologies.



# ERDF examples of projects (I)

- **Technology transfer** activities between universities, research organisations and SMEs (incl. with financial instruments); development of critical technologies (**innovation competitions**); **advanced materials** for the aeronautic sector, optimisation of **heat pump manufacturing** process (DE);
- Developing an **advanced electrolysis technique for the production of lithium hydroxide** for the automotive industry, advanced facilities to enhance the development/manufacturing of **photonic chips, quantum computing**, network of open laboratories for the adoption of advanced digital technologies, **alternative protein technologies**(ES);
- **Tissue and cell engineering, green hydrogen, mechanics and mechatronics, quantum computing technologies**; support for dedicated production lines, expansion or repurposing of existing plants, **recycling and recuperating critical raw materials from waste**, innovative technologies for **renewable energies** (IT);





# ERDF examples of projects (II)

- **Financial instruments** for industrial startups and innovative SMEs (deep tech innovation, digital, clean and resource-efficient technologies) (FR);
- **AI, and robotics in healthcare**, technologies for **hydrogen storage and hydrogen energy production**, development of a full and efficient **value chain in microelectronics** (RO).

## Skills

- **Cross-company education centres** for critical technologies (DE);
- Skills and training for **quantum computer professionals**; development of specialised skills essential in clean and resource-efficient technologies, including the European Net Zero Industry Academies (IT).



# ESF+ examples of projects

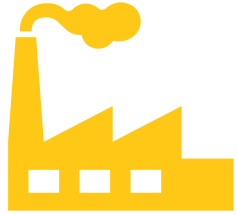
- New training courses in **hydrogen, quantum, AI, high performance computing, biotechnology, advanced materials and cleantech** (FR);
- Vocational education, higher education and adult learning in **data science, blockchain, AI, robotics, cybersecurity, energy efficiency, smart grids, biotechnology, bio-engineering**; training healthcare professionals in AI and robotics' technologies (RO);
- Training in **sensors' technologies, biotechnology, industrial biotechnology or environmental technologies**; knowledge transfer from universities to SMEs (Bavaria DE).



# JTF examples of projects

- **Power-to-X technologies, green pyrolysis, carbon storage technologies (DK);**
- **Decarbonisation of steel and ammonia production by using green hydrogen (RO);**
- **Development of sustainable alternative fuels, development of high-power chargers, charging systems and advanced battery management systems, manufacturing of renewable energy generation equipment (ES).**

# Common misunderstandings



Deployment of existing technologies instead of the development or manufacturing



Actions on fundamental research and whose feasibility has not been tested



Equipment and infrastructure being added without indicating this is an associated service



Skills related to the sectors and not to the technologies



# Procedure after programme approval



**Calls:** MA to communicate the published calls and TF to upload it on the STEP Portal.

**Project selection:** authorities to set criteria in the calls in line with STEP objectives /conditions etc. and evaluate compliance accordingly.

## Reporting:

- Obligation for NCP to report STEP projects for the Portal; OR
- MAs to use the Kohesio template.

# Thank you



Contact us at [EC-STEP-PARTNERS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EC-STEP-PARTNERS@ec.europa.eu)



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# Annex

# Mobilising RRF resources





# STEP

## The incentives under RRF



### Prioritization of the STEP Seal

STEP Seal projects as a priority when revising RRFs



### InvestEU Member State Compartment

Additional 6% of the RRF allocations to the InvestEU Member State Compartment for STEP (upper limit of 10%)