



Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP)

**informational event/workshop on STEP in the
Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace**



Irati ICARDO ISASA - STEP Team– DG BUDG – EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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

Challenges for EU industry and economy



What is at stake

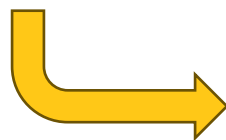
- **Competitiveness** and **resilience**
- **Global race** for critical technologies
- **Investment needs** for twin transitions
- Constraints on **EU budget**
- Need for a **European response**



Takeaways of **Letta's and Draghi's reports**

Industry feedback

- Fragmented/complex **offer of EU funding**
- Lack of **advisory** and **support services, mentorship programmes**
- Need for **user-friendly** portal
- **Regulatory** and **structural** issues
- **Gaps** in funding across the **innovation cycle**
- Need for **skills** in specific critical technologies



Very positive momentum
for STEP



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11 EU programmes support STEP



5

EU PROGRAMMES⁽¹⁾

Funding and STEP Seal awarded by the Commission

More than 100 calls
€13.5bn

Horizon Europe⁽²⁾

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 from the EU budget and financial institutions (e.g., EIB)

€14bn across 21 MS

European Regional Development Fund

Cohesion Fund

European Social Fund +

Just Transition Fund

Recovery & Resilience Facility⁽³⁾

InvestEU⁽⁴⁾

⁽¹⁾ 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

⁽²⁾ European Innovation Council

⁽³⁾ Performance based programme managed by the European Commission and implemented by the Member States

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

STEP Scope

Objectives, conditions, and scope

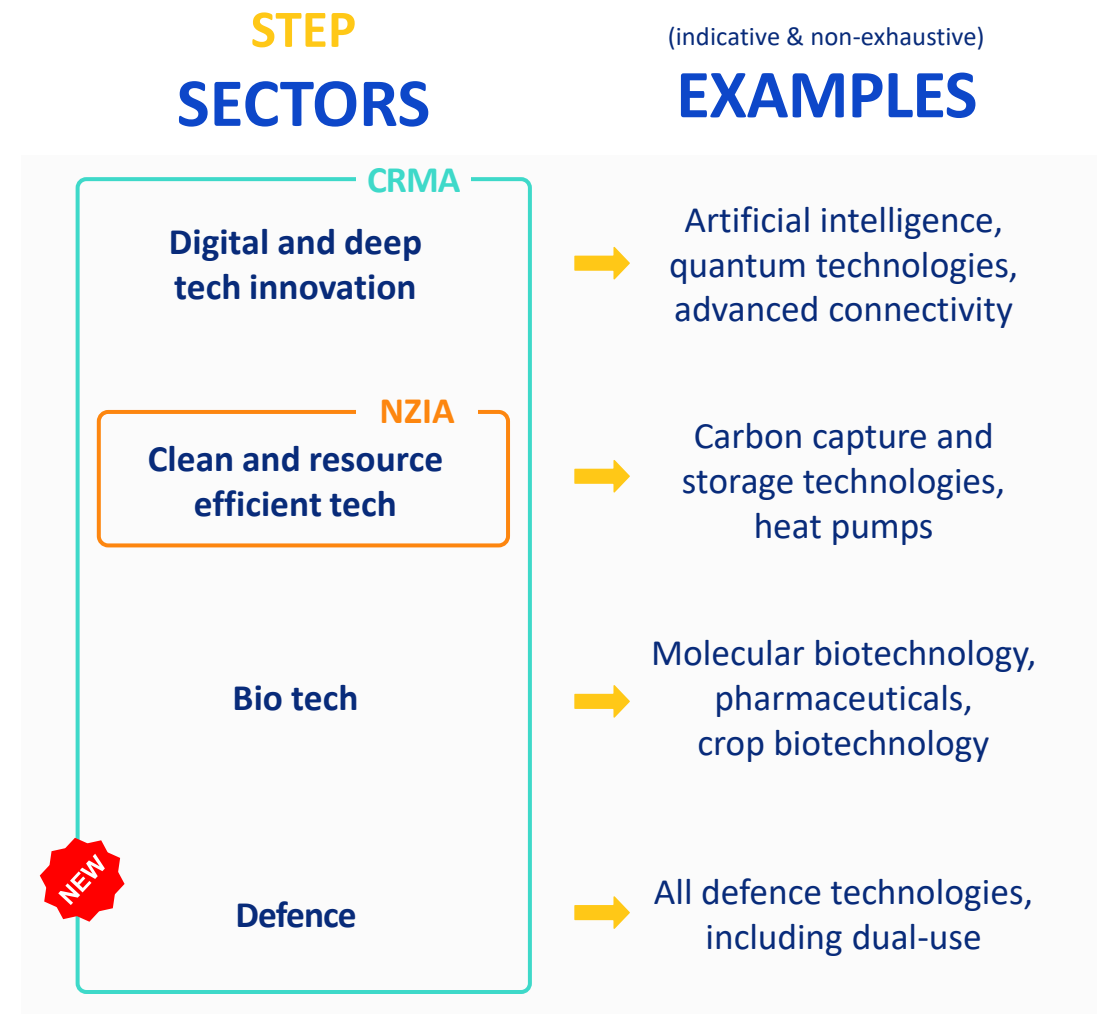
STEP Scope



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

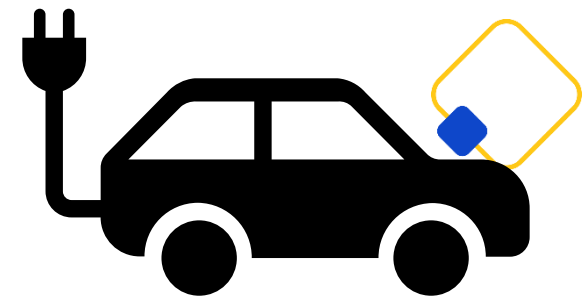
*STEP Guidance notes published on 13 May 2024 and 23 December 2025

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



STEP

Practical examples – Electric vehicles



Development or manufacturing of **electric propulsion systems / battery technologies**

Why on scope?

- ✓ Develops/manufactures a technology
- ✓ Sector compliant: clean and resource efficient tech

What else do we need to demonstrate?

Compliance with 1 of the STEP conditions!



Broad production of the electric vehicle, or other peripheral activities such as paint shops

Why not on scope?

- × No development/manufacturing activities
- × Electric Vehicles alone are not within a STEP technology area/sector

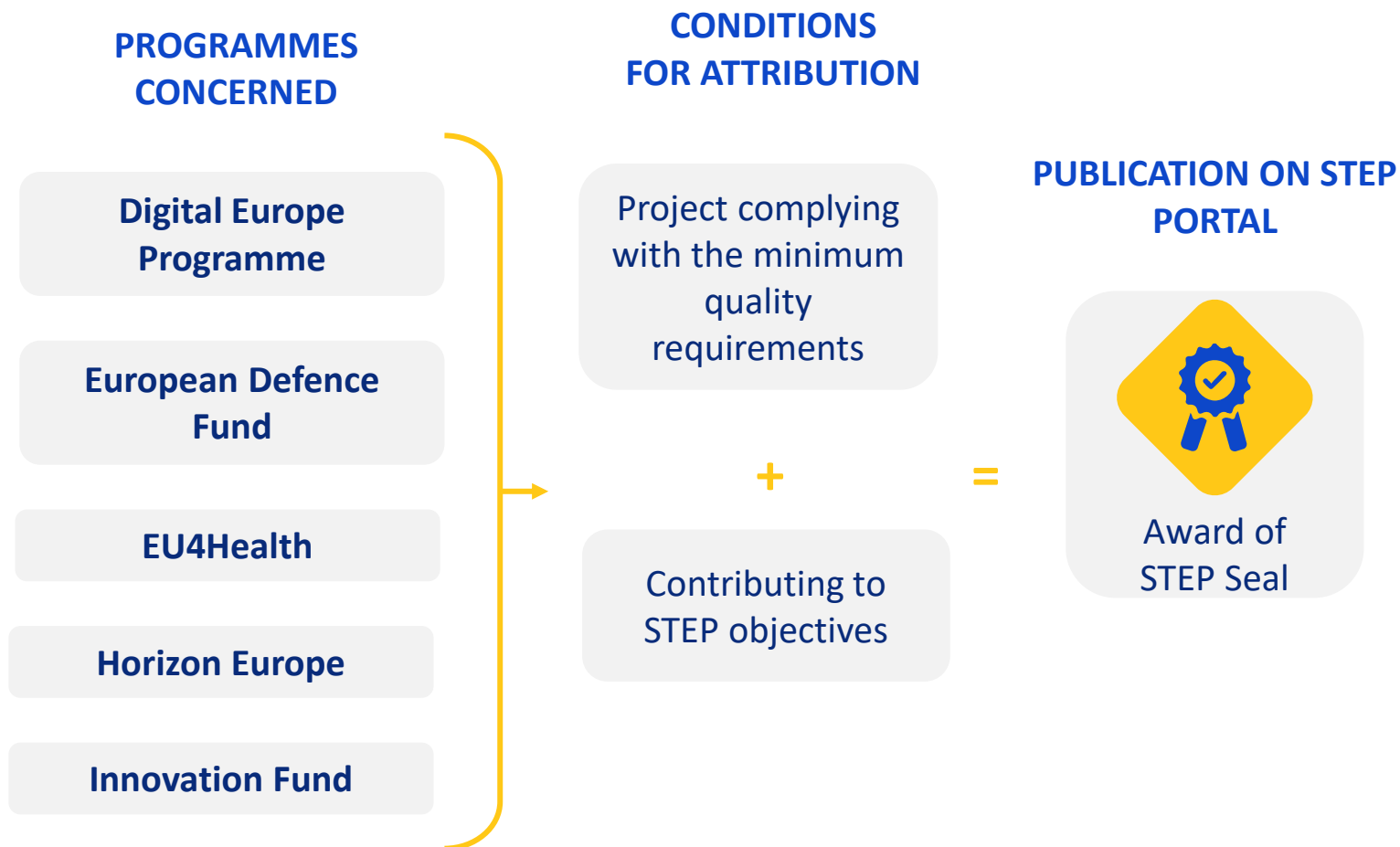


The STEP Seal

The role of the STEP Seal

STEP

The STEP Seal



BENEFITS PER PROGRAMME

Cohesion policy funds (ERDF, ESF+, JTF)

Possibility for MA to fast-track project and grant combined support

Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)

Project to be considered as a priority for funding under national RRP

InvestEU

To be considered by EC in its 'policy check', and project to be examined by implementing partners

Other Union funds or programmes

Project could be granted (combined) support

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STEP Seal – overview in the Greece



122

STEP Seals awarded in Greece

8

Innovation Fund

30

Digital Europe Programme

36

European Defence Fund

45

Horizon Europe

3

EU4Health



Region name	Funded	Unfunded	Total
Attiki	40	41	81
Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki	2	1	3
Dytiki Elláda	3	3	6
Dytiki Makedonia	2	0	2
Ellada	1	3	4
Kentriki Makedonia	3	8	11
Kriti	0	4	4
Stereia Ellada	2	1	3
Thessalia	3	5	8

Mobilising funds towards STEP

STEP Funding under Cohesion Policy (31.03.26)



Belgium – EUR 118m

3 regional ERDF programmes



Bulgaria – EUR 162m

2 national ERDF programmes



Denmark – EUR 65m

1 national JTF programme



Czechia – EUR 165m

1 national ERDF programme



Germany – EUR 1.9bn

12 regional ERDF, 1 regional JTF and
1 regional ESF+ programmes



Ireland – EUR 14m

2 regional ERDF programme



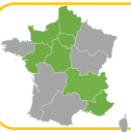
Greece – EUR 569m

1 National JTF and ERDF and ESF+, 8
Regional ERDF programme



Spain – EUR 2.1bn

13 regional and 1 national ERDF, 8 regional
ESF+ and 1 national JTF programmes



France – EUR 240m

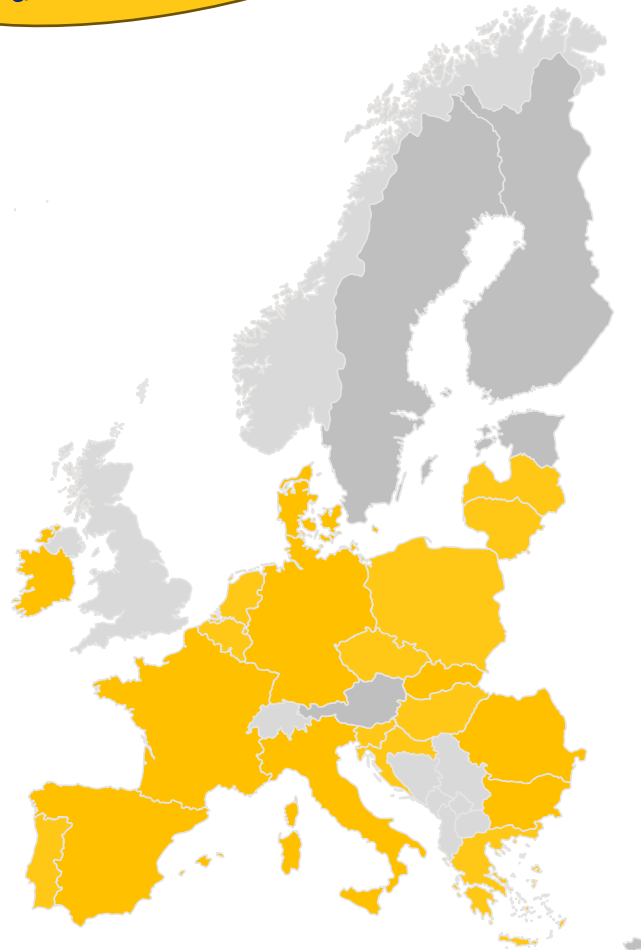
7 regional multifund programmes



Croatia – EUR 198m

2 national ERDF programmes

>EUR 15 bn
allocation to STEP



Adopted programmes



Italy – EUR 4.5bn

16 regional and 1 national ERDF, and 2
national and 6 regional ESF+ programmes



Latvia – EUR 58m

1 national ERDF programme



Lithuania – EUR 59m

1 national ERDF programme



Hungary – EUR 545m

1 national ERDF and 1 national
ERDF/ESF+ programme



Netherlands – EUR 60m

2 regional ERDF and 1 national JTF
programme



Poland – EUR 981m

3 regional and 1 national ERDF
programmes



Portugal – EUR 1.2bn

4 regional and 1 national ERDF
programmes



Romania – EUR 1.5bn

8 regional and 2 national ERDF, 1 national
ESF+, 1 national JTF programmes



Slovenia – EUR 158m

1 national ERDF programme



Slovakia – EUR 315m

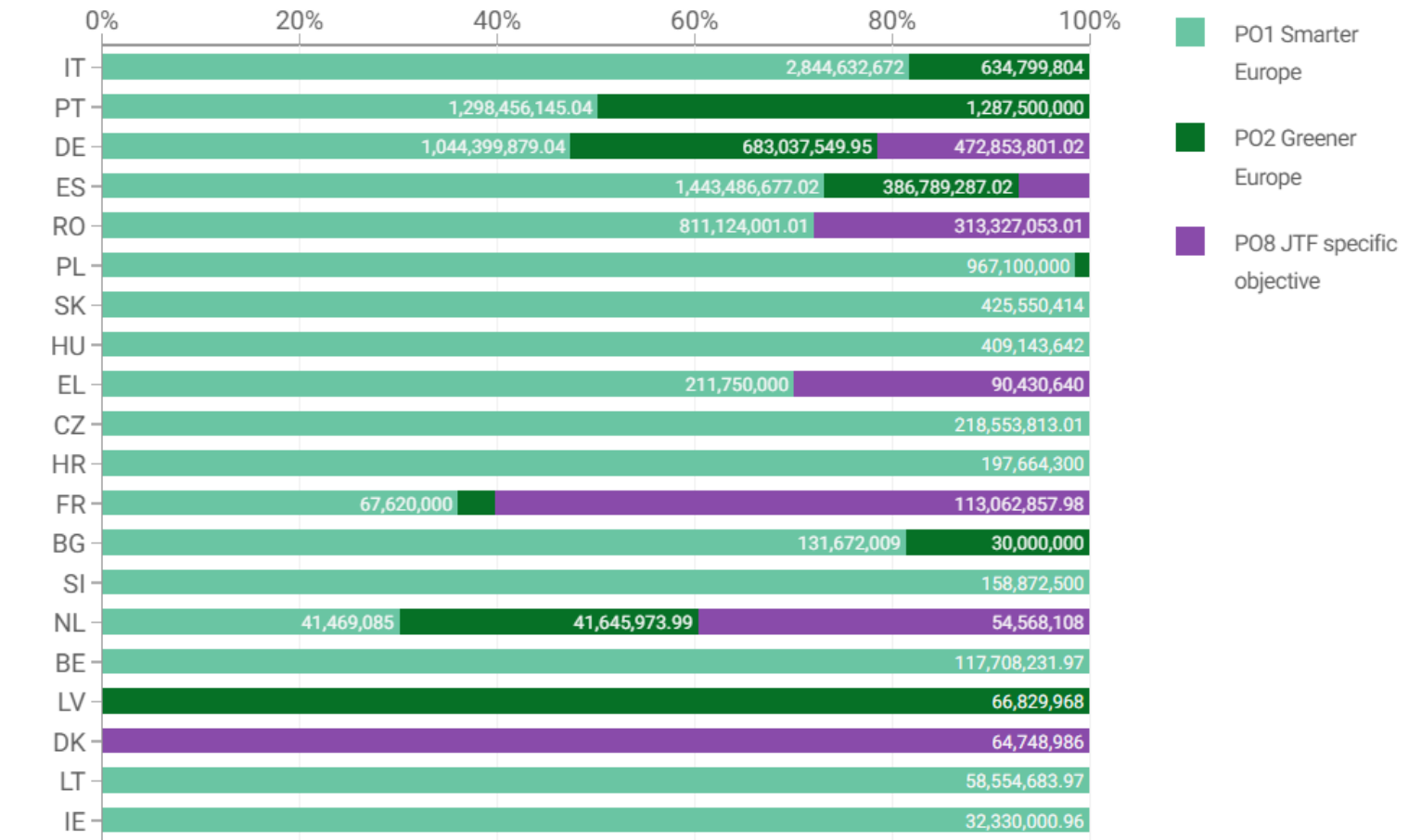
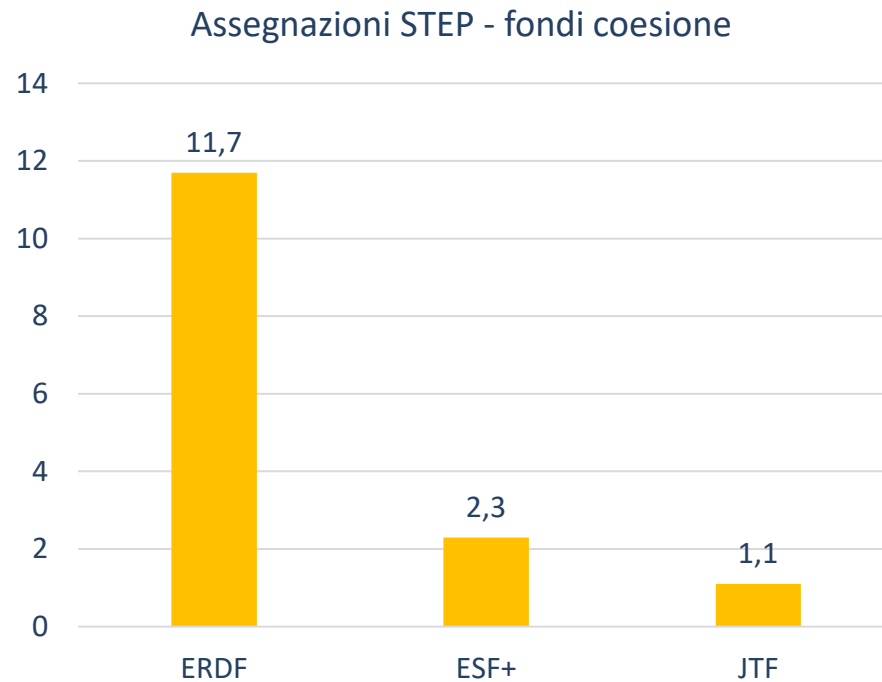
1 national ERDF programme

STEP in the EU - overview

Cohesion Policy's support to STEP stands at 15 bn EUR



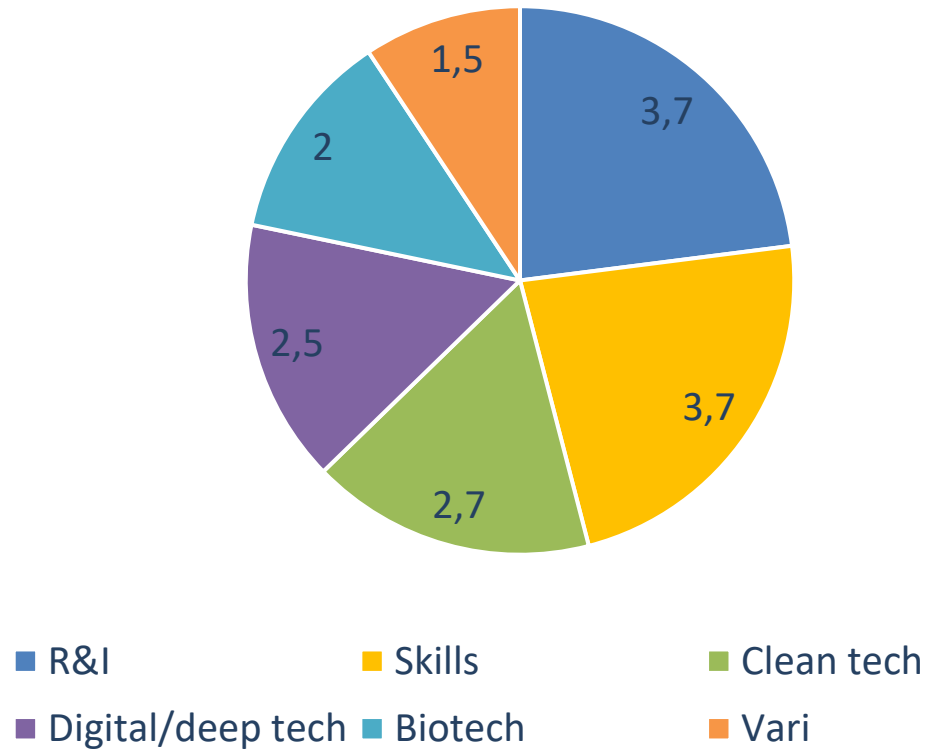
2021-2027 - STEP allocations (total amount) - by policy objective (PO)



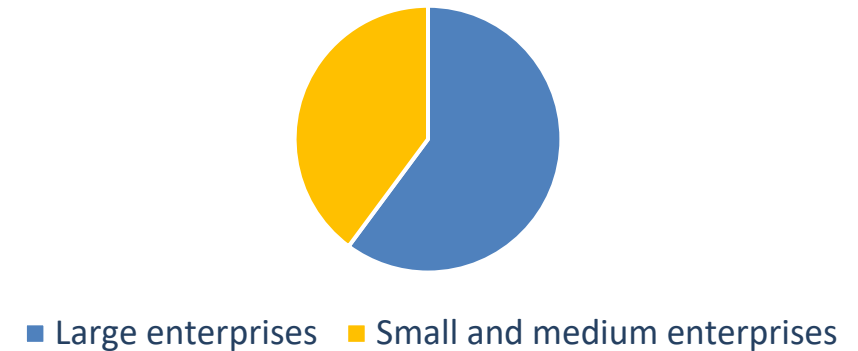


STEP in the EU – overview

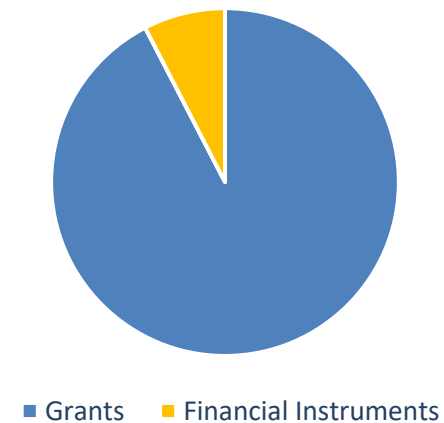
Main sectors of investment (in mill EUR)



Type of enterprise supported



Form of support



Financial Instruments in:
BE, BG, DE, ES, FR, HU, IT

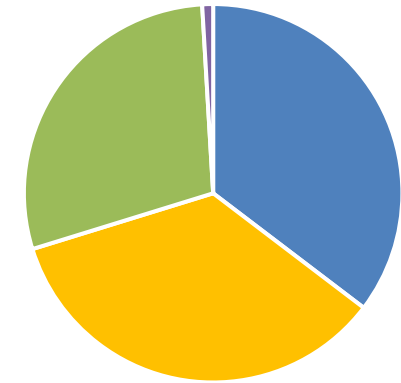
Examples of calls & selected projects



STEP in the EU – published calls

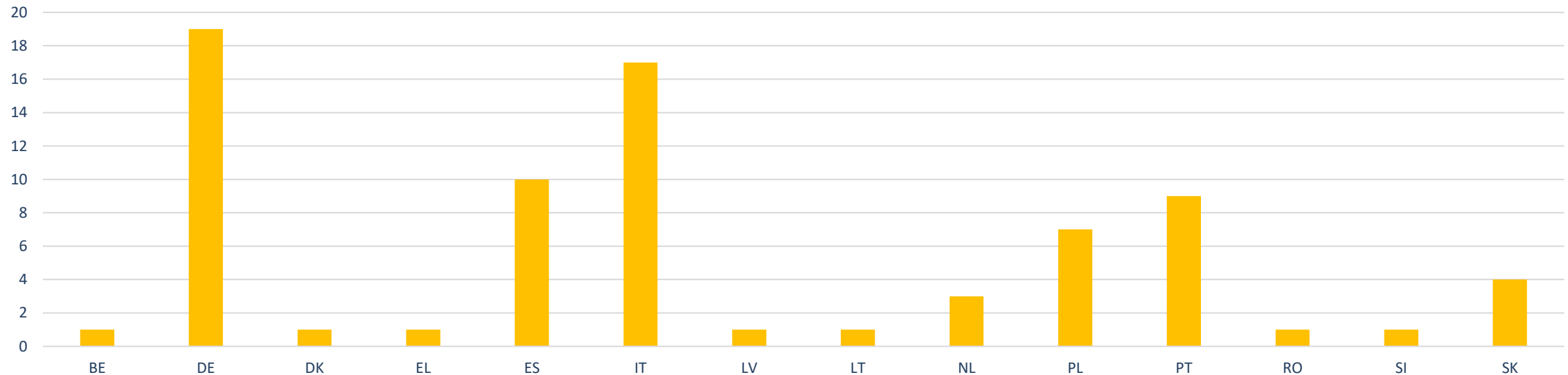
- Resources published through calls: **+ EUR 4.5 mll**
- MS with published calls: **14 MS**

Calls per sector



■ Digital ■ Clean tech ■ Biotech ■ Defence

Number of calls published per MS





Examples of calls (ERDF)

- Productive investment proposals aimed at the development and/or manufacture of critical STEP technologies (Sardinia region, Italy)
- Productive investments and research and development projects under STEP (Emilia Romagna region, Italy)
- Productive innovation in Digital and Biotech (Algarve region, Portugal)
- Productive innovation – energy technologies (Portuguese national programme)
- Critical Technologies Support Fund - Investment projects introducing an innovative, emerging and cutting-edge element with significant economic potential to the EU internal market (Polish national programme)
- Innovators initiative (Irish national programme)



Examples of calls (ESF+)

- PhD scholarships in STEP technologies (Sicily region, Italy)
- Skills Acquisition for Students in STEP Technology (Bavaria region, Germany)
- Knowledge Transfer from Universities to SMEs in STEP (Bavaria region, Germany)
- Training for the future of STEP (Bavaria region, Germany)
- Four-Year IEFP Course 2026 Technician for Digital Products and Services Development and Management (Valle d'Aosta region, Italy)
- STEP-LLL Applicant's Guide – Skills for the Future: Workplace Training and Adult Education in Critical Technologies – Adults (Romanian national programme)

STEP Stories



Greensand Future - Large-scale carbon storage

Greensand Future is a medium-scale carbon capture and storage (CCS) project aiming to store 300,000 tonnes of CO₂ per year in a former oilfield to support the EU's net-zero goals.



OpenEuroLLM – A European Family of Large Language Models

OpenEuroLLM will develop a family of Large Language Model (LLMs) covering all EU official languages, ensuring transparency, compliance with the AI Act, and uptake among European businesses, startups, and innovators



PharmSD 3.0 – Advancing Continuous Pharmaceutical Manufacturing

PharmSD 3.0 will develop an integrated, continuous-pharmaceutical spray drying process to enhance efficiency, scalability, and cost-effectiveness.

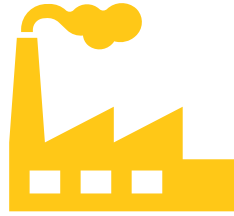
Excellent projects that were awarded a STEP Seal

https://strategic-technologies.europa.eu/be-inspired_en

Lessons learnt



Common misunderstandings on the STEP scope



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

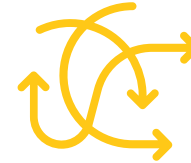
Main lessons learnt



Mismatch between
Regulations (f.e. ERDF
exceptions)



Timing mismatch
between programmes,
Seal implementation
period, etc.



Difficult scope, not easy to
understand



State aid issues as big barrier
for STEP Seal uptake (no State
aid facilitation)



S3 important base for STEP
project development

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Portal : Central access point for users

Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform



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**

Thank you



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



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



STEP [Guidance Note I](#) and [Guidance Note II](#)



[Defence mini-omnibus](#)



[STEP Seals Dashboard](#)



[STEP Newsletter](#)