



**PRELIMINARY**

# Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform

**4<sup>th</sup> National Contact Points meeting**

**In-person**

Brussels, 7 November 2024

# STEP

## Draft agenda



- 10:00-10:15:** Welcome by Christiane Canenbley
- 10:15-11:15:** National Contact Points: your role, experience, and ambition
- 11:15-12:15:** STEP Seals
- 12:15-13:30:** **Lunch Break and family picture**
- 13:30-13:45:** User's survey
- 13:45-15:15:** Mobilising funds towards STEP: Cohesion Policy
- 15:15-15:45:** Mobilising funds towards STEP: InvestEU Member State Compartment
- 15:45-16:00:** Closing remarks by Christiane Canenbley

**STEP**

**WIFI**



**Wifi network: ECvisitor**

**Password: Welcome**

# Opening remarks

10h00 - 10h15

Christiane Canenbley

Acting Director for Revenues and Multiannual Financial Framework, DG BUDG

Chair of the STEP National Contact Points Network

# NCPs presentation

Name, country and Ministry/organisation

# NCP: your role, experience and ambition

10h15-11h15

STEP Taskforce

Good practices from NCPs



## NCP network objectives and role

### OBJECTIVES



**Facilitating reprogramming  
for STEP**



**Raising awareness in  
the MS on STEP**

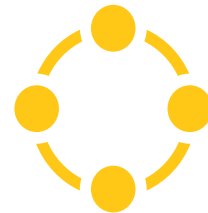
### YOUR ROLE



**Main Contact Point for the  
Commission and National  
Stakeholders**



**Share best practices  
among peers**



**Ensure consistency and coordination  
with existing networks of National  
Contact Points of other programmes  
(e.g. Horizon Europe)**



**Identifying and signalling  
obstacles to implementation**

# STEP



## NCP network: working methods

**2 in person meetings per year.**  
Next meeting in June 2025  
(date tbc)



**3-4 online meetings per year:**  
Next meeting  
in February/March



**Regular updates by email**  
from the Taskforce and  
bilateral contact anytime)



### Potential topics for future meetings:

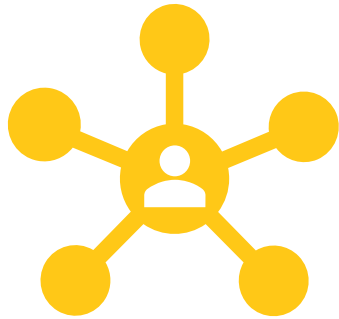
**1st STEP annual report (mid-2025)**

**Presentation of next batch of Seals**

# STEP



## NCP role: Mapping of good practices in MS



**What are the actions you have taken, or you envisage to activate your national STEP network?**



**Which practical examples you could share with the group today?**



**Which resources or material are the most useful? Would you need any extra resources?**

# STEP Seals

11h15 - 12h15

Insights facilitating Seal's uptake and your role as a National Contact Point in your Member State

STEP Taskforce

DG CLIMA



# STEP

## Refresher - 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

## Refresher - the STEP Seal 2/2

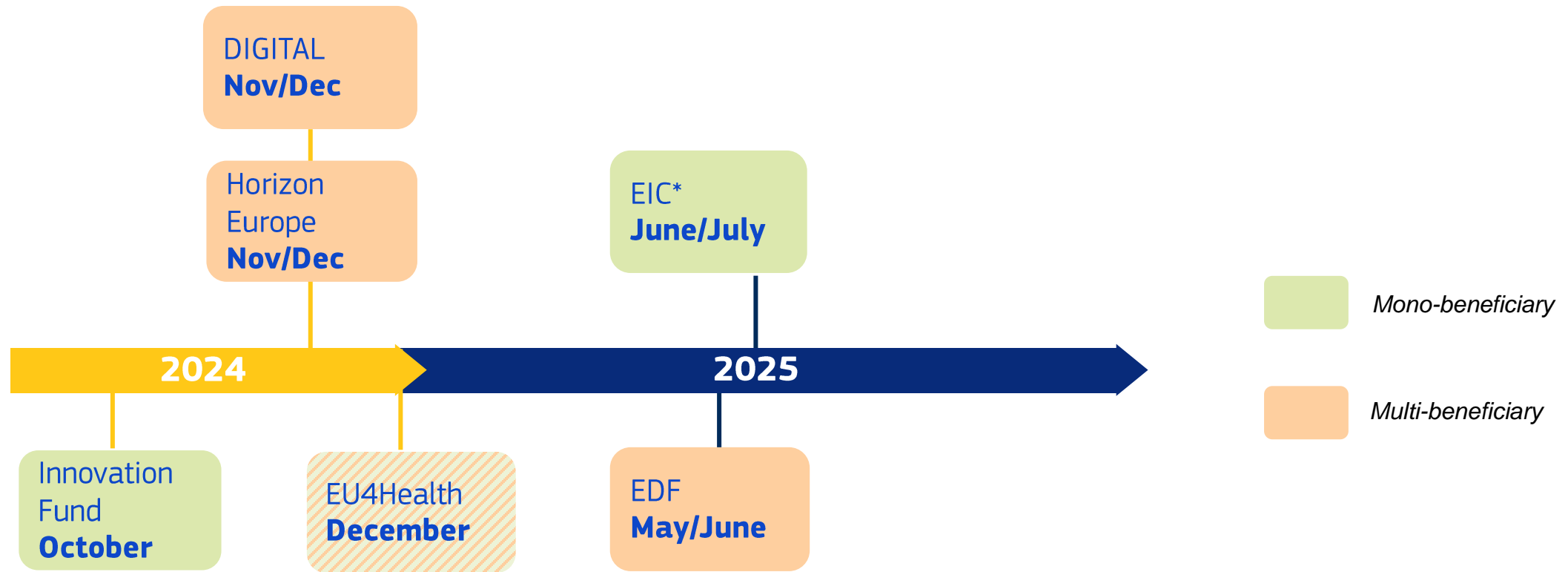


### BENEFITS PER PROGRAMME



# STEP

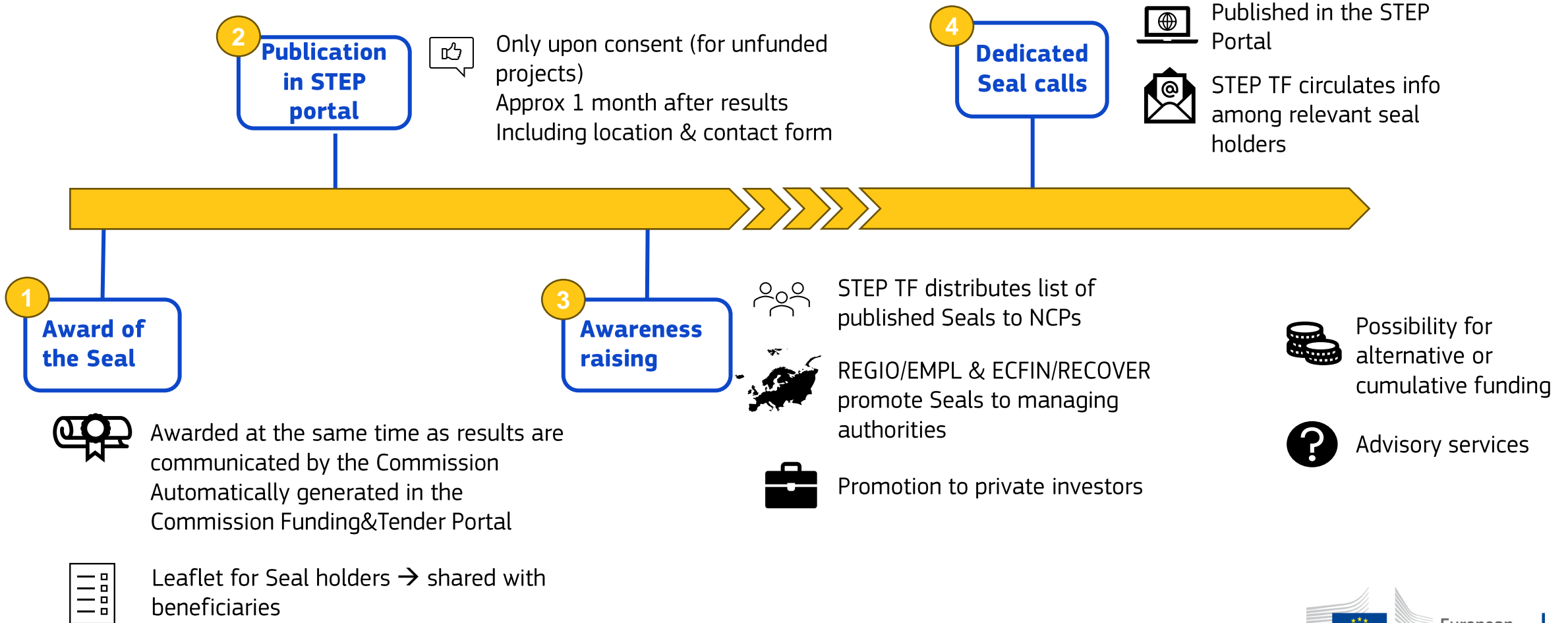
## Uptake of Seals – timeline of awards 2024-2025



\*First cut-off

# STEP

## Uptake of Seals – a joint effort



# STEP SEAL TEMPLATE



The project proposal

**[Number]** — **[Acronym]**

**[Title]**

by

**[Coordinator legal name]** **[and other participants]**

submitted under the **[Programme name]** call

**[Topic ID]** — **[Topic description/title]**

was recognised as a **high-quality project** proposal in a highly competitive evaluation process and contributes to the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP) objectives, following evaluation by an international panel of independent experts.

The STEP (Sovereignty) Seal is a quality label awarded by the European Commission aimed at facilitating access to funding opportunities under other Union programmes covered by STEP. For further information, visit <https://strategic-technologies.europa.eu/>

Brussels, **[date]**





## STEP

# STEP Seals – role of the NCPs

- **Link Seal holders with relevant funding sources and bodies** (Cohesion Policy programme amendments and RRF; private investors):
  - **Map relevant** national stakeholders **and regularly disseminate** STEP Seals.
  - STEP Seal awareness raising in your national **fora**.
- **Communication and engagement:** Seal holders to contact NCPs; NCPs proactively to communicate the Seals to stakeholders. *Reach out to the STEP Taskforce for concrete information and clarifications.*



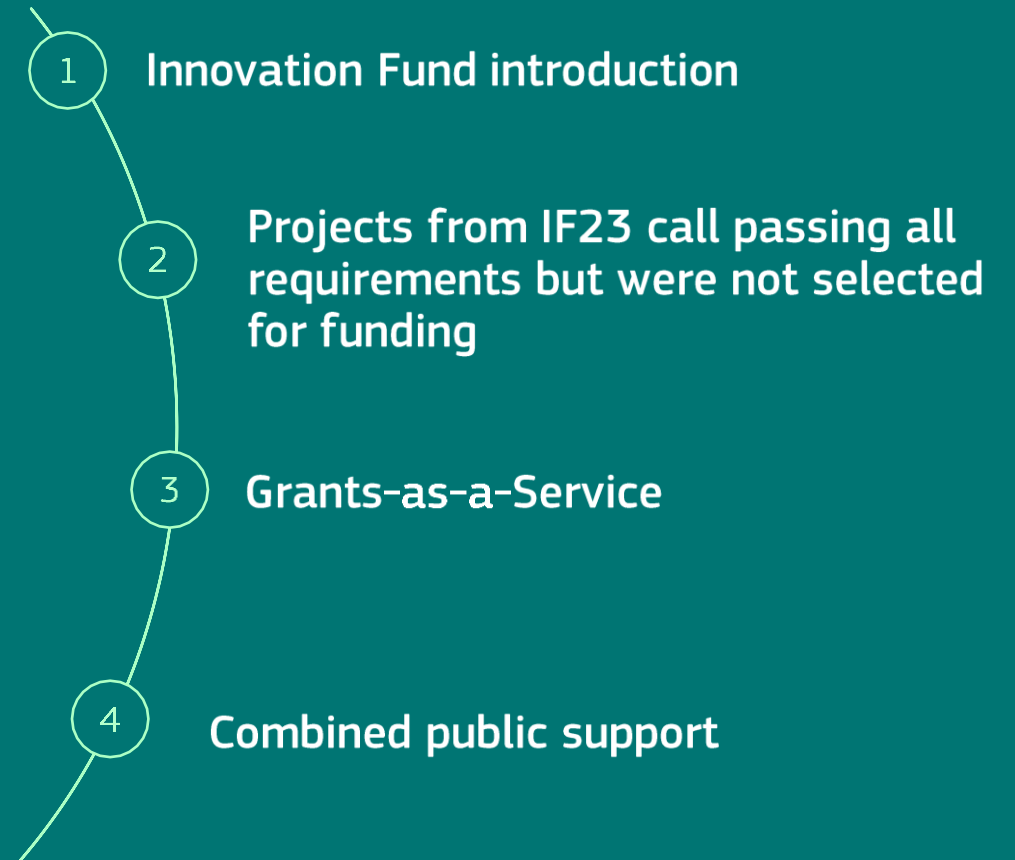
# Innovation Fund STEP Seal projects

Ewelina DANIEL, Policy Officer  
DG CLIMA, Innovation Fund team

7 November 2024  
STEP NCPs meeting



# Content





# INNOVATION FUND

Deploying innovative net-zero technologies for climate neutrality

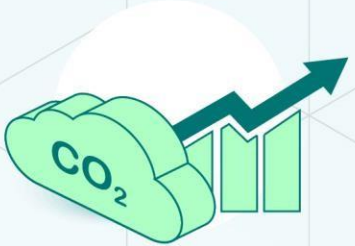
Funded by the EU Emissions Trading System



€40 billion\* available between 2020-2030

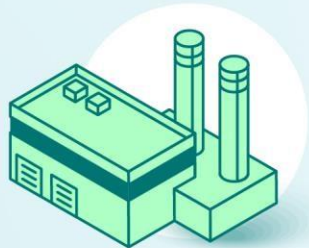


grants awarded through regular calls and auctions



avoid GHG emissions, boost competitiveness

## supporting innovation in:



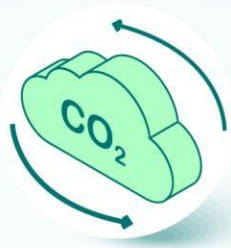
Energy-intensive industries



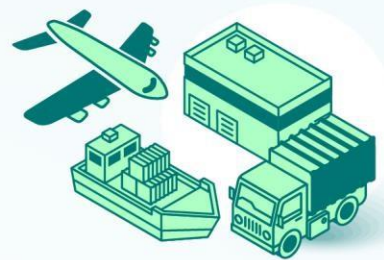
Renewable energy



Energy storage



Carbon capture, use and storage



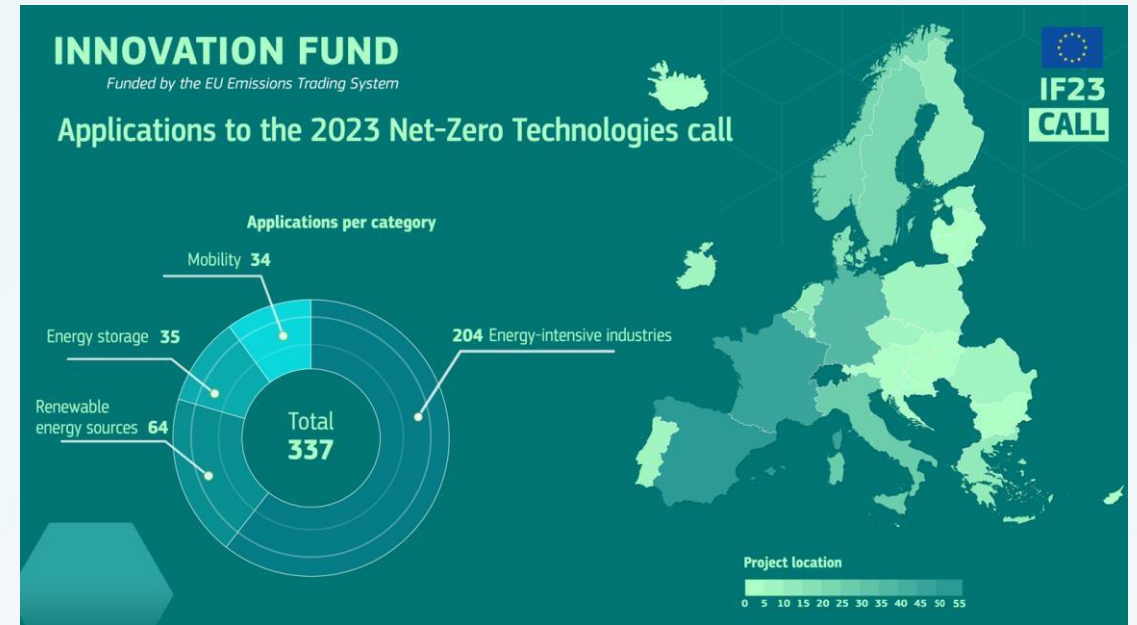
Net-zero mobility and buildings

\*based on a carbon price of €75/tonne

# IF23 Call: Net Zero Technologies (NZZ)

- 337 received proposals
  - 95 resubmissions
- 283\* admissible & eligible
- 85 to be invited for grant agreement preparation (Seals)
- 64 projects passing all requirements but were not selected for funding (Seals)

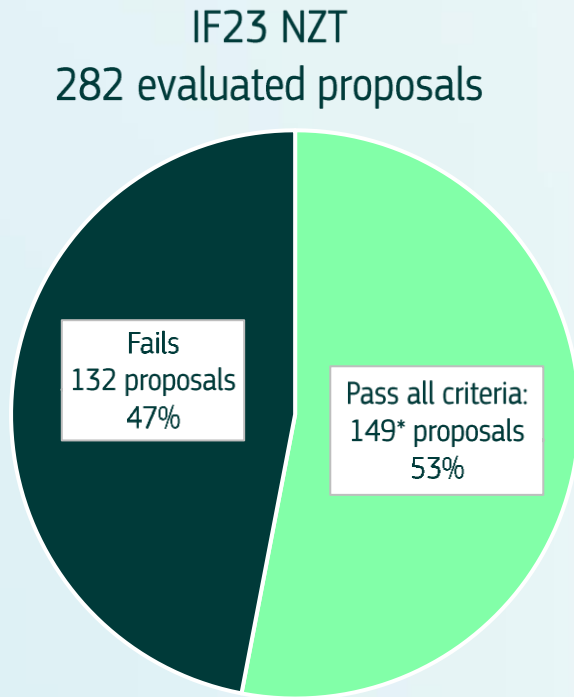
## IF23 NTZ call



\* 2 proposals withdrew during the evaluation

\*LSP = Large-Scale Projects ; MSP = Medium-Scale Projects ; SSP = Small-Scale Projects

# 53% of the evaluated proposals passed all evaluation criteria



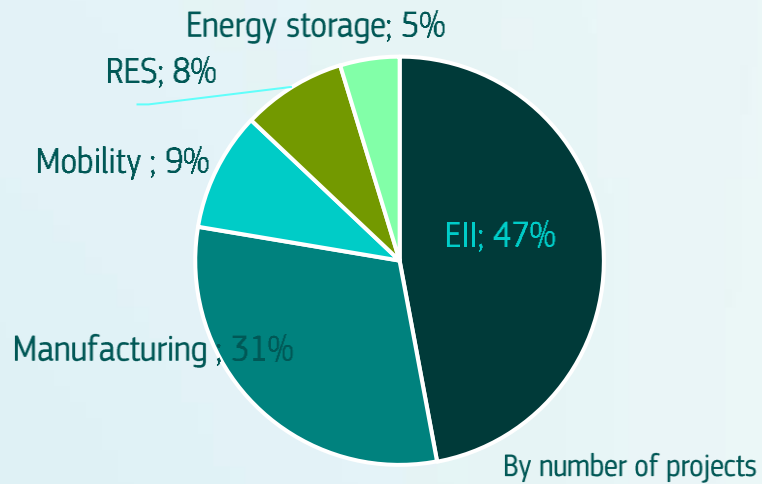
Significant increase in the share of proposals passing all criteria

Topic	Received proposals	Eligible proposals	Pass all criteria
GENERAL-LSP	139	132 (95%)	80 (61%)
GENERAL-MSP	50	38 (76%)	16 (42%)
GENERAL-SSP	42	22 (52%)	8 (36%)
MANUFACTURING	56	52* (91%)	25* (49%)
PILOTS	50	39 (78%)	20 (51%)

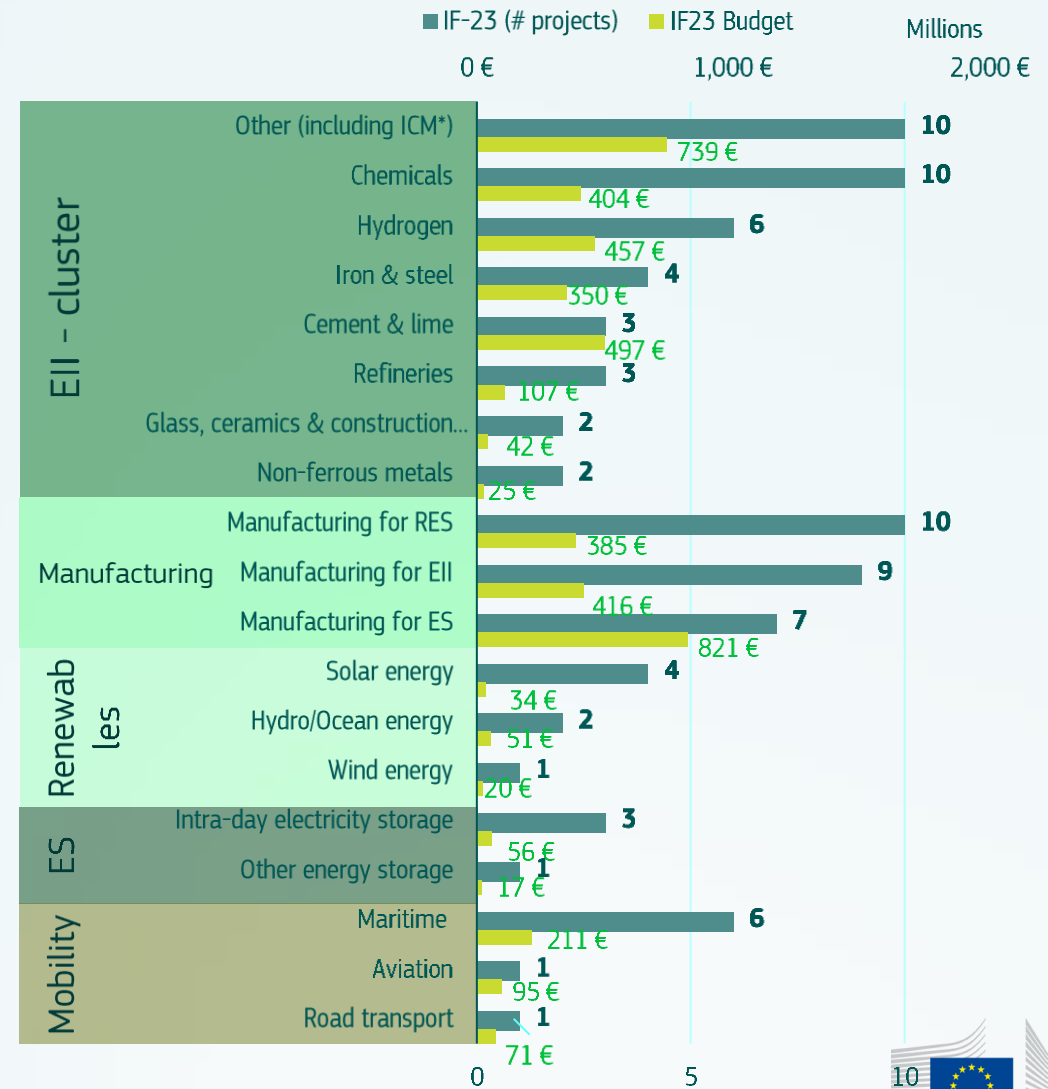
\* 2 proposals withdrew during the evaluation

# IF23 selected projects

Share of projects by category



Newly added mobility projects in:  
Aviation, Road transport, Maritime\* sectors



\*ICM : Industrial Carbon Management

# Resulting Innovation Fund portfolio



**208 projects:**  
123 ongoing +  
85 under GAP\*



**€ 12.04 Billion**  
**EU** granted +  
under GAP\*

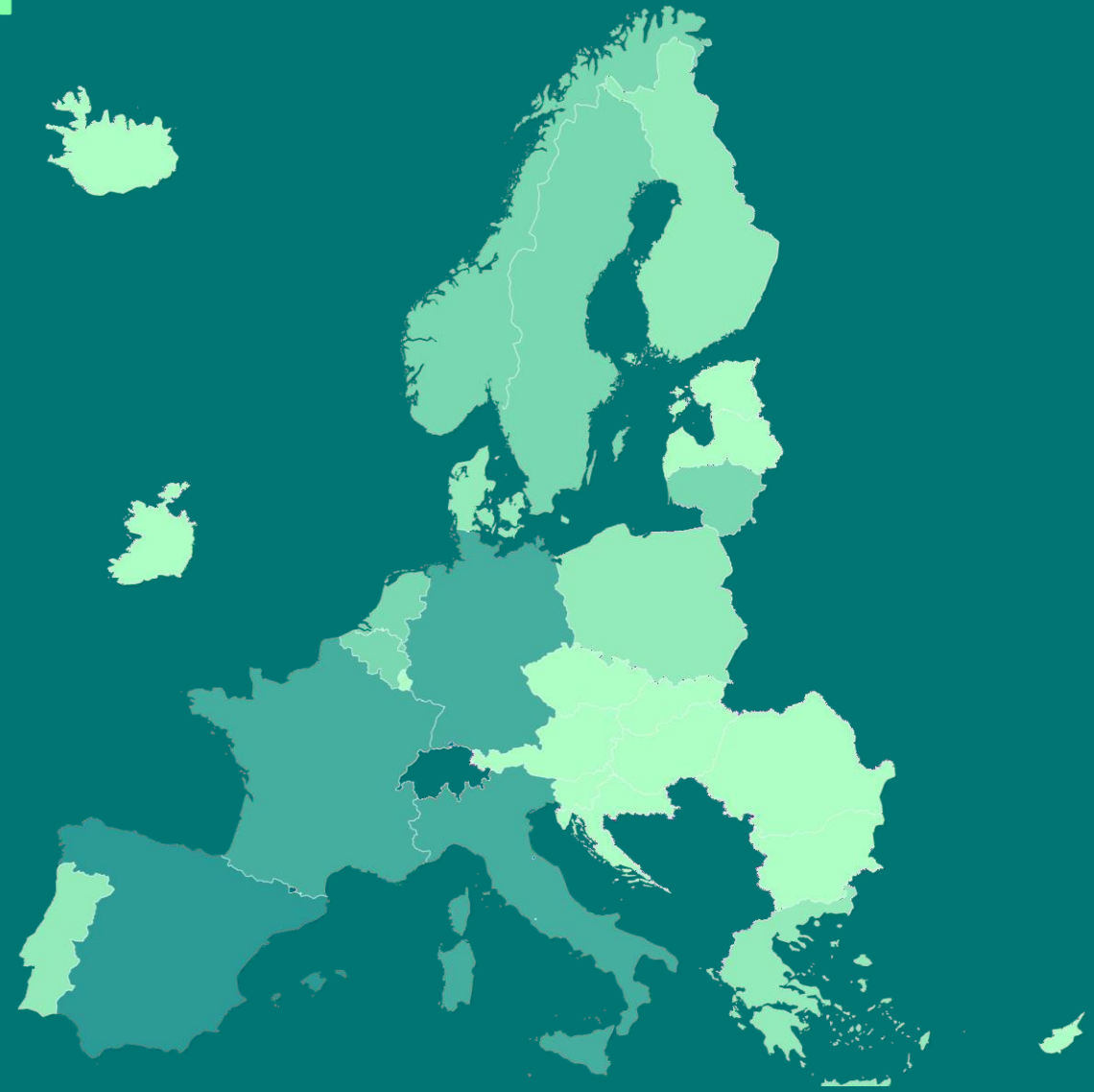


**~929 Mt CO<sub>2</sub> eq**  
**to be avoided\*\***



**26**  
**Countries**

**Two new countries added: Estonia and Slovakia**

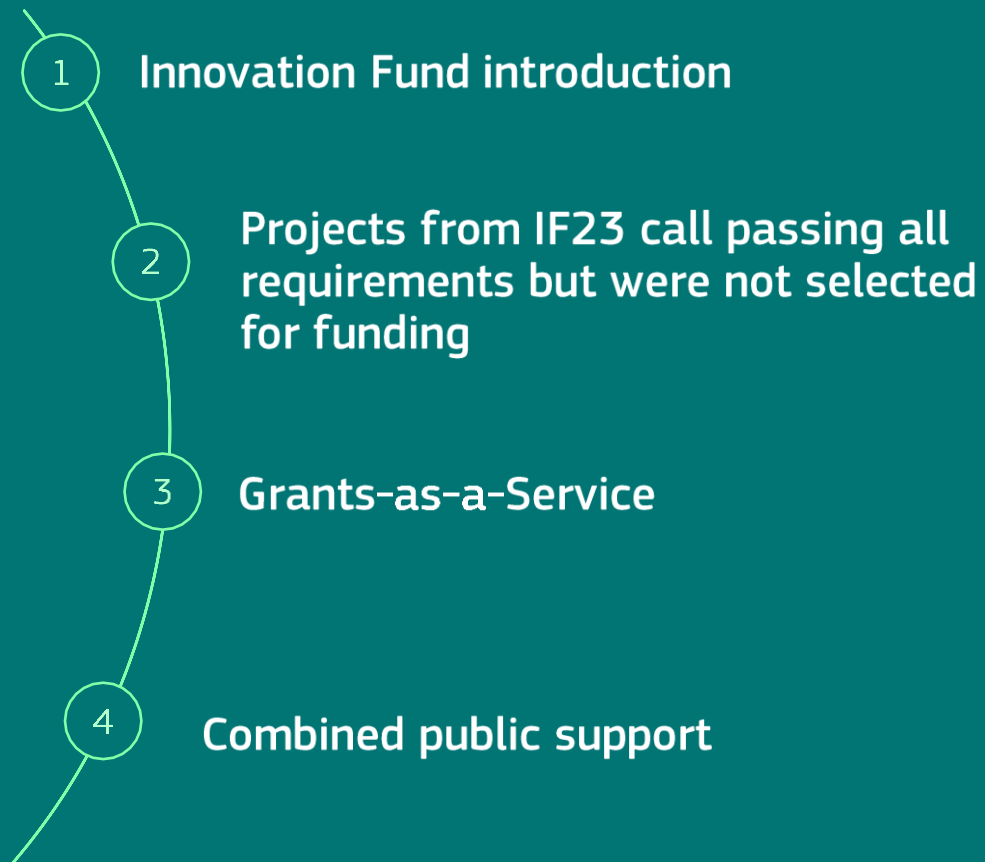


Project location



\*GAP: Grant Agreement Preparation  
\*\* estimated based on 10 years operations

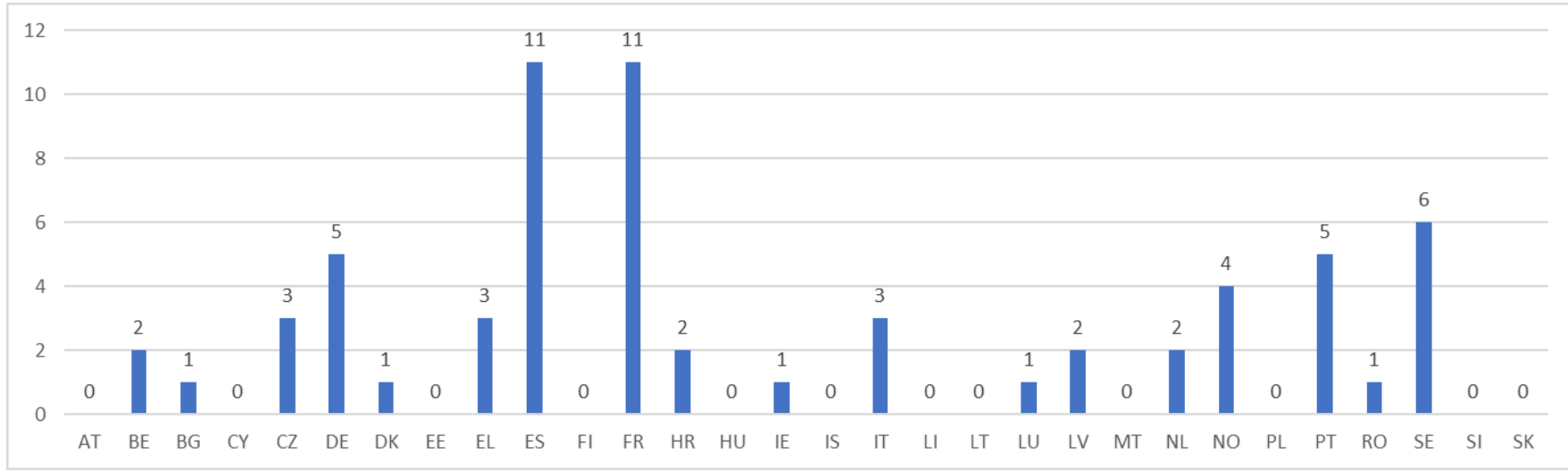
# Content



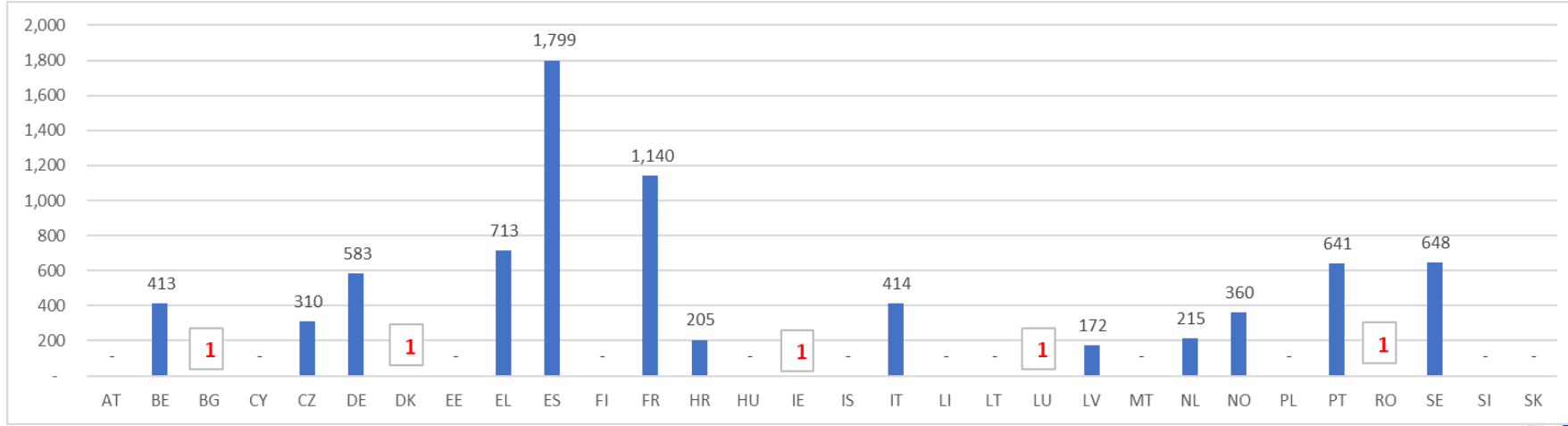
# Projects passing all requirements but not selected for funding - (64 proposals)



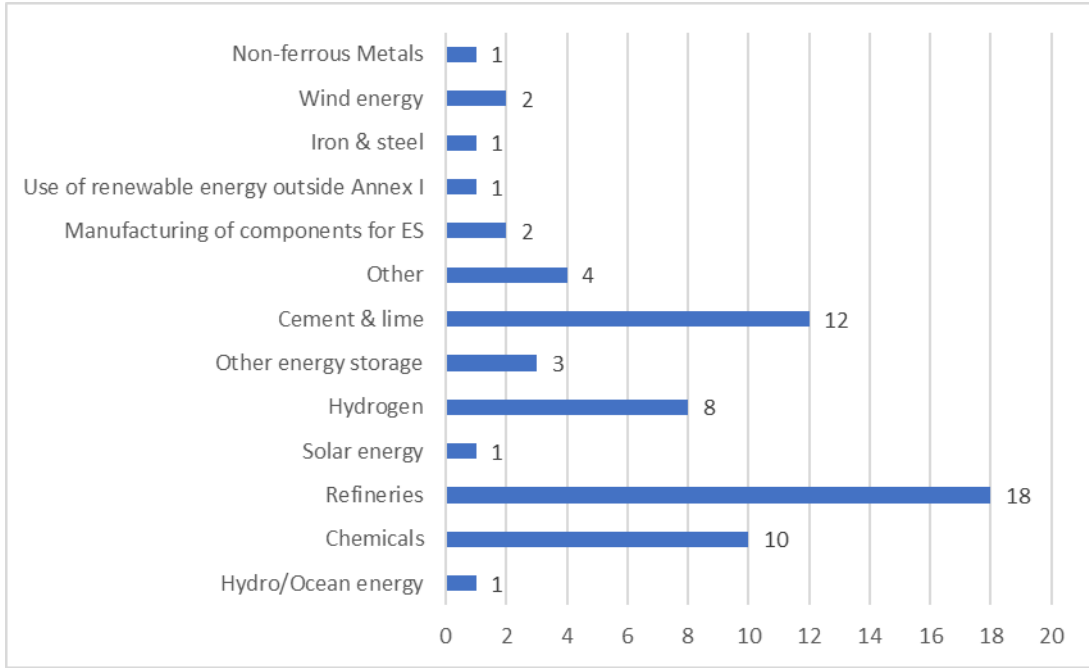
Number of passing projects not selected for funding



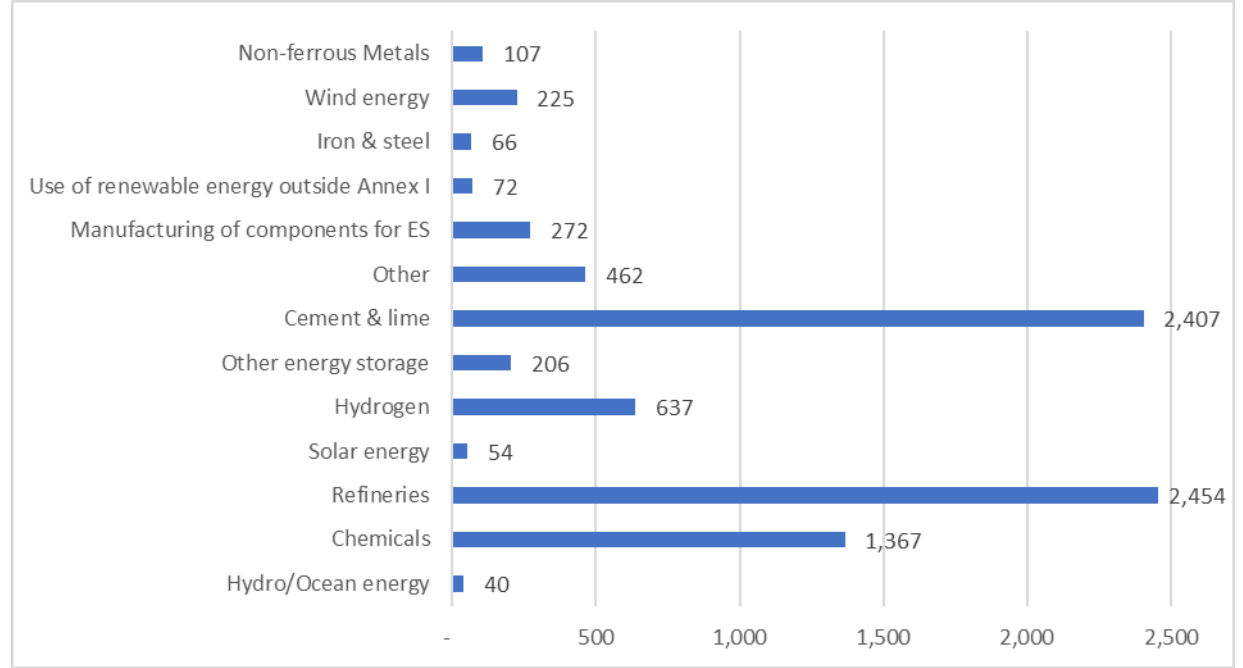
Requested grant amount [in million EUR], if only 1 project, amount not provided for confidentiality reasons



# Projects passing all requirements but not selected for funding - (64 proposals)

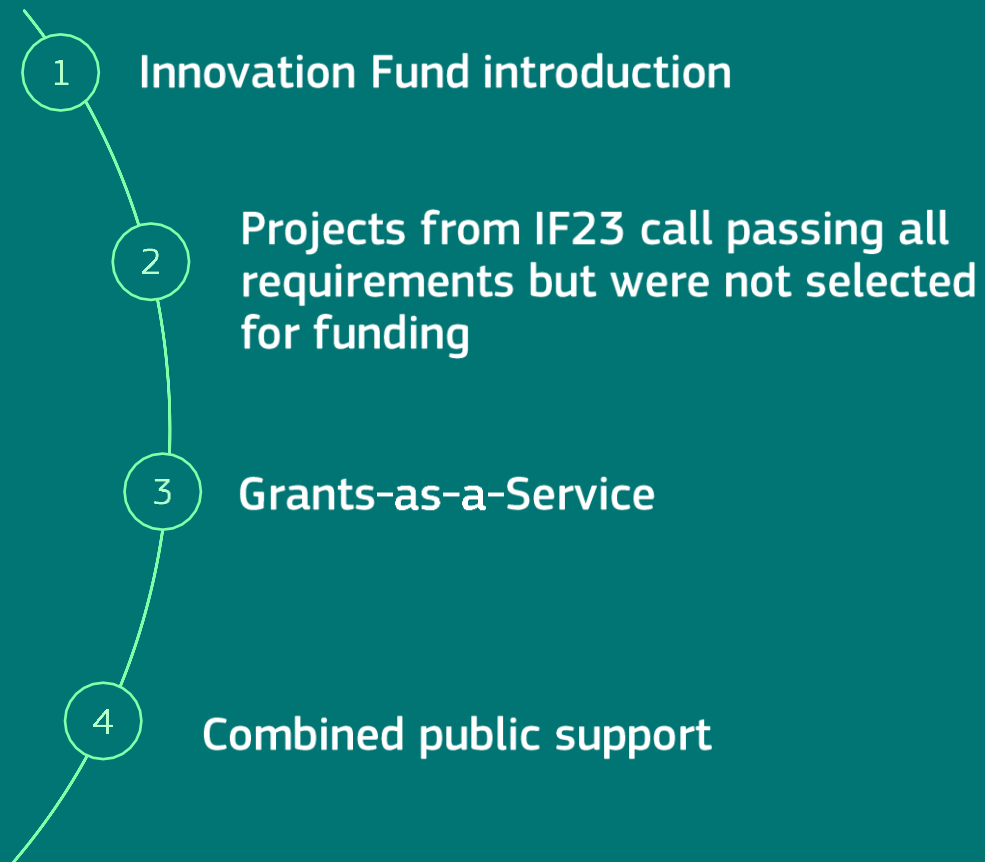


Number of passing projects not selected for funding



Requested grant amount [in million EUR]

# Content



# Grants-as-a-Service (GaaS): introduction

- Innovation Fund offers “**regular**” **calls for proposals** and **auctions**. For auctions, “**Auction-as-a-Service**” (**AaaS**) was operationalised this year.
- “Regular” grants calls for proposals, have been thoroughly reviewed and are now **better aligned with the State aid guidelines** for decarbonisation projects – “Grants-as-a-Service” is now possible.
- IF has a limited budget and there is a **growing pool of decarbonisation projects** identified under the Innovation Fund “regular” calls for proposals that could benefit from national schemes.
- **Not all MS have schemes** to award such projects
- MS **could establish State aid schemes** to provide support to projects that
  - have passed all minimum requirements (i.e. projects awarded STEP Seal) but have not been awarded an IF grant (“**substitute aid**”) and/or
  - have been awarded an IF grant, but still need additional public funding (“**top-up aid**”).

# Accelerated assessment – conditions

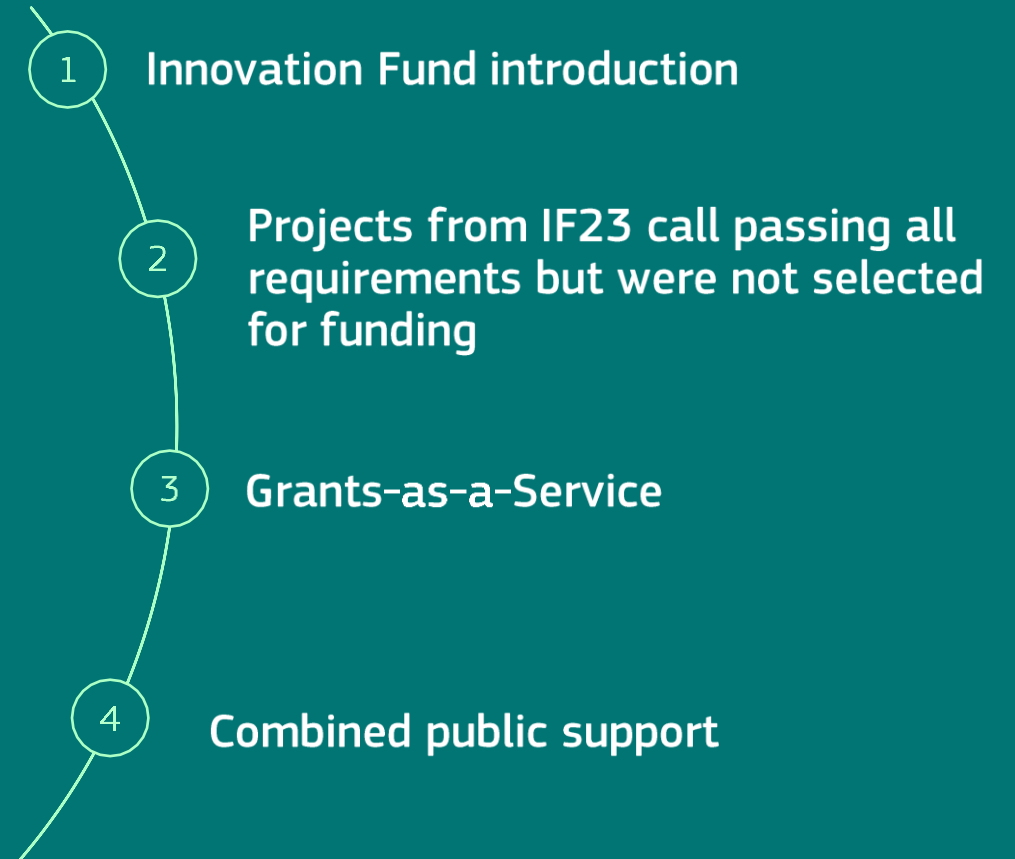
## To limit undue competition distortions and maximise environmental benefits:

- Member State must **engage in (pre)notification contacts with the Commission** at the same time as the publication of the call for proposal, or at the latest 3 months after that? Language waiver will be necessary.
- State aid measure is an **aid scheme** relying on GaaS:
- Scope:
  - No limitation to certain sectors or pre-identified undertakings and following GaaS ranking
  - No projects that use or rely on fossil fuels (except CCUS projects)
  - All energy produced must come exclusively from renewable energy sources
  - All hydrogen used must qualify as renewable hydrogen
  - No dedicated infrastructure (open or integrated)
- **Remaining State aid compatibility conditions** will have to be checked (proportionality and indirect emissions)

# Grants-as-a-Service: advantages for Member States

- Through “**Grants-as-a-service**” mechanism, MS can benefit from the **EU-level competition and well-established selection process at the EU level** for the variety of decarbonisation projects.
- Not all MS have schemes for decarbonisation projects.
  - GaaS can **save administrative effort** of developing a new scheme,
  - MS benefit from **faster State aid clearance, subject to certain conditions.**
  - MS would be able to **grant State aid** for decarbonisation projects selected under Innovation Fund “regular” calls. Once there is a GaaS scheme approved, MS would not have to notify individual aid anymore. Such schemes could be **open-ended and cover multiple IF “regular” calls for proposals**
  - Member States will only have to evaluate quality projects and they will have all the information gathered during the IF selection process at their disposal. By relying on the IF evaluation, the **checks of the national authorities** on State aid compliance would be **reduced to the minimum.**
- In case of interest by Member States, the Commission services could **help interested Member States in setting up such schemes.**

# Content





# Combined public support

- Under IF “regular grants” **up to 60% of the funding gap** can be covered
- Large share of IF projects need a **combined public support**, in majority of cases this is State aid (IPCEI, RRF, ad-hoc cases, to smaller extent GBER)
- Not all MS have schemes for decarbonisation projects. GaaS can **save administrative effort** of developing a new scheme also for a top-aid scheme
- There are **rules on combined public support** that are difficult to navigate for the projects – Staff Working Document is forthcoming with guidance for applicants:
- The **purpose of SWD will be to bring together information** on how the combination of an IF grant with other public support, be it EU or Member States’
  - can be managed and reflected in the IF application, and
  - might be assessed by (i) competent national authorities (for State aid) or (ii) funding bodies/managing authorities of other EU funding programmes.

# Thank you



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Slide xx: element concerned, source: e.g. Fotolia.com; Slide xx: element concerned, source: e.g. iStock.com

# Q&A

# Family photo and lunch break

12h15-13h30

Follow the instructions of the STEP TF

Lunch break on 22<sup>nd</sup> floor

**STEP**

# Draft agenda



**10:00-10:15:** Welcome by Christiane Canenbley

**10:15-11:15:** National Contact Points: your role, experience, and ambition

**11:15-12:15:** STEP Seals

**12:15-13:30:** **Lunch Break and family picture**

**13:30-13:45:** Users' survey

**13:45-15:15:** Mobilising funds towards STEP: Cohesion Policy

**15:15-15:45:** Mobilising funds towards STEP: InvestEU Member State Compartment

**15:45-16:00:** Closing remarks by Christiane Canenbley

# Users' survey

13h30-13h45



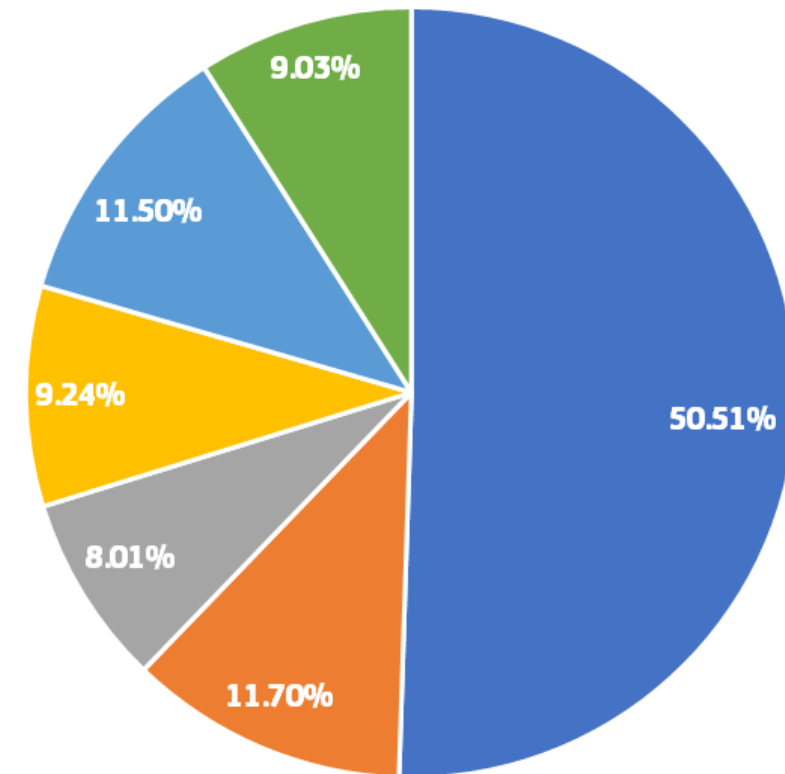


# A total of 485 people responded to the survey

The survey generated high interest from private companies and businesses

## Who replied to the survey?

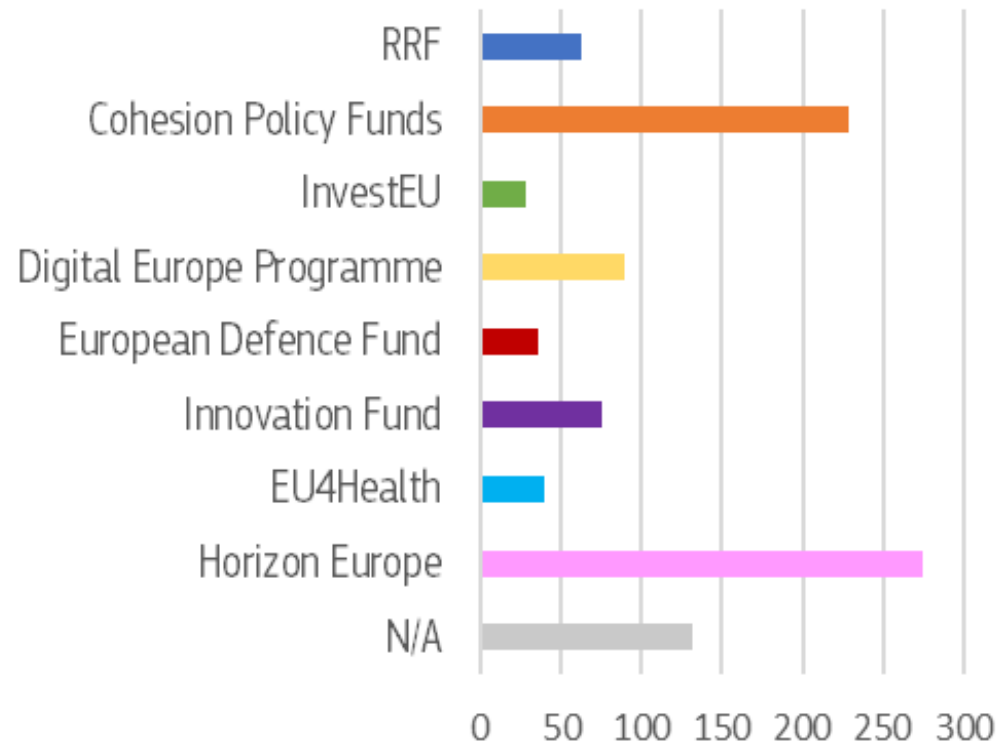
- Employed by or own a (private) company
- Academic/researcher
- Civil servant employed by non-governmental / civil society organisation
- Employed by an industry association
- Working for a consulting organisation that assists companies in applying for EU funding
- Other



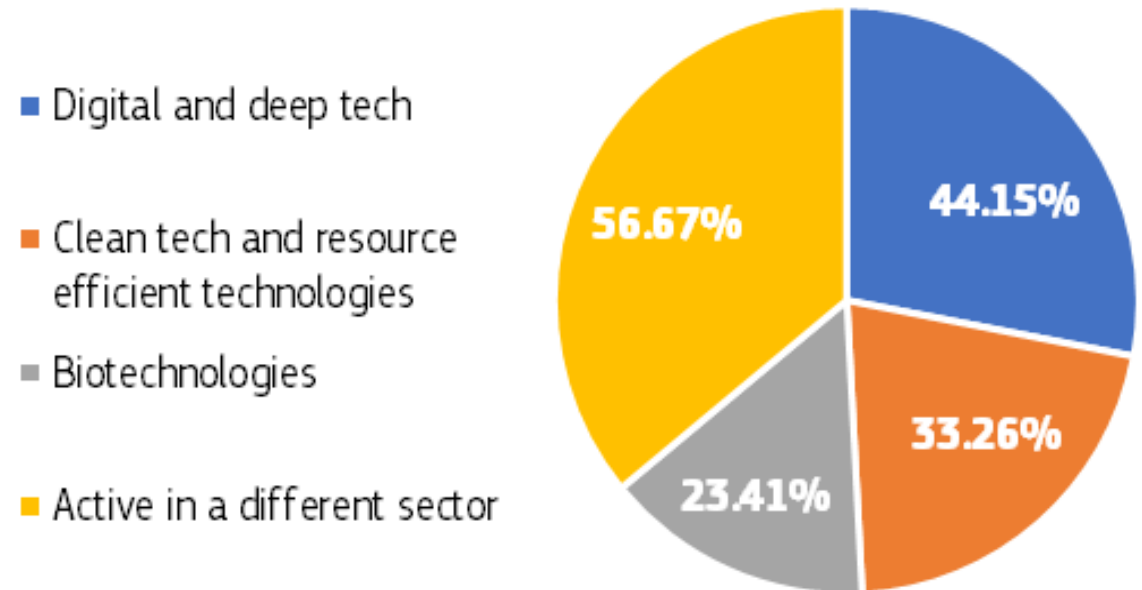
# Respondents have experience on Horizon Europe and Cohesion Policy Funds

Most of the respondents also belong to other sectors beyond the STEP sectors

Which EU funding programme(s) under STEP do you have experience with?



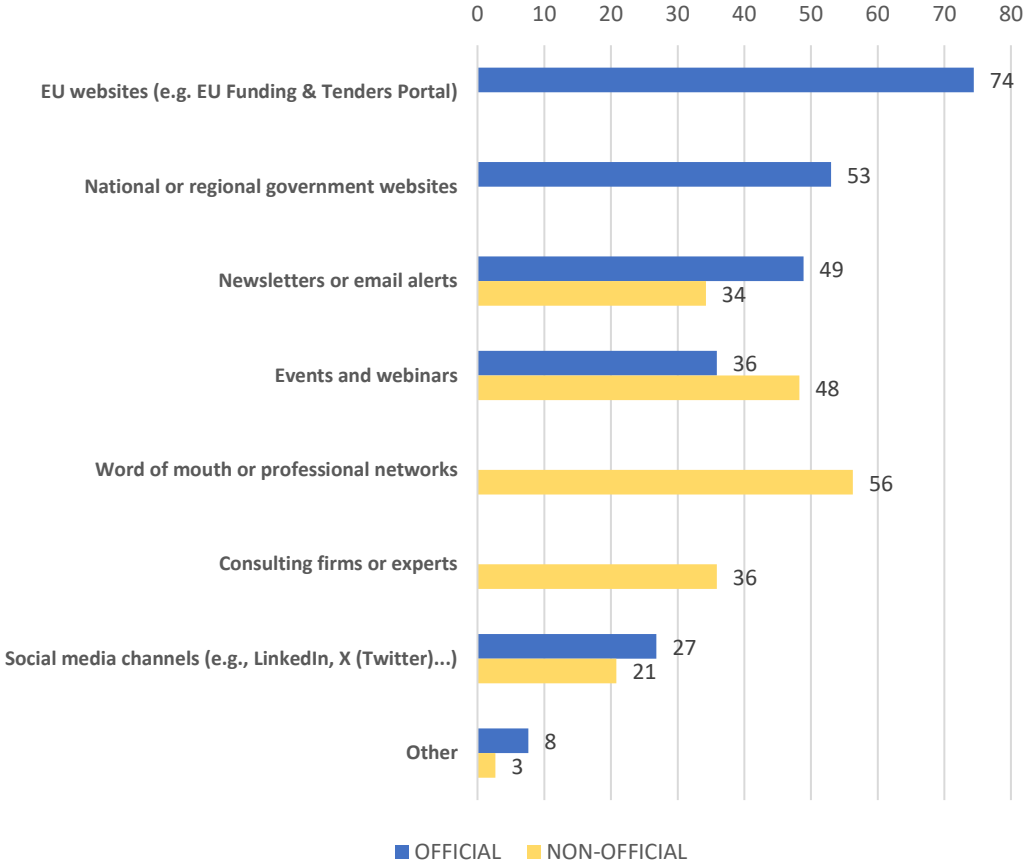
Is your company/organisation active in one of the following sectors?



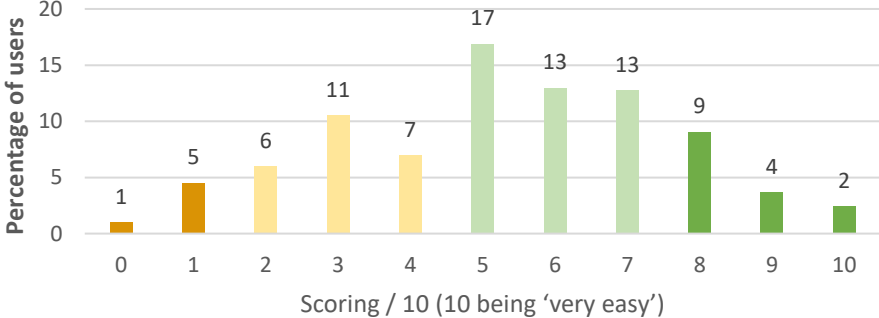
# Users are looking for easier sources to look for EU funding

To enrich their knowledge, users often reach out to non-official information sources to fill information gaps

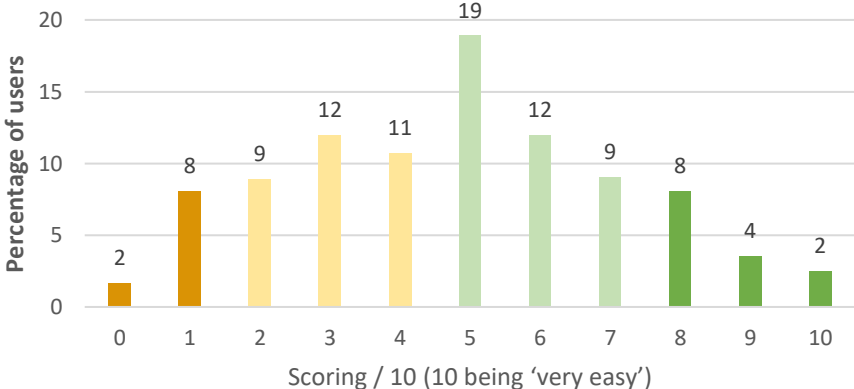
## Where users look for information (% of users)



## Is information on EU funding easy to find?



## How easy is submitting an application?



# The majority of users see value in a one-stop-shop approach

Excellent feedback on the STEP portal

# 72%

of respondents **see value in a one-stop-shop combining EU and national funding**

**268 positive comments**



1. Easier discovery
2. Time saving
3. Enhanced clarity



**21 negative comments**

1. Different requirements
2. Complexity of messages (confusion & overload of info)
3. Changing criteria & evaluation processes

## Key take-aways:



- Having information combined is seen as an added value, confirming the need for cross-Programme listing of opportunities
- Concerns on combining the National & Regional levels indicate a need for consciousness on what will be embedded (information overload)

# Mobilising funds towards STEP: Cohesion Policy

13h45-15h15

National Contact Points: Denmark, Germany, Italy, Romania

DG REGIO/DG EMPL

# 1st wave of reprogramming a strong start

FR: 2 regional ERDF and ESF+ programmes

DK: 1 regional ERDF+JTF programme

DE: 5 regional programmes

IT: 9 regional and 1 national ERDF programme

ES: 7 regional ERDF, 2 regional ESF+ and one national JTF programme

RO: 2 national ESF+ and 2 national ERDF programmes



# STEP reprogramming of the Danish Just Transition Fund program

by Patrick Danielsen, DK STEP NCP

7<sup>th</sup> November 2024

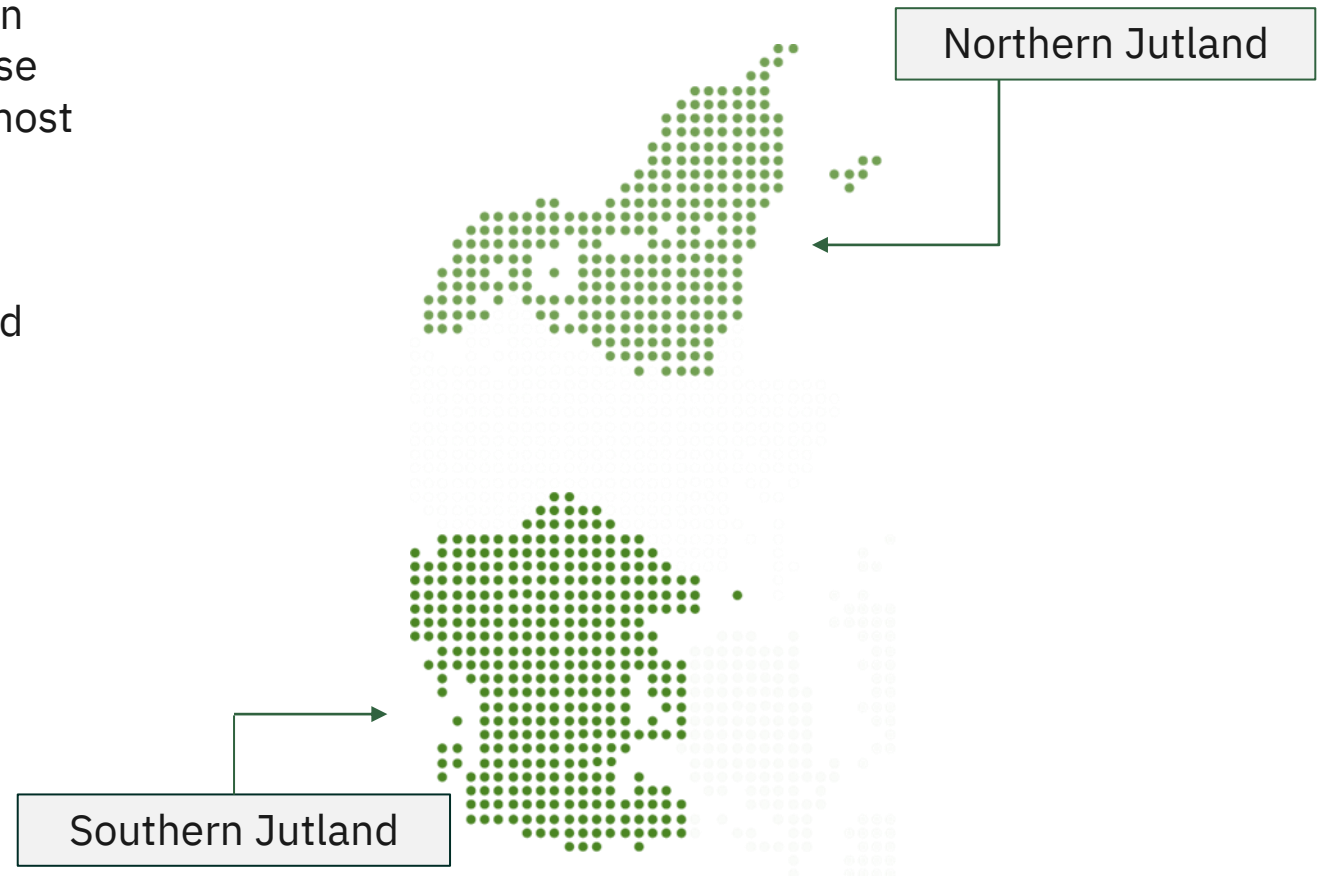


# JTF 2021-2027 and geographical scope

From 2021-2027, the JTF invests 85,4 mio. euros in activities in Denmark aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of the climate transition by supporting the most affected territories and workers concerned and to promote a balanced socio-economic transition.

Northern- and Southern Jutland has been appointed eligible areas.

- The designation of **North Jutland** based on the restructuring of greenhouse gas-intensive production processes
- The designation of **South Jutland** based on the phasing out of fossil fuel production



# The Just Transition Fund 2021-2027: 85,4 mio. euro

Five operations	
13,3 mio. €	A cohesive Denmark with strong local business lighthouses
13,3 mio. €	Technology- and business development within Power-to-X
6,7 mio. €	Better conditions for green transition in SMEs
26,0 mio. €	Development of brown biorefining such as pyrolysis
25,3 mio. €	Development of local value chains for CO <sub>2</sub> capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS)

## Types of activities



**Skills development**



**Research and development**



**Investment aid**



**Preliminary projects**

# Reprogramming of the JTF program to STEP

## Issues

- Lack of interest in applying for funds
  - Complaints over a low EU-cofinancing rate
  - A new fund with new intervention logics and partnerships
  - Re-announcements of calls
- Lack of demand for skills development
- Severe time constraints to reach n+3
- The maturity of the technologies



## STEP

- Increased EU-cofinancing rate (up to 100%)
- Increased flexibility to support productive investments in large enterprises
  - Indicative list
- 30% pre-financing

## The process

- Fall 2023: Following the negotiations of STEP
- Spring 2024: Preliminary dialogue with the Commission and informal consultation
- Summer 2024: Formal consultation and program approval

# Projects

- Four projects have been selected for support before reprogramming
- Open calls:
  - PtX: applications are being processed
  - CCUS: deadline for applications in November
  - Pyrolysis: deadline for applications in November

## Beyond Fossil

The Business Lighthouse for green energy and sector coupling. The project consists of ten innovation projects. Furthermore, the project facilitates networking activities for SME's and offers skills development.

## Development of North Jutland Oxy-Fuel pyrolysis

The project will develop a test- and demonstration facility based on Oxy-Fuel pyrolysis on Vrejlev Energi (biogas plant) and R&D in relation to eliminating PFAS

## CO2Vision NeXt

The Business Lighthouse for CCUS. The project establishes three new mini-lighthouses to test and demonstrate new CCUS solutions.

## Green Port Scandinavia

The project will establish a CO2 intermediate storage facility with a capacity of 200,000 tonnes of biogenic CO2 per year from biogas plants. Furthermore, preliminary analyzes are carried out with the aim of increasing the capacity to 800,000 tonnes in 2028 from new CO2 sources.





Federal Ministry  
for Economic Affairs  
and Climate Action

# Cohesion Policy reprogramming in North Rhine-Westphalia/Germany

STEP NCAs meeting 07/11

# STEP-related reprogramming – ERDF

1. Innovative NRW (PO 1. i)
2. SME-friendly NRW (PO 1.ii-iv)
3. Sustainable NRW (PO 2.i, ii, iv, vi und vii)
4. Mobile NRW (PO 2.viii)
5. Liveable NRW (PO 5.i)
- [6. Sustainable coal regions (PO 8.i) – JTF]
- [7. NEW: Resilient coal regions (PO 8.i) – JTF]
- 8. NEW: Competitive NRW (PO 1.vi)**
- 9. NEW: Resource-efficient NRW (PO 2.ix)**

# STEP-related objective – Competitive NRW

## Measures:

- Development of critical technologies (innovation competitions)
- Research infrastructure for critical technologies
- Patent commercialisation for critical technologies
- Digital technologies and technology-intensive innovations
- Inter-company training centres for critical technologies

# STEP-related objective – Resource-efficient NRW

## Measures:

- Circular value creation
- call for projects "Ressource.NRW"
- Circular Economy
- Support for sustainable and environmentally oriented start-ups and start-ups

# STEP-related objectives – Examples

Start

Maßnahmen ▾

Über uns

Kontakt



Kofinanziert von der Europäischen Union

Die Landesregierung Nordrhein-Westfalen



Innovationen in Umweltwirtschaft, Circular Economy und Klimaanpassung im Rahmen des EFRE/JTF-Programms NRW 2021-2027

## Innovationswettbewerb GreenEconomy.IN.NRW

# STEP-related objectives – Examples

Start

Maßnahmen ▾

Über uns

Kontakt



Kofinanziert von der Europäischen Union

Die Landesregierung Nordrhein-Westfalen



Innovationen für die Energiesysteme der Zukunft, eine klimaneutrale Industrie sowie klima- und ressourcengerechtes Bauen im Rahmen des EFRE/JTF-Programms NRW 2021-2027

## Innovationswettbewerb Energie.IN.NRW

# STEP-related objectives – Examples

Start

Maßnahmen ▾

Über uns

Kontakt



Kofinanziert von der Europäischen Union

Die Landesregierung Nordrhein-Westfalen



Eine Initiative des Ministeriums für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Verkehr des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen im Rahmen des EFRE/JTF-Programms NRW 2021-2027

## Circular Economy - CircularCities.NRW

# STEP-related reprogramming - Timeline

Dates 2024	Implementation stages
03/01	STEP Regulation enters into force
05/07	ERDF/JTF monitoring committee: Decision to amend programme
05/22	WG ERDF/JTF coordination: Decision of financial plan for programme amendment
06/25	Approval of the decision to amend the programme via circulation procedure
07/01	Formal submission of ERDF/JTF programme amendment to COM
08/07	Approval of STEP amendment by COM



# Reprogramming towards STEP under cohesion policy funds: the case of Italy

**Federica BUSILLO**

**Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministries  
Department for Cohesion Policy**

November 7, 2024



# Amount of reprogrammed resources within cohesion policy (1)



**10 Cohesion policy programmes out of 48 programmes** have reallocated resources to STEP.



**Less Developed regions have reallocated the most significant amount of resources to STEP** (70.2 % of total resources from ERDF Regional Programme and 18.7% from the National Programmes “Research, Innovation and Competitiveness” 2021-2027)

The opportunity posed by the Step regulation is particularly challenging for Italy as less developed regions will contribute significantly to the strengthening the EU's competitiveness and strategic independence in critical technologies.

**2.98**  
billion Euros

**558.5** MEuros

From 1 National Programme



18.7%

**290.5** MEuros

From 3 Programmes in More Developed Regions



10%

**2,100.3** MEuros

From 5 Programmes in Less Developed Regions



70.2%

**31.4** MEuros

From 1 Programme in Transition Regions



1.1%



# Amount of reprogrammed resources within cohesion policy (2)



**As of 14 October 2024, all programs containing STEP reprogramming have been approved.**

Note: The amount used for the STEP reprogramming coincides for all programs with the flexibility quota (15% of the total EU share in the Program's financial plan), except for the Apulia Region, which reprogrammed an additional 20 million euros in favour of STEP priorities. The national co-financing resources, resulting from applying the EU co-financing rate of up to 100%, have been retained within the Programs' Priorities.

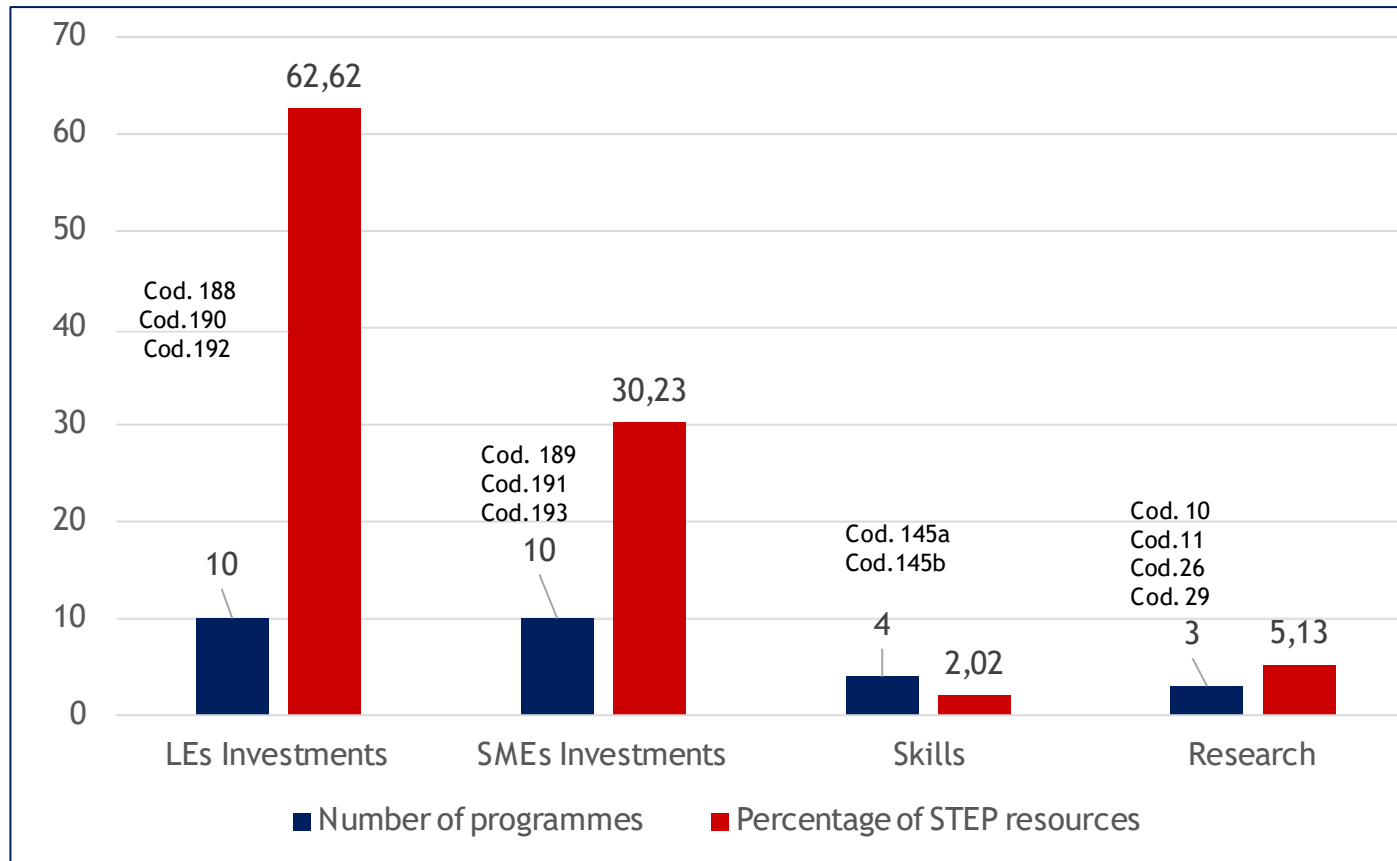


Type of Operational Programs	Program	STEP Decision	Amount Allocated to STEP Reprogramming (in Euro)			Total EU Contribution to the Program (in Euro)	%
			Amount Dedicated to Critical Digital Technologies and Biotechnologies (PO1)	Amount Dedicated to Zero-Emission, Clean, and Efficient Technologies (PO2)	Total reprogrammed amount		
<b>National Programmes</b>							
National Programmes	NP RIC	C(2024)7214 of 14.10.2024	558,455,362.00	-	558,455,362.00	3,723,000,000.00	15%
<b>Regional Programmes</b>							
Less Developed Regions	RP Multi-Fund Calabria	C(2024)6754 of 26.09.2024	151,653,084.00	112,791,969.00	266,445,053.00	1,762,950,091.00	15%
	RP Multi-Fund Puglia	C(2024)6752 of 26.09.2024	342,829,431.00	128,701,236.00	471,530,667.00	2,555,644,874.00	19%
	RP ERDF Campania	C(2024) 6748 of 26.09.2024	581,141,969.00	-	581,141,969.00	3,874,242,592.00	15%
	RP ERDF Sardegna	C(2024) 6563 of 14.10.2024	110,692,718.00	55,317,943.00	166,010,661.00	1,106,727,109.00	15%
	RP ERDF Sicilia	C(2024)7098 of 08.10.2024	369,117,413.00	246,078,276.00	615,195,689.00	4,101,265,211.00	15%
Transition Regions	RP ERDF Umbria	C(2024)7211 of 14.10.2024	26,421,586.00	5,000,000.00	31,421,586.00	209,465,124.00	15%
More Developed Regions	RP ERDF Emilia Romagna	C(2024)7208 of 14.10.2024	61,456,430.00	-	61,456,430.00	409,685,856.00	15%
	RP ERDF Lazio	C(2024) 6747 of 26.09.2024	79,043,497.00	30,000,000.00	109,043,497.00	726,914,632.00	15%
	RP ERDF Lombardia	C(2024) 6655 del 18.09.2024	90,006,935.00	30,000,000.00	120,006,935.00	800,000,000.00	15%



# A strategic opportunity for large enterprises

**62.62%** of the resources will be allocated to investments for large enterprises, while **30.23%** will support investments by SMEs.



1

**Intervention code 188** Productive investments in large enterprises linked primarily to clean and resource-efficient technologies

**Intervention code 190** Productive investments in large enterprises linked primarily to biotechnologies

**Intervention code 192** Productive investments in large enterprises linked primarily to digital technologies and deep tech innovation

**Investments by large enterprises**

2

**Intervention code 189** Productive investments in SMEs linked primarily to clean and resource-efficient technologies

**Intervention code 191** Productive investments in SMEs linked primarily to biotechnologies

**Intervention code 193** Productive investments in SMEs linked primarily to digital technologies and deep tech innovation

**Investments by SMEs**

3

**Intervention code 145a** Support for the development of skills or access to employment in digital technologies and deep tech innovation, biotechnologies

**Intervention code 145b** Support for the development of skills or access to employment in clean and resource-efficient technologies.

**Skill support**

4

**Intervention code 10** Research SMEs

**Intervention code 11** Research LEs

**Intervention code 26** Innovation clusters and networks

**Intervention code 29** Research and focusing on the low carbon economy, resilience and adaptation to climate change

**Research and innovation**



# Sectoral focus for strategic technologies within STEP reprogramming

Different programmes identify the same sectors for the implementation of the STEP Objectives :

1. **Automotive and motor engineering** (Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy - MIMIT), Puglia, Emilia Romagna);
2. Onshore and offshore wind energy (Puglia, Sardegna, Lazio);
3. Green hydrogen (Puglia, Calabria);
4. **Aerospace** (MIMIT, Puglia, Emilia Romagna);
5. Advanced computing and quantum computing (MIMIT, Calabria, Puglia, Campania, Sardegna, Lazio);
6. **Pharmaceuticals and health technologies** (MIMIT, Puglia, Campania, Sardegna, Lazio);
7. **Production/recovery of new materials**, also as a substitute for critical raw materials (Calabria, Puglia, Sardegna, Sicilia Lombardia);
8. **Tissue and cell engineering** (Sardegna, Campania, Umbria, Emilia Romagna);
9. **Technologies for water purification and desalination** (Sicilia, Campania);
10. Alternative fuels (Sicilia, Lazio)
11. **Mechanics and mechatronics** (MIMIT, Umbria, Emilia Romagna).

The sectors in bold correspond to those identified as priorities for economic security in the Green Paper "Made in Italy 2030"

Sectoral Focus



# STEP implementation



Implementation maturity

## SELECTION CRITERIA

### Sardegna

Selection criteria are to be approved by MC by the end of 2024.

### Lombardia

Approved

### Sicilia

Approved

### Emilia Romagna

Selection criteria are to be approved by MC by the end of 2024.

### Umbria

Selection criteria are to be approved by MC the end of 2024.

### Puglia

Selection criteria are to be approved by MC the end of 2024.

### Campania

Selection criteria are going to be updated .

### NP RIC

Selection criteria are to be approved

## STEP CALLS FOR PROPOSALS

Update of the timetable of the calls for proposals by the first quarter of 2025. Expression of interest to be published by the end of 2024. Calls for proposal to be published in the **first quarter of 2025**.

Update of the timetable of the calls for proposal by the end of 2024. Calls for proposal are to be open in the **first quarter 2025**.

The timetable of the calls for proposal will be updated after the final consultation with the stakeholders **by the end of 2024**.

Calls for proposals are to be defined after the Regional Elections in November.

Calls to be published in **the first quarter of 2025**

The timetable of the calls for proposal will updated after the approval of selection criteria. Calls will be open **in the first semester 2025**

A call for proposal on quantum technologies with an overall budget of 70 Meuro **is being published**.

Directorial Decree defining the STEP operations was adopted last August. **A first call of proposal with an overall budget of 300 Meuro will be adopted shortly** (eligible investment between 5 and 20 Meuro)





# Thank you

Federica Busillo  
Presidency of the Council of Ministers  
Department for Cohesion Policy  
Director  
General Directorate for European Cohesion  
Policy

# Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform - STEP and Cohesion Policy 2021-2027

7 November 2024, Bruxelles



*Ministry of European Investments and Projects  
(MEIP)  
Romania*

# STEP and Cohesion Policy in Romania

## STEP Amendments – 2014-2020

### Operational Programme

- Regional
- Competitiveness
- Large infrastructure

benefited from the **application of the EU co-financing rate of 100%** to the expenditure declared in the payment claims for the accounting year starting on 1 July 2023 and ending on 30 June 2024 for certain priority axes.

## STEP Amendments – 2021-2027

Under the Cohesion Policy there are **8 national programs and 8 regional programmes.**

Dedicated STEP priorities have been introduced and submitted to the COM for approval in the following **Programmes, with allocations dedicated to the new STEP priority (total 1,5 bn euro, EU):**

- **Health** (allocation 2,274 mil euro, EU) – STEP → 446 mil euro
- **Education and Employment** (allocation 3,484 mil euro, EU) – STEP → 572 mil euro
- **Smart Growth, Digitalization and Financial Instruments** (allocation 1,650 mil euro, EU) – STEP → 271 mil euro
- **Just Transition**(allocation 2,139 mil euro, EU) – STEP → 266 mil euro



# STEP & ESF+



## Identifying the need for ESF+ intervention under STEP

**Critical technology sectors benefit of a lower share of employment in Romania compared with EU average.** Those sectors comprise knowledge-intensive services and employ in Romania 22.8% of the total workforce, compared with 33.4% in Poland, 35.9% in Slovenia or to the EU average of 37.2% (Eurostat).

**The volume of expertise in bioeconomy services is also limited and is estimated between 8% and 13% over total employment.** According to the EU Bioeconomy Monitoring System employment in the bioeconomy services shows substantial differences across Member States and in Romania is expected to have a share between minimum 8% and maximum 13% over the total employment (2019). The percentage is way below peer countries such as Lithuania (over 20%), Bulgaria (19%) or Greece (29%) (JRC, 2019).

Similarly, **the share of R&D personnel and researchers in total active population is the lowest in European Union.** Biotechnologies or clean industries are R&D intensive and, in this sector, Romania (0.46%) holds the last position in EU related to the personal working in research and development, with values 3 times lower than peers' countries such as Poland (1.2) and Estonia (1.31) or EU average (1.64%) (Eurostat, 2023).

### **Significant labor and skills shortages in health sector**

According to the Romanian Country Report on 2023, labour and skills shortages and mismatches remain a pressing challenge for employability and health is of the sectors with the most difficulties in filling positions.

## EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

Priority 11  
STEP – Strategic Technologies  
for Europe

Budget: 428.022.050 euro,  
100% ESF+

Overcoming labor and skills shortages essential for quality jobs in strategic technology sectors through the following **types of actions**:

- a) Strengthening adult skills in the STEP sectors with VET and workplace learning
- b) Addressing STEP skills gaps through continuing education and adult learning

The field of training covers **3 major types of training programs** (*young people over 29 years old*): Vocational training at the workplace; Training at higher education level and Adult education

### Impact:

- ✓ promoting access to education and stimulating lifelong learning in the STEP sectors
- ✓ facilitating inclusive and equal participation in quality and sustainable employment for the labor force, both for youth and adult
- ✓ enabling the education and training systems to meet the demands of the labor market in terms of necessary skills

## EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

### Priority 12

Developing the potential of young people through STEP technologies (Youth employment)

Budget: 144.611.114 euro,  
100% ESF+

Overcoming labor and skills shortages essential for quality jobs for young people in strategic technology sectors through the following **types of actions**:

- a) **Strengthening the employability of young people in STEP** - related careers, through VET and workplace learning
- b) **Consolidation of higher education pathways** for young women and disadvantaged youth in the STEP fields

The field of training covers three major types of **training programs for young people (15-29 years old)**: Vocational training at the workplace, Training at higher education level and Adult education.

#### Impact:

- ✓ equip young people with future-oriented skills related to STEP;
- ✓ make young people less vulnerable to changes in employer demands, ensuring they are well-prepared to adapt to and thrive in a dynamic job market.
- ✓ empower youth to remain resilient in the face of future challenges

## EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

### Status of programme modification

- The programme modification was analyzed by the Monitoring Committee and approved through the written procedure in August 2024, before being sent to the Commission.
- Programme submitted to the COM on 29 August, 2024
- Comments received from the COM on 30 September, 2024
- Revised programme Re-submitted to the COM on 2 October, 2024



# STEP & ERDF Synthetic



## JUST TRANSITION

### Priority 8

Support for investments that contribute to the STEP objectives

Budget: 266.327.996 euro; 100% JTF

- Action 8.1 Development of enterprises and entrepreneurship contributing to the objectives of the STEP platform under priorities 1-6
- Action 8.2 Investments for the substantial reduction of ETS emissions contributing to the objectives of the STEP platform

## SMART GROWTH, DIGITALIZATION & FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Priority 4 - Developing strategic technologies for Europe - STEP

Budget: 271.008.136 euro, 100% ERDF

- The National Platform for Semiconductor Technologies
- Romanian Hub of Artificial Intelligence
- Romanian Hub for Hydrogen and new energy technologies - Ro-HydroHub

## HEALTH

Priority 9 - Contribution to the STEP Platform: Supporting biotechnologies, digital and deep technology innovation in health, including associated services

Budget: 351.767.644 euro, 100% ERDF

- Development of biotechnology, including critical medicines and digital technologies in the field of health in particular through applied research, development and productive investments, including related infrastructure
- Research solutions in the sector of biotechnologies and digital technologies and deep tech innovation; applied research in order to ensure the transfer of technology and of commercialization in the field of biotechnology, of digital technology, innovation in the field of deep technologies

## JUST TRANSITION

### Status of programme modification

- Submitted to the COM - 30 August , 2024
- Comments received - 27 September, 2024
- Aditonal information provided - 1 October, 2024

## SMART GROWTH, DIGITALIZATION & FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

### Status of programme modification

- Submitted to the COM - 29 August , 2024
- Comments received - 4 September, 2024
- Aditonal information provided - 17 October, 2024

## HEALTH

### Status of programme modification

- Submitted to the COM - 23 August , 2024
- Comments received - 29 August, 2024
- Re-submitted to the COM - 30 August, 2024
- Comments received - 18 October, 2024
- Aditonal information provided - 22 October, 2024

THANK YOU!

Ministry of European Investments and Projects - Romania

[www.mfe.gov.ro](http://www.mfe.gov.ro)

# Q&A

# Mobilising funds towards STEP under cohesion policy: state of play

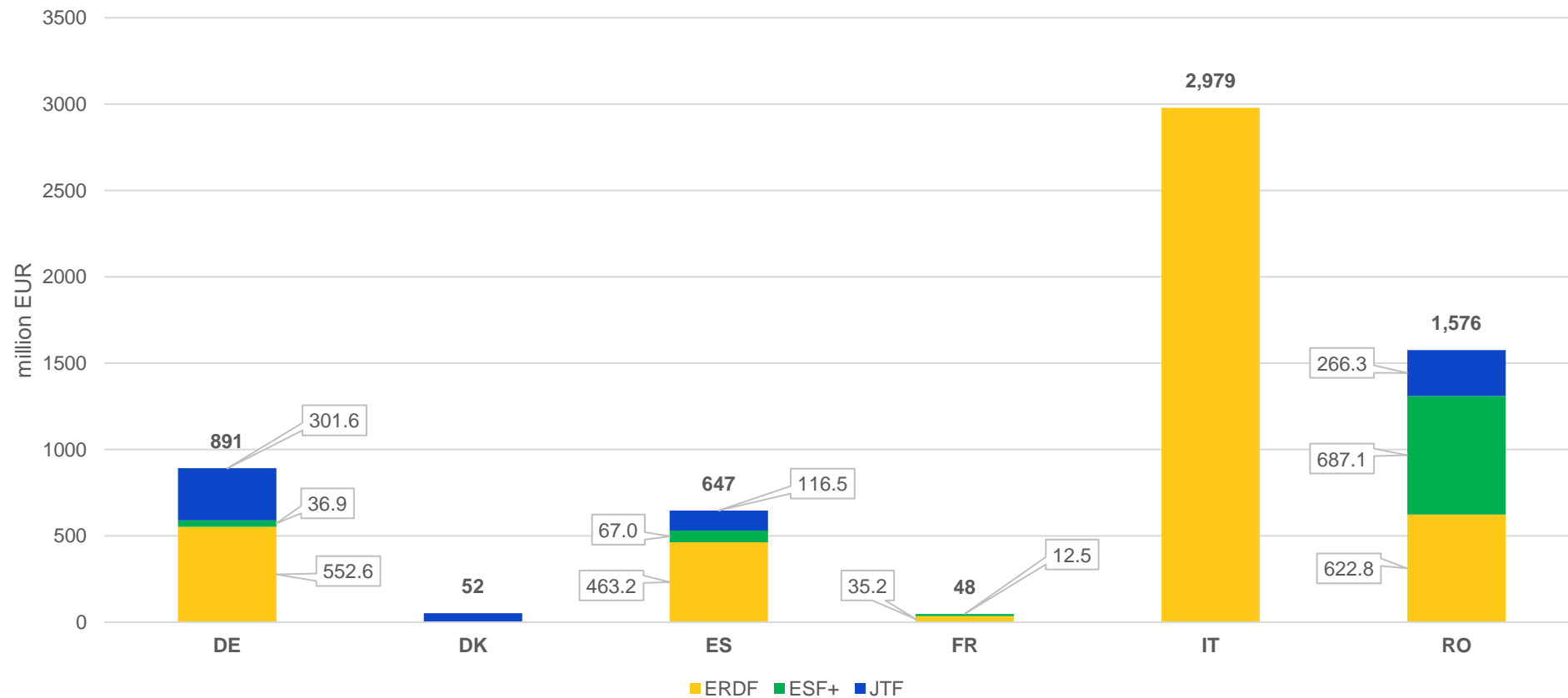
Monika TCHAVDAROVA, DG Regional and Urban Policy

Jader CANE, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

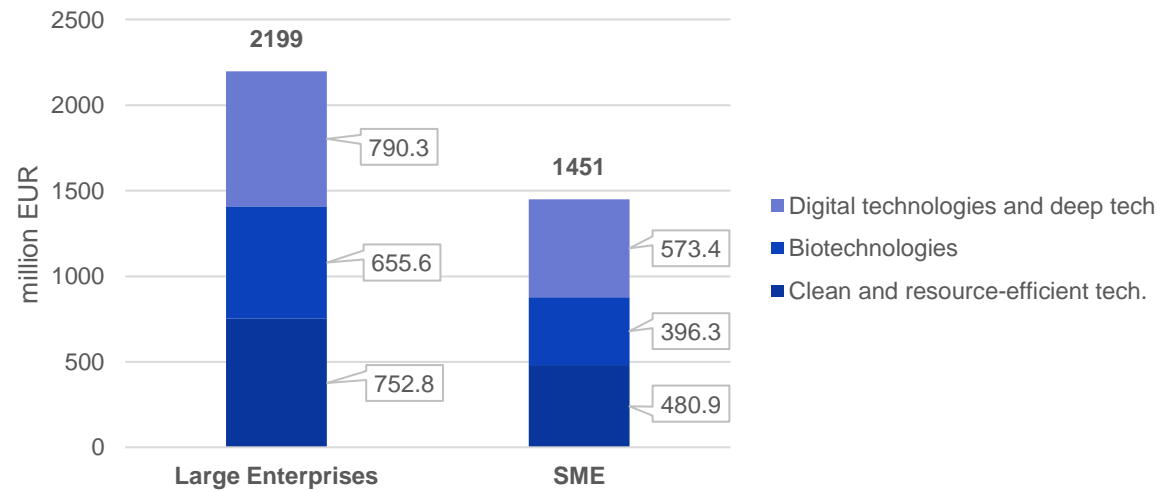
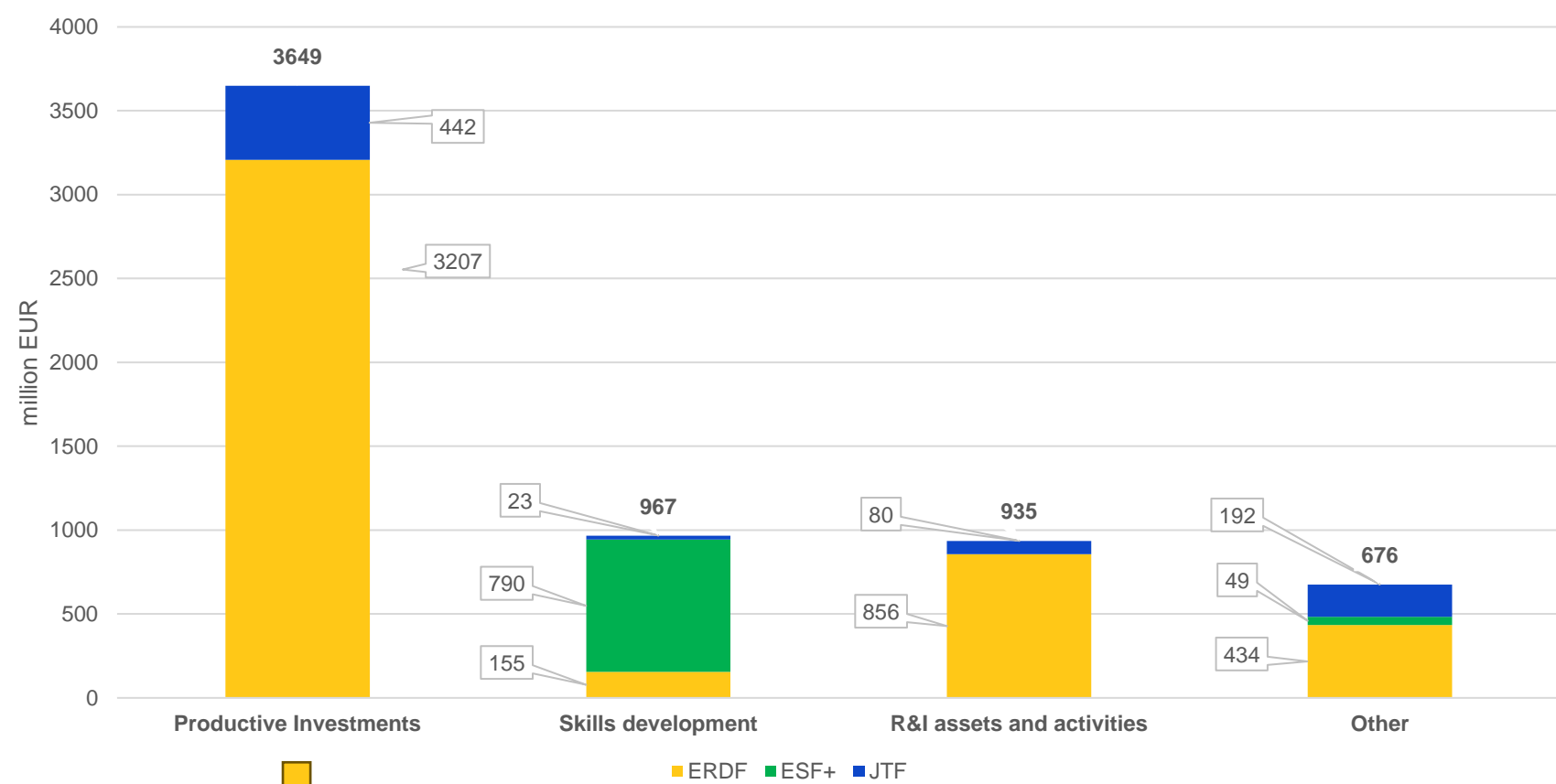


# STEP uptake state of play

- As of 30/10, 33 amendment requests, 20 approved (-> amounts might change somewhat in the upcoming weeks)
- Total amount programmed under STEP priorities: EUR 6.2 bn (4.6 bn ERDF, EUR 0.8 bn ESF+, EUR 0.7 bn JTF)

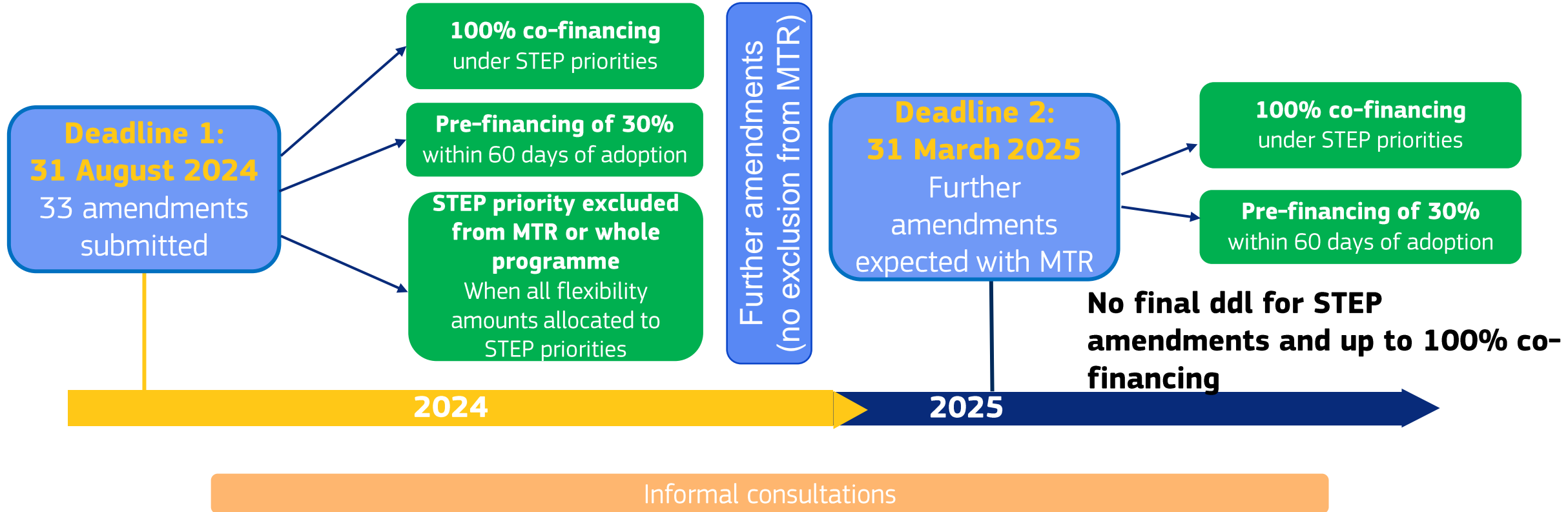


# Split by topic and sector





# STEP programme amendments - timeline





# Reporting – STEP calls and projects

- As of 30/10, the following STEP **calls** were reported:
  - 3 under the DK JTF programme amounting to EUR 340 m
  - 1 under the North Rhine-Westphalia programme amounting to EUR 140 m (in addition, further 5 mixed calls were launched under this programme, which can also lead to STEP-related investments).
- The information on these calls was uploaded on the [STEP Portal](#).
- Next steps – **project** selection
- Obligation for NCP to report STEP projects on the Portal
- Template for project selection reporting shared with the MAs (List of operations toolbox: [Inforegio - How to communicate \(europa.eu\)](#)) to upload on their pages -> we could extract to [Kohesio](#)



# ESF+ reprogramming towards STEP

## Main figures concerning ESF+ related amendments (as of 28/10/2024):

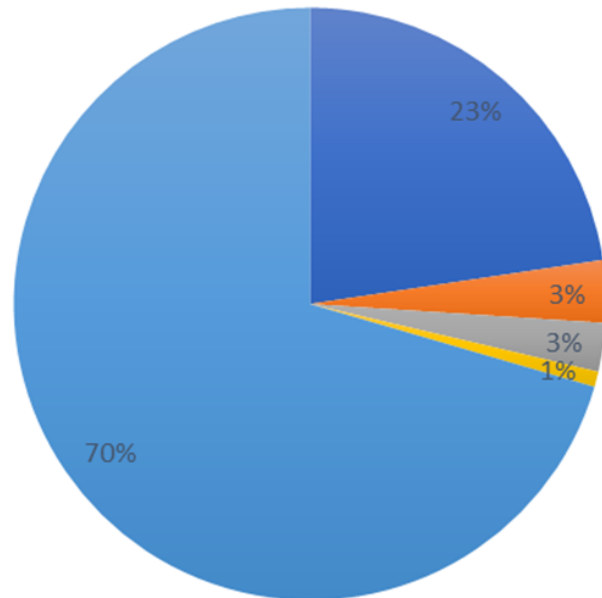
- One fifth of all STEP programme amendments (7 out of a total of 33)
- 5 out of the 7 amendments exclusively concern the ESF+
- In total, EUR 838 million of EU amount (13.5% of all cohesion policy funds)
- One amendment (FR) worth EUR 34.9 million adopted, all the others (1 DE, 2 ES, 1 FR, 2 RO) being processed
- 2 RO amendments, worth EUR 687 million, represent 82% of all the ESF+ amendments



# ESF+ reprogramming towards STEP

## Specific objectives:

% EU amount



- ESO4.1 Access to employment and activation measures
- ESO4.4 Adaptation of workers and enterprises to change
- ESO4.5 Improving education and training systems
- ESO4.6 Quality and inclusive education and training systems
- ESO4.7 Lifelong learning and career transitions

## Intervention fields:

Support for the development of skills or access to employment in digital technologies and deep tech innovation, biotechnologies

Support for the development of skills or access to employment in clean and resource-efficient technologies

# Q&A

# Mobilising funds towards STEP: InvestEU Member State Compartment

15h15-15h45

Short update

STEP Taskforce

DG ECFIN

# STEP

## Mobilising funds towards STEP: RRF incentives



### Prioritization of the STEP Seal

STEP Seal projects as a priority when revising RRFs



### InvestEU Member State Compartment

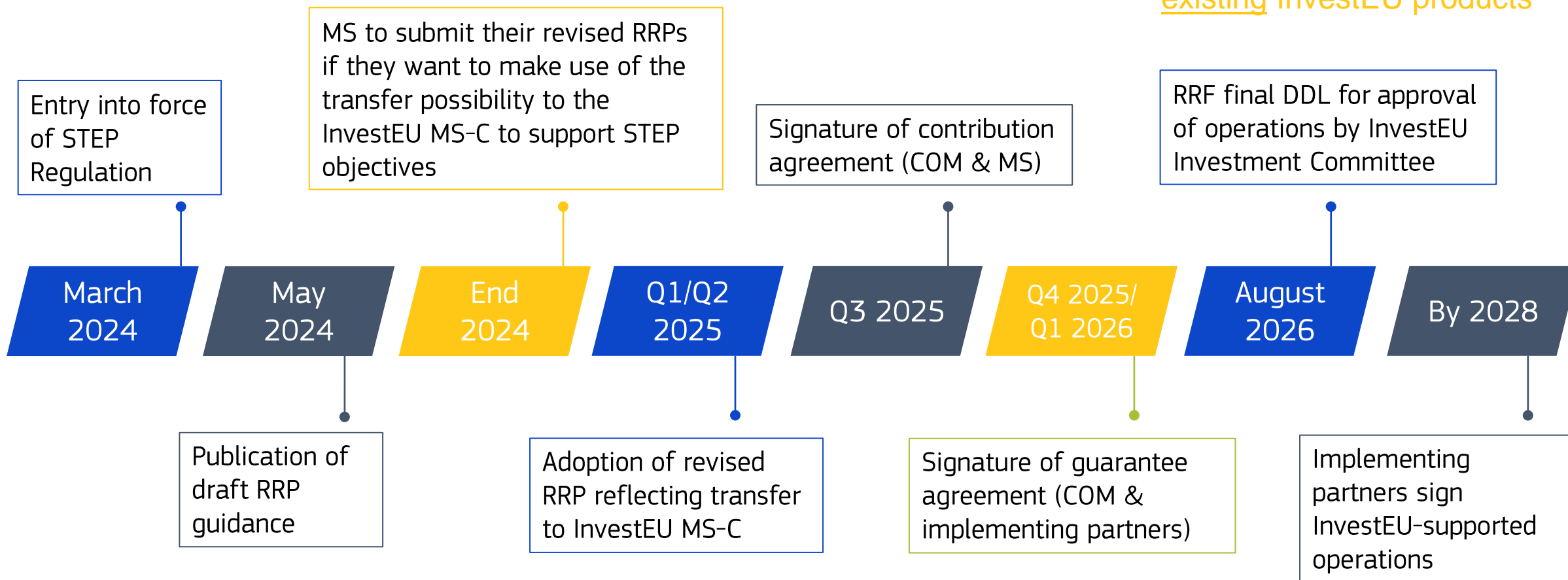
Additional 6% of the RRF allocations to the InvestEU Member State Compartment for STEP (upper limit of 10%)

# STEP

## Mobilising funds towards STEP: RRF timeline



This timeline applies when using existing InvestEU products



# Q&A

# Closing remarks

Christiane Canenbley

Acting Director for Revenues and Multiannual Financial Framework, DG BUDG

Chair of the STEP National Contact Points Network

# Thank you



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



More info on STEP: [strategic-technologies.europa.eu](http://strategic-technologies.europa.eu)

# Annex - Resources

- The STEP [Portal](#);
- The STEP [Guidance](#) on scope;
- The RRF [Guidance](#) amended also for STEP;
- The REGIO [Webinar](#) on STEP
- Contact us at [EC-STEP-PARTNERS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EC-STEP-PARTNERS@ec.europa.eu)