Agenda

1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform
   Nina Hoppmann, *Team Member, European Cluster Collaboration Platform*

2. STEP: Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform
   Davide Lombardo, *Acting Head of the STEP Task Force, DG BUDG, European Commission*

3. Panel debate
   Ben Jorgensen, *Chief Project Manager, CLEAN – The Danish Environmental Cluster*
   Elvis Bajric, *Business Developer, High Tech NL Robotics*
   Mike Richardson, *Senior Project Manager, OpTecBB*
   Stamatiki Kritas, *Business Development Manager, Hellenic Bio Cluster*

4. Funding opportunities
   Nina Hoppmann, *Team Member, European Cluster Collaboration Platform*

Housekeeping rules

Chris Burns, presenter

- We will use **slido** to launch polls. Please scan the QR code to answer.

- Please use the **Zoom Q&A function to ask questions,** and the **chat function** to comment or share links.

- If you want to speak: Please **raise your hand** and we will give you the floor.

- Please note that the session is being **recorded** and that the recording will be **published** on the European Cluster Collaboration Platform.

NEWS FROM THE
EUROPEAN CLUSTER COLLABORATION PLATFORM

United Kingdom joins Horizon Europe programme

As of 1 January 2024, the United Kingdom becomes an **associated country** to Horizon Europe. Its researchers will be able to participate in this research and innovation programme of the EU on the same terms as researchers from other associated countries and will have access to Horizon Europe funding.

Horizon Europe is the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation with a budget of €95.5 billion for 2021-27.
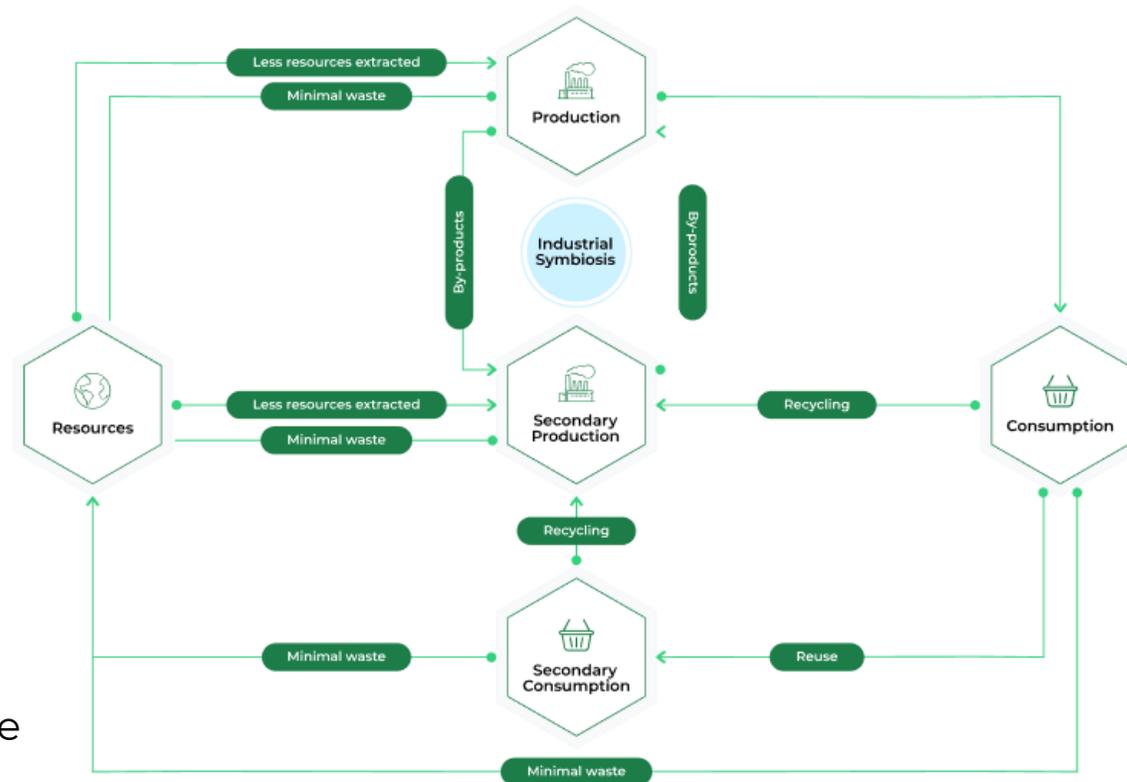
Find out more in the press release.

Green Transition Support: Industrial Symbiosis Toolkit

Green Transition Support is your knowledge hub to support

- energy efficiency
- resource efficiency
- and emission reduction

in European businesses.

One of the services is the **Industrial Symbiosis Toolkit**. Industrial Symbiosis describes a (regional) collaborative action in the industrial sector. Its underlying key concept is that by-products or waste flows of one industry become the raw materials or inputs for another.

Take part in the Cluster Booster Academy

The Cluster Booster Academy is an annual event designed for **35 to 50** participants. This third iteration will maintain a hybrid format, this time spanning five days:

- **3 days of online training sessions: 23-25 January 2024**. In the mornings from 10 AM to 2 PM CET. This virtual component comprises 1 full day and 2 half days with smaller, more interactive sessions.

- **2 days of in-person training sessions: 11-12 March 2024**, hosted at the Automotive Cluster in Sofia, Bulgaria, allowing participants to personally get to know each other, strengthen networking, and enhance collaboration.

If you are a cluster professional looking to enhance your skills, apply until 22 December 2023.

Host a "Clusters meet Regions" event!

The objective of the 'Clusters meet Regions' events is to facilitate the implementation of good practices where clusters play an active role in regional economies and are **drivers for economic transition**, and to create and promote **collaborations between clusters and regional stakeholders** for the industrial development of the regions.

The next **call** to host a 'Cluster meet Regions' event is published! It is open to institutions such as clusters, regional agencies for economic development, and business network groups.

Need inspiration? Come to **Kraków, Poland – 11-12 December 2023;** registration open

Feedback survey and topic submission for EU Clusters Talks

Please share your suggestions!

We are constantly looking for ways to improve our ECCP activities to best suit the needs of our community.

As such, we kindly ask for your **feedback** on the EU Clusters Talks and submit your **topic ideas for 2024**!

https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/EUClustersTalks_November2023
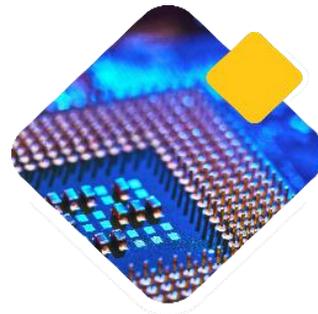
STEP
Introduction

A STRUCTURAL AND TARGETED RESPONSE TO SUPPORT THE EU INDUSTRY:

- **Safeguarding competitiveness:** supporting the green and digital transitions, as well as the resilience of the Union, in view of rising challenges affecting the EU industry
- **International competition**: preserving a European edge on critical and emerging technologies
- **EU budget as catalyst:** leveraging existing instruments to have a faster deployment, increase synergies between EU programmes and reduce burdens for project promoters
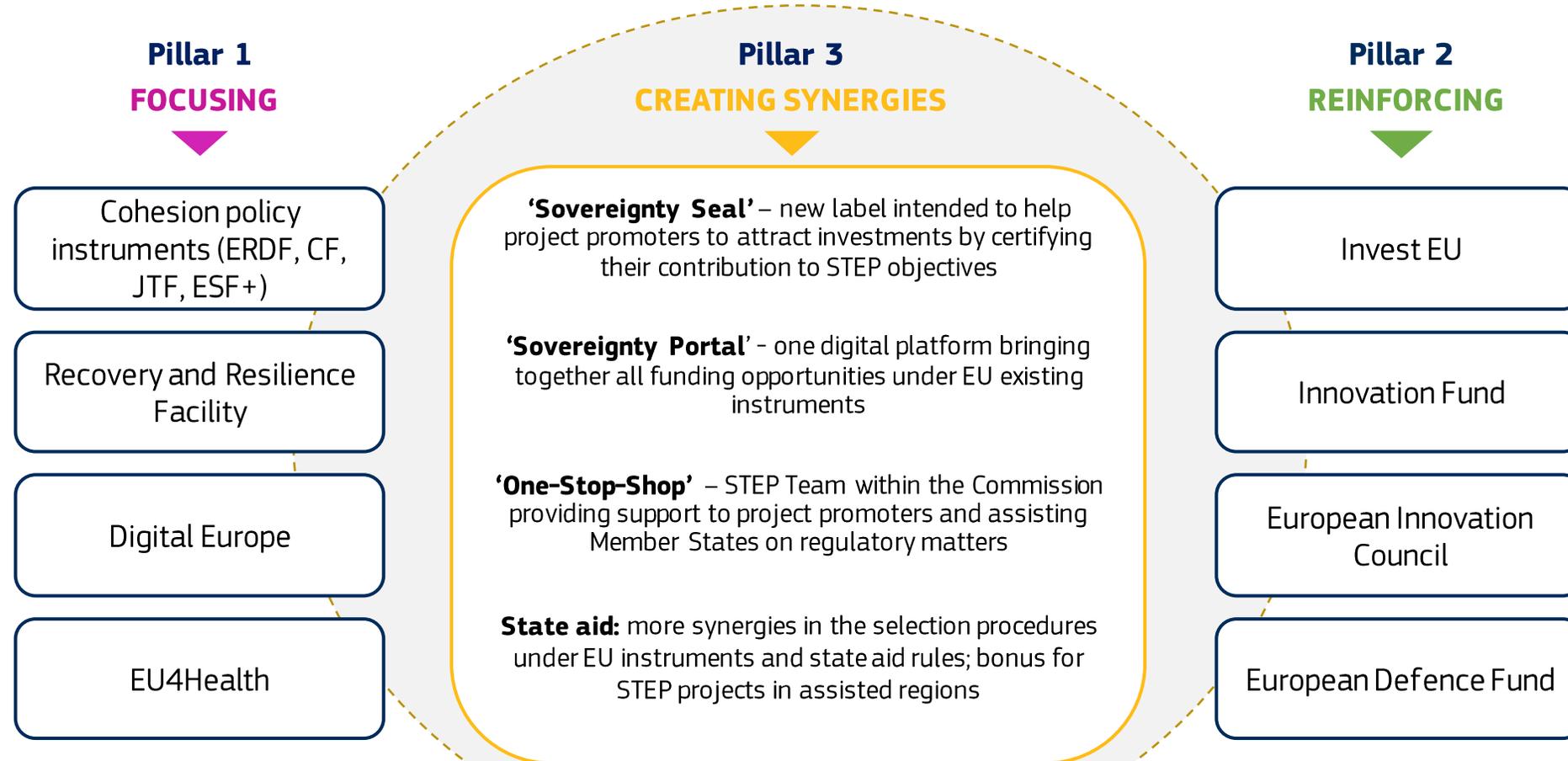
FOCUS ON THREE KEY SECTORS:

- **Deep and digital technologies**
- **Clean technologies**
- **Bio technologies**

STEP
In a nutshell

Pillar 1
FOCUSING ▼

- Cohesion policy instruments (ERDF, CF, JTF, ESF+)
- Recovery and Resilience Facility
- Digital Europe
- EU4Health

Pillar 3
CREATING SYNERGIES ▼

'Sovereignty Seal' – new label intended to help project promoters to attract investments by certifying their contribution to STEP objectives

'Sovereignty Portal' – one digital platform bringing together all funding opportunities under EU existing instruments

'One-Stop-Shop' – STEP Team within the Commission providing support to project promoters and assisting Member States on regulatory matters

State aid: more synergies in the selection procedures under EU instruments and state aid rules; bonus for STEP projects in assisted regions

Pillar 2
REINFORCING ▼

- Invest EU
- Innovation Fund
- European Innovation Council
- European Defence Fund

European Commission

STEP
Pillar 3: creating synergies

Sovereignty Seal (Article 4)
- Awarded under directly managed programs (Horizon Europe, Innovation Fund, Digital Europe, EU4Health and European Defence Fund) to STEP projects.
- Aimed at enabling easier funding under other EU programmes, and helping projects attract public and private investments by certifying its contribution to the European sovereignty and therefore facilitating cumulative or combined funding from several Union instruments.

Sovereignty Portal (Article 6)
- Centralising information about all EU funding opportunities for STEP projects (direct, shared or indirectly managed programmes), and giving visibility to projects awarded a Sovereignty Seal.

One-Stop-Shop within the Commission
- New team within the Commission: providing advise to project promoters better seeking access to EU funding, assisting Member States and implementing partners on regulatory matters, and coordinating all instruments implementing STEP.

European Commission

Thank you

USEFUL LINKS

◆ STEP

◆ EU budget today

◆ EU programmes

◆ EU budget

European Commission

Panel debate

Ben Jorgensen, Chief Project Manager, CLEAN – The Danish Environmental Cluster

Elvis Bajric, Business Developer, High Tech NL Robotics

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Stamatiki Kritas, Business Development Manager, Hellenic Bio Cluster

Innovation Fund 2023 Net Zero Technologies – General decarbonisation – Small-Scale Project

- The following activities can be funded under this topic:
  - activities supporting **innovation in low-carbon technologies and processes**, including environmentally safe carbon capture and utilisation (CCU) that contributes substantially to mitigating climate change
  - activities helping **stimulate the construction and operation of projects** that aim at the environmentally safe capture and geological storage of CO_2 (CCS)
  - activities helping **the construction and operation of innovative renewable energy and energy storage technologies**
- Only projects with a total capital expenditure above EUR 2 500 000 and up to EUR 20 000 000 are eligible under this topic.
- Deadline: 9 April 2024
- InnovFund-LS INNOVFUND Lump Sum Grant
  Topic ID: INNOVFUND-2023-NZT-GENERAL-SSP
- Published on [Funding & Tenders Portal](#)

Bio-intelligent manufacturing industries (Made in Europe Partnership)

- European manufacturing industries are reinforced through **biological transformation**; in particular
  - **Access** to bio-intelligent production technologies and architecture;
  - Technological advances and improvements in sustainability arising from the **integration** of bio-intelligent principles, functions, structures and technologies in manufacturing;
  - **Substitution** of raw materials by bio-based materials, or implementation of bio-based or bio-intelligent manufacturing operations, and business models leading to regenerative production.
- Proposals need to demonstrate the **development of digital and green technologies** that facilitate the upscaled manufacturing of bio-based or bio-intelligent products in one manufacturing value chain.
- Proposals submitted under this topic should include a **business case and exploitation strategy**.
- Deadlines: 7 February 2024; 24 September 2024
- HORIZON-RIA HORIZON Research and Innovation Action
  Topic ID: HORIZON-CL4-2024-TWIN-TRANSITION-01-01
- Published on Funding & Tenders Portal

Industrial leadership in AI, Data and Robotics boosting competitiveness and the green transition

- Projects are expected to contribute to one of the two following outcomes, exclusively:

  - The creation of systems to address large scale challenges using **combined robotics data and AI solutions** that have significant impact on the objectives of the green deal.

  - The creation of systems to address large scale **resource optimisation** challenges using combined AI and Data solutions, that have significant impact on the objectives of the green deal, such as optimisation of any kind of resources, from production to use along the complete value chain in order to minimise waste or foster the reuse of resources or in using AI and data solutions to maximize energy efficiency, ensuring energy security.

- Deadline: 19 March 2024

- HORIZON-IA HORIZON Innovation Action
  Topic ID: HORIZON-CL4-2024-DIGITAL-EMERGING-01-04

- Published on [Funding & Tenders Portal](#)

Opportunities for SMEs: Calls from Euroclusters

- <u>AIBC:</u> Open Call for **digitalisation services and product development** targeted at European SMEs from the **manufacturing, mobility, logistics and energy sectors**, working on the AI & BC technologies and/or interested in adopting AI & BC solutions; deadline 16 January 2024

- <u>B-Resilient:</u> Acceleration lump sums targets **food processing and producing** SMEs intending to optimise their use of biomass via digital and sustainable tool solutions; deadline 1 February 2024

- <u>CircInWater:</u> Knowledge lump sum is willing to boost SMEs' development or growth by facilitating **access to external training or consultancy services**; meant for an individual SME that is offering **water-smart solutions**, especially for the agrifood & energy-intensive industries; deadline 2 October 2024

- <u>E-Boost:</u> Five calls to identify product innovations to reduce dependency on critical inputs and technologies in the E- BOOST value chains, to introduce new-to-firm products or services, and to engage actors from regions with different levels of economic development; targets are SMEs from the **mobility** ecosystem

- <u>ELBE:</u> Financial support for **training** on "Sustainability & Digitalization", "Sustainable Business, with focus on general ESG issues, UN Sustainability goals and a materiality analysis", "Factlines Platform for ESG reporting"; deadline 31 December 2023

- <u>EU Rural Tourism</u>: 2nd open call for **rural tourism SMEs** to improve their digital, green and social maturity, skills, and capacities; deadline 16 January 2024

- <u>FRIEND CCI:</u> 2nd Open Call for project proposals dedicated to SMEs to reinforce **innovation and internationalisation i**n Cultural and Creative Industries; deadline 14 January 2024

- <u>FRIEND CCI:</u> Call for **providers** offering solutions in **digitalisation, greening, and internationalisation** to collaborate with **Creative and Cultural** SMEs for the realization of funded projects; deadline 1 August 2025

- <u>GEMSTONE:</u> Financial support for **training** related to **Green Manufacturing**; deadline 31 December 2024

Opportunities for SMEs: Calls from Euroclusters

- INGENIOUS: **Internationalisation** grant for SMEs operating in **energy-intensive industries** to develop activities related to Africa, Asia, North America and Latin America; deadline 30 September 2024

- INGENIOUS: **Training** grants to help SMEs improve their digital skills, green transition, resilience preparedness and reskilling and upskilling of the workforce; deadline 14 February 2025

- METASTARS: Call for **innovation services** for green technology development, digitalisation, upskilling and reskilling, internationalisation, and information security systems for SMEs from the **aeronautics, space, defence and ICT sectors**; deadline 31 December 2023

- PIMAP4Sustainability: Support for u**pskilling and reskilling** projects for photonics, advanced materials, advanced manufacturing, aerospace, metalworking and industrial production SMEs; deadline 31 December 2023, 29 February 2024, 30 April 2024

- RESIST: 2nd **Innovation** Open Call for improved technologies and processes in production in the **Automotive – Mobility – Transport** ecosystem; deadline 12 December 2024

- RESIST: **Networking and marketing** FSTP for SMEs from the **Automotive – Mobility – Transport** ecosystem; deadline 20 December 2024

- RESIST: **Internationalisation** FSTP for activities in target markets; deadline 20 December 2024

- RESIST: **Coaching and mentoring** for assessment and feasibility services; deadline 1 November 2024

- SILEO: Open Call for **Talent Placement Projects** aimed to support lighting and furniture SMEs to attract professionals and young graduates; 30 January 2024

- **All calls here:** **https://clustercollaboration.eu/open-calls**

Register for the next Talks

13 December
EU Clusters Talks Special: Recap on key policies and takeaways

We will be back on **10 January 2024!**

Visit the ECCP website and follow us on social media

www.clustercollaboration.eu

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European Cluster Collaboration Platform

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EUCLUSTERS TALKS ★