

DRIVING GROWTH 

**New RIF Funding Scheme:
«STEP: Setting up facilities and
production lines for manufacturing
new innovative products/services»**



ΙΔΡΥΜΑ
ΕΡΕΥΝΑΣ ΚΑΙ
ΚΑΙΝΟΤΟΜΙΑΣ

► Objective

To finance local companies interested in **developing critical technologies and setting up facilities and production lines for manufacturing new innovative products in digital and deep technology innovation, clean and resource efficient technologies and biotechnologies**, in line with the STEP Regulation.

Link to STEP Regulation https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202400795

Link to EC STEP Guidance Note https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C_202403209

► Basic Principles of STEP Regulation

The technologies shall be deemed **critical** where they meet either of the following conditions:

- (a) they bring to the internal market (EU) an innovative, emerging and cutting-edge element with significant economic potential;
- (b) they contribute to reducing or preventing strategic dependencies of the Union.

The STEP Regulation highlights the vital importance of **strengthening the entire value chain associated with the development or manufacturing of critical technologies** to reduce the Union's strategic dependencies and preserving the integrity of the internal market. The term '**value chain**' relates to: final products; specific components and specific machinery primarily used to produce the final products; critical raw materials; associated services critical for and specific to the development or manufacturing of those final products; and technologies that fall under the scope of the Net-Zero Industry Act (NZIA).

► Basic Principles of STEP Regulation

Development refers to activities aimed at:

- achieving technological breakthroughs,
- perfecting the technology for market needs, including enhancing its efficiency, reliability, and

Manufacturing includes:

- setting up production lines,
- first-of-a-kind-facilities,
- the extension or repurposing of existing facilities,
- scaling up processes to meet demand, and/or
- implementing quality control mechanisms to ensure the consistent production of high-quality products.

STEP does not include the installation and deployment of the final products, but it does cover associated services that are critical and specific to the development and manufacturing of these products within the STEP sectors.

Beneficiaries

- ❑ The Host Organisation (HO) must be a **Small, Medium or Large Enterprise** (B1, B2, B3).
- ❑ Research Organisations, Enterprises and Other Private Sector Organisations may participate as Partner Organisations. **Partner Organisations may support the Host Organisation in achieving the technological objectives of the project.**
- ❑ In case the Host Organisation is a Large Enterprise and Article 29 applies, the project must involve small and medium-sized enterprise(s) (SMEs) with at least 30% of the total eligible costs.
- ❑ **Partners cannot participate in Manufacturing Activities under any other circumstances.**

► Main Programme Provisions

- ❑ Proposal Submission Limit: Each enterprise can only submit one proposal as Host Organisation.
- ❑ Project Coordinator: The Project Coordinator must be employed by the Host Organisation at the time of proposal submission.
- ❑ The facilities and production lines must be set-up in territories under the control of the Republic of Cyprus.
- ❑ The Programme does not fund expenses for buildings and land.
- ❑ The requested funding for Development Activities must not exceed 10% of the total budget of the proposed project or €200,000, whichever amount is lower.

► Main Programme Provisions

- ❑ In the case funding is included for development activities, these activities must be exclusively related to the development of the product/service to be produced.
- ❑ Entities are required to clearly specify the portion of the proposed activities that pertain to the development of the product/service to ensure it is ready for production, and to define related milestones and deliverables.
- ❑ Further development of the product/service is allowed after production begins, but must be explicitly stated in the proposal. Upon reaching the **'ready for production' milestone**, the RIF will conduct an evaluation of the deliverable by external experts to ensure that the product/service meets the agreed-upon specifications.

► Main Programme Provisions

- ❑ The purchase orders for the machinery and equipment necessary for the set-up of the facility /production line must be placed not later than 12 months from the project start date.
- ❑ The proposed facility/production line must be fully operational by the end of the project.
- ❑ The budget allocation between development activities and the creation of facilities and production lines must be determined at the proposal submission stage, and no adjustments to this allocation will be permitted at a later stage.
- ❑ The production line established within the framework of the project must be maintained for at least 5 years.

► Main Programme Provisions

- ❑ At least one representative from the Host Organisation involved in the project team must, prior to the signing of the Project Contract, attend two mandatory training seminars organized by the RIF.
- ❑ The Contract Preparation process includes, among others:
 - (a) a 'due diligence' process, during which all information submitted in the proposal will be reviewed and verified, and additional information may be requested if deemed necessary, and
 - (b) a meeting to be held at the premises of the Host Organisation.

► General Call Information

- ❑ Call Announcement: June 2025
- ❑ Proposal Submission Deadline: 5 September 2025
- ❑ Programme Budget: € 10.000.000
- ❑ Budget Distribution:
 - *Digital and deep technology innovation 33.3%*
 - *Clean and resource efficient technologies 33.3%*
 - *Biotechnologies 33.3%*
- ❑ Maximum Funding per Project: € 2.000.000
- ❑ Project Duration: 24-36 Months
- ❑ Project Start Date: 2/1/2026 at the latest

► Relevant State Aid Articles

For Manufacturing of Critical Technologies :

- *Article 22 Aid for start-ups*
- *Article 29 Aid for process and organisational innovation*
- *Article 14 Regional investment aid*
- *Article 17 Investment aid to SMEs*
- *Article 31 Training aid*
- *De Minimis*

For Development of Critical Technologies:

- *Article 25 Aid for research and development projects*
- *Article 28 Innovation aid for SMEs*

Link to State Aid Regulation: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/651/oj/eng>

Link to General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER): <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/general-block-exemption-regulation.html>

Are you a start-up?

- Start-ups are allowed to use Article 22 [start-up aid] with maximum amount of aid [grant]: EUR 750,000 per start-up if they are located in RAM “c” area [1] or 0.5M for other areas, provided that the start-up has not already secured other grants up to the permitted amount.

Are you an SME?

- If located within RAM “c” area and planning for an initial investment or an initial investment in favour of a new economic activity, then Article 14 GBER [regional investment aid] can be applied. The maximum aid intensity can reach 35% for small enterprises and 25% for medium-sized enterprises.
- If located outside RAM “c” area, then Article 17 GBER [SME investment aid] can be applied. The maximum aid intensity can reach 20% for small enterprises and 10% for medium-sized enterprises.
- Alternatively, if the SME is planning for process and organisational innovation then Article 29 [process and organisational innovation aid] can be applied. The maximum aid intensity is 50% for all SMEs.

Are you a large enterprise?

If located within RAM “c” area and planning for an initial investment in favour of a new economic activity, then Article 14 GBER [regional investment aid] can be applied. The maximum aid intensity is 15% of capital expenditure for large enterprises.

If the **large enterprise** is planning for process and organisational innovation AND is effectively collaborating with SMEs for the purposes of the aided activity and, given that the collaborating SMEs incur at least 30 % of the total eligible costs, then Article 29 [process and organisational innovation aid] can be applied. The maximum aid intensity for the large enterprise is 15% (depreciation cost).

Additionally, all types of enterprises can make use of the following:

Article 31 [Training Aid]: Maximum aid intensity: 50% of the cost of training that is necessary for the operation of new equipment or machinery for large enterprises, 60% for medium enterprises and 70% for small enterprises.

De minimis Regulation: Up to EUR 300,000 per undertaking per three-year period may be granted to enterprises of all sizes, provided it complies with the conditions in Regulation 2023/2831.

For development activities the following provisions may be used:

Article 25 [Aid for research and development projects] Aid to support R&D activities up to TRL8 which is equivalent to experimental development. Maximum aid intensity: 25% for large enterprises, 35% for medium enterprises and 45% for small enterprises. Under certain conditions 15% additional aid intensity can be added.

Article 28 [Innovation aid for SMEs] Aid to support the cost of innovation advisory and support services obtained by SMEs. Maximum aid intensity: 50% for medium enterprises and 50% for small enterprises.

Maximum Aid Intensity *(Funding Percentage on Eligible Expenses)*

	Eligible Expenses	Funding Aid intensity		
		Large Enterprises	Medium Enterprises	Small Enterprises
Article 14: Regional investment aid Supports initial investment, expansion of initial investment & diversification into a new product line (only for RAM “c” areas – see next slide)	Personnel Costs (new working positions for 2 years) , Investment costs (capital expenditure)	15% limited only to initial investment and diversification into new products.	25%	35%
Article 17: Investment aid for SMEs	Personnel Costs (new working positions for 2 years), Investment costs (capital expenditure)	--	10%	20%
Article 22: Aid for start-ups (Up to €0.5M in all areas or €0.75M in RAM “c” areas – see next slide)	Personnel costs, Investment costs (capital expenditure)	--	--	85%
Article 29: Supports the cost of process & organisational innovation	Personnel costs, costs of instruments, equipment (depreciation), additional overheads and other operating costs, including costs of materials, supplies and similar products, incurred directly as a result of the project.	15% possible only if they collaborate with SMEs that incur at least 30 % of the total eligible costs.	50%	50%
Article 31: Training costs	Personnel Cost of trainees, Costs for Travelling Abroad, Costs for External Services	50%	60%	70%
De Minimis	Personnel Cost (for activities related to production, communication, investment attraction and market penetration activities), Costs for Instruments and Equipment, including industrial production equipment (full cost), Costs for External Services, Costs for Travelling Abroad (for promotional/marketing purposes and/or for investment attraction), Other specific costs (real costs for promotional/marketing activities)			
Article 25: Aid for research and development projects Under certain conditions 15% additional aid intensity can be added.	Personnel Cost, Costs for Instruments and Equipment (depreciation), Costs for External Services, Costs for Travelling Abroad, Consumables, Other specific costs, Overheads.	25%	35%	45%
Article 28: Supports the cost of innovation advisory & support services obtained by SMEs	Costs for External Services	--	50%	50%

► Definitions

RAM “c” area

Currently, the Regional Aid Map [RAM] of Cyprus allows investment aid only at a maximum rate of 15%. Given that Cyprus is a “c” area [but please note that the RAM does not cover the whole of the territory of Cyprus controlled by the Republic], The RAM of Cyprus has been approved by Commission decision SA.100726 can be accessed at:

https://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/cases1/202211/SA_100726_40001D7F-0000-CC6A-8D0F-648D8E3158F3_49_1.pdf The eligible areas for regional investment are listed in the annex of the Commission decision.

► Proposal Sections

Part A – General Information (electronic form (fields) to be completed online through the IRIS Portal).

Part B – **Technical Annex & Budget** (document to be uploaded as an Annex on the IRIS Portal in PDF format).

The templates provided for this Call must be submitted without any alterations. The Part B templates for this Call can be found on the IRIS Portal, under the relevant Call for Proposals (Call Documents).

STEP
STEP/0625

Short Description / Σύντομη Περιγραφή

The objective of STEP: Setting up facilities and production lines for manufacturing new innovative products/services is to support enterprises in Cyprus for the development of critical technologies and setting up of facilities and production lines for manufacturing new innovative products and services, in line with the EC's Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP) Regulation.

Announcement Date:
13/06/2025

Deadline:
05/07/2025

Call Documents:

[Call for Proposals \(EL\)](#)

[Call for Proposals \(EN\)](#)

[Part B – Technical Annex](#)

[Part B – Technical Annex](#)

[Guide for Evaluators](#)

[Other Documents](#)

[Other Documents](#)

**FAQ Document
will be
published soon**



STEP

ΠΡΟΚΗΡΥΞΗ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΟΣ

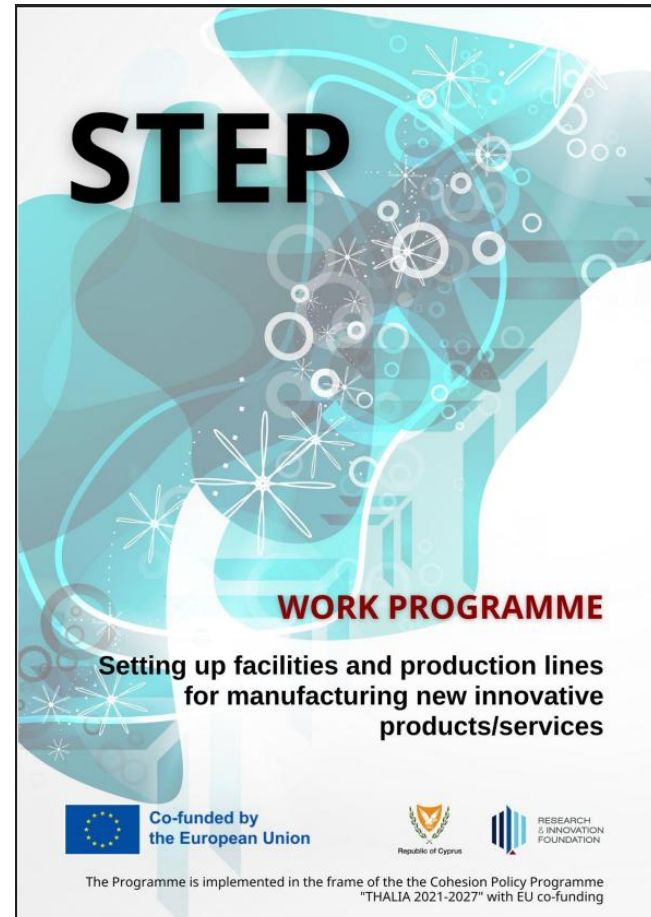
Δημιουργία εγκαταστάσεων και γραμμών παραγωγής για την παραγωγή νέων καινοτόμων προϊόντων/υπηρεσιών


 Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



 ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΕΡΕΥΝΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΙΝΟΤΟΜΙΑΣ


Το Πρόγραμμα υλοποιείται στο πλαίσιο του Προγράμματος Πολιτικής Συνοχής "ΘΑΛΕΙΑ 2021-2027" με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της ΕΕ





STEP

WORK PROGRAMME

Setting up facilities and production lines for manufacturing new innovative products/services


 Co-funded by the European Union



 RESEARCH & INNOVATION FOUNDATION

The Programme is implemented in the frame of the the Cohesion Policy Programme "THALIA 2021-2027" with EU co-funding

STEP - GUIDE FOR EVALUATORS



RESEARCH & INNOVATION FOUNDATION

THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FOUNDATION

«STEP: Setting up facilities and production lines for manufacturing new innovative products/services»

PROGRAMME

GUIDE FOR EVALUATORS

PROPOSAL DETAILS	
PROGRAMME	STEP
CALL IDENTIFIER	STEP/0625


 Co-funded by the European Union


 Republic of Cyprus


 RESEARCH & INNOVATION FOUNDATION

**REGULATION (EU) 2024/795 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL
of 29 February 2024**

**establishing the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP), and amending
Directive 2003/87/EC and Regulations (EU) 2021/1058, (EU) 2021/1056, (EU) 2021/1057, (EU)
No 1303/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) 2021/1060, (EU) 2021/523, (EU) 2021/695, (EU) 2021/697
and (EU) 2021/241**

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 164 and 173, Article 175, third paragraph, Articles 176, 177 and 178, Article 182(1) and Article 192(1) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national parliaments,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee ⁽¹⁾,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions ⁽²⁾,

Acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure ⁽³⁾,

Whereas:

- (1) Strengthening the competitiveness and resilience of the European economy through the green and digital transformations has been the Union's compass over recent years. The green and digital transitions, anchored in the European Green Deal, set out in the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 entitled 'The European Green Deal', and the Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030 established by Decision (EU) 2022/2481 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽⁴⁾, spur growth and the modernisation of the Union's economy, opening up new business opportunities and helping the Union to gain a competitive advantage on the global markets. The European Green Deal sets out the roadmap for making the Union's economy climate-neutral and sustainable in a fair and inclusive manner, tackling climate- and environmental-related challenges. The Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030 sets out a clear direction for the digital transformation of the Union and for the delivery of digital targets at Union level by 2030, in particular concerning digital skills, digital infrastructures, and the digital transformation of businesses and public services.
- (2) The Union's industry has proven its inbuilt resilience but its competitiveness must also be ensured in the future. High inflation, labour shortages, post-COVID supply chain disruptions, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, rising interest rates, and increases in energy costs and input prices are weighing on the competitiveness of the Union's industry and have highlighted the importance for the Union to secure its open strategic autonomy and reduce its strategic dependencies on third countries in various sectors. These pressures on the Union's industry are paired with

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION

Guidance Note concerning certain provisions of Regulation (EU) 2024/795 establishing the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP)

The purpose of this non-binding Guidance Note issued by the European Commission is to offer practical guidance on certain provisions of the STEP Regulation, to facilitate its implementation. While the Guidance Note occasionally paraphrases the provisions of Union legislation, it is not meant to add to or diminish the rights and obligations set out in the STEP Regulation. To assess the eligibility of projects to a specific funding opportunity pursuant to the STEP Regulation, project promoters are invited to refer to the relevant programme's rules (e.g., as defined in the respective basic acts, annual work programmes, calls, and topic descriptions). Those rules continue to apply since STEP is not a new funding instrument but works through existing Union programmes. The Commission may revise or expand this Guidance Note, including in light of the interim evaluation report to be submitted to the European Parliament and the Council by 31 December 2025. This guidance is without prejudice to State aid rules¹.

Introduction

On 1 March 2024, the Regulation (EU) 2024/795 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 February 2024, establishing the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP)² (hereinafter the "STEP Regulation") entered into force. The aim of STEP is to support the development and manufacturing of critical technologies in three sectors (e.g., digital and deep technology innovation, clean and resource efficient technologies, and biotechnologies) relevant to the green and digital transitions. STEP will also support investments aimed at strengthening industrial development and reinforcing value chains, thereby reducing the Union's strategic dependencies, strengthening Union sovereignty and economic security, and addressing labour and skills shortages in those strategic sectors. This will enhance the long-term competitiveness of the Union and strengthen its resilience.

Eleven Union programmes and funds are relevant to the implementation of STEP: the Digital Europe Programme, the European Defence Fund, EU4Health, Horizon Europe, the Innovation Fund, InvestEU, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, as well as the Cohesion Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), and the Just Transition Fund.

The Guidance Note is structured as follows:

- Section 1 focuses on the two main objectives underlying the STEP Regulation in line with Article 2(1) of the STEP Regulation.
- Section 2 clarifies the three technological areas supported by STEP, providing examples of the technological sectors falling within the scope of STEP in line with Article 2(1)(a) of the STEP Regulation.

STEP PROGRAMME – PART B TEMPLATE

STEP: Setting up facilities and production lines for manufacturing new innovative products/services

PROPOSAL DETAILS

PROGRAMME	STEP: Setting up facilities and production lines for manufacturing new innovative products/services
RPF PROPOSAL NUMBER	STEP/0525/
PROPOSAL TITLE	
PROPOSAL ACRONYM	



STEP PROGRAMME – PART B TEMPLATE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROPOSAL PREPARATION

This page does not count towards the page limit.

- Participants must use the current template for the preparation of Part B – Technical Annex, for the respective Call for Proposals. The structure of this template must be followed when preparing your proposal. It has been designed to ensure that the important aspects of your planned work are presented in a way that will enable the experts to make an effective assessment against the evaluation criteria.
- Please do not make any changes to the format/layout of this document as this will render your application ineligible.
- The Cover Page, the Instructions, section headings and tables in this Part B template must NOT be removed. Only guidelines in **blue colour** may be removed.
- Page Limit: A page limit of 25 pages will be applied. Any excess pages will be disregarded by evaluators.

The Cover Page, the Instructions Page and the Checklist Table do not count towards the page limit. The tables, figures, references and any other element pertaining to this template must be included as an integral part of it and are thus counted against this page limit. The recommendations in each section of this template is only indicative.

- Text format recommendations:
 - Recommended font types are Arial (used in this template), Calibri or choice of any other font type should ensure that the text is clear and legible.
 - The recommended minimum font size is 11 points, with standard line spacing.
- To facilitate the successful submission of proposals, please duly comply with the following instructions:
- Any hyperlinks that direct to information beyond what is provided in the template should be removed. The evaluators for the evaluation of the proposal.

IMPORTANT NOTE

- Early submission of proposals is recommended to avoid any last-minute delays/inconvenience before the deadline. Please note that on the day of the deadline, the submission of proposals will be accepted until 12:00 PM. The last valid submission will be the one received at 12:00 PM. The IRIS Call will be automatically closed at 12:00 PM. Proposals received after 12:00 PM will NOT be accepted. RIF's Partner Support Center can assist you in submitting your proposal, you must contact the support@research.org.cy or by phone at 22205000 in good time if you encounter problems with the submission of your proposal. For more information, so that RIF can provide you with the necessary assistance, please contact the support@research.org.cy or by phone at 22205000 in good time before the deadline. The Host Organization and the Proposer must submit the proposal before the deadline, and for ensuring that all required documents are submitted as described in the Call.

CALCULATION OF BUDGET (ACCORDING TO PARTICIPANT CATEGORY, TYPE OF ACTIVITIES AND OTHER SPECIAL PROVISIONS)

MANUFACTURING COSTS									
Participant Category	Personnel Costs for Manufacturing	Equipment Costs for Manufacturing	Other Expenses	External Services for Other Activities	Travel Costs for Other Activities	Manufacturing Budget	% Aid Intensity	Maximum Requested Funding	Requested Funding
HO									
Participant Category	-Select Category-								
ARTICLE 14			N/A	N/A	N/A	0	50%	50%	
ARTICLE 17			N/A	N/A	N/A	0	50%	50%	
ARTICLE 29				N/A	N/A	0	50%	50%	
ARTICLE 22 (Up to 10.5M or 10.75M in RAM "c" or less)			N/A	N/A	N/A	0	50%	50%	
DE MINIMIS AID (Up to 1300,000)				N/A	N/A	0	50%	50%	
ARTICLE 31- TRAINING ACTIVITIES	N/A	N/A	N/A			0	50%	50%	
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0		50%	0.00
PA1 for Manufacturing Activities									
Participant Category	-Select Category-								
ARTICLE 29				N/A	N/A	0	50%	50%	
PA2 for Manufacturing Activities									
Participant Category	-Select Category-								
ARTICLE 29				N/A	N/A	0	50%	50%	

PART B – TECHNICAL ANNEX [Page limit count starts here]

General Information

STEP Sector: Please select one of the following

- ☐ Digital technologies and deep-tech innovation
- ☐ Clean and resource-efficient technologies
- ☐ Biotechnologies

Total Funding Requested:

Type of Activity	Requested Funding (€)
Development Activities	
Manufacturing Activities	
Training Activities	

State Aid Article to be Used for Manufacturing Activities: (Indicate which State Aid Article applies for the manufacturing activities and ensure it aligns with the proposed activities):

Declaration Please select one of the following pertaining to Development Activities.

- A. ☐ I declare that no development activities are foreseen or included in this proposal, as the product is already ready for manufacturing
- B. ☐ I declare that Development activities are foreseen and included in this proposal, as the product is not yet ready for manufacturing.

Section 1. Compatibility with STEP Regulation and Objectives

1.1 Project Objectives and Host Organization Mission

Describe your mission and vision and how it is relevant to the STEP Objectives.

1.2 Description of the Proposed Product / Service

Describe the proposed product/service to be manufactured and explain the degree of innovation compared to existing solutions. Describe how the proposed technology introduces innovative, emerging, or cutting-edge elements. Describe how your product/service falls into the 'value chain' which relates to final products; specific components and specific machinery primarily used to produce the final products; critical raw materials, associated services critical for and specific to the development or manufacturing of those final products and technologies that fall under the scope of the Net-Zero Industry Act (NZIA).

1.3 Intellectual Property Strategy

Provide the current IP status and outline the strategy for IP management, protection, and ensuring "freedom to operate".

1.4 Technology Criticality

Describe how the proposed technology incorporates at least two of the following:

- Innovative elements
- Emerging cutting-edge elements
- Contributes to the reduction or prevention of strategic dependencies within the Union

Section 2. Development Activities (if applicable)

2.1 Technology Maturity

Provide a detailed description of the technological development in relation to existing solutions and current TRL.

2.2 Development Activities

Outline the development activities aimed at reaching the "ready for manufacturing" product.

2.3 Work Plan and Timeline for Development Activities

Provide a clear, realistic work plan with detailed timelines and a Gantt chart, including milestones, as well as the "Ready for Manufacturing" milestone. Identify responsibilities of all partners and subcontractors.

2.4 Budget Justification

Provide a cost breakdown for Development Activities. Specify and justify the total funding requested.

Section 3. Manufacturing Activities

3.1 Feasibility and Readiness for Production

Describe the feasibility of the proposed-product/service production, including testing, validation, and certification achieved prior to reaching the "ready for manufacturing" stage. Detail evidence of product readiness (e.g., MVP, beta testing).

3.2 Manufacturing Activities

Describe production line setup, scale-up strategy, equipment procurement, installation, facility development or repurposing.

3.3 Work Plan and Timeline for Manufacturing Activities

Provide a clear, realistic work plan with detailed timelines and a Gantt chart, including milestones for Manufacturing activities. Identify responsibilities of all partners and subcontractors.

3.4 Budget Justification

Provide a cost breakdown for manufacturing activities. Specify and justify the total funding requested.

3.5 State Aid Article Selection for Manufacturing Activities

Explain the selected State Aid Article for your proposal and how it aligns with the defined eligible activities, in line with the attached Expert Opinion.

Section 4. Training Activities (if applicable)

4.1 Training Activities

Describe any training activities related to manufacturing.

Complete the Sheet STEP BUDGET CALCULATIONS and covert to pdf and merge with the Part B-Technical Annex

Please complete the Budget Form according to the following instructions:

Only white cells can be filled in. The modification of coloured cells is not allowed.

Error Messages: In case that the data entered is not consistent with the Call's provisions, automatic error messages will appear in red indicating the error. By correcting the errors, the relevant messages will disappear.

Aid Intensity

1. The overall Aid Intensity percentage is calculated separately for each participant , according to participant category, type of activities and any special conditions that might apply.
2. Select the correct participant category for each member of the Consortium from the provided list (see section II and III of the STEP Work Programme).

3. Additional Aid Intensity for Experimental Development: The final eligible Aid Intensity percentage for Development Cost is calculated for each participant separately, according to the information provided.

Additional Aid Intensity for Experimental Development is allowed if the project involves substantial collaboration between a company and a research organisation, provided that the research organisation undertakes at least 10% of the eligible expenses of the project and has the right to publish the results which arise from the research carried out at that organisation OR The Project results are widely disseminated through conferences, publications, free access repositories or through free software or open source software.

Beneficiaries

The Host Organisation (HO) must be a Small, Medium or Large Enterprise (B1, B2, B3).

Research Organisations, Enterprises and Other Private Sector Organisations may participate as Partner Organisations.

Partner Organisations may support the Host Organisation in achieving the technological objectives of the project.

In case the Host Organisation is a Large Enterprise and Article 29 applies, the project must involve small and medium-sized enterprise(s) (SMEs) with at least 30% of the total eligible costs.

Partners cannot participate in Manufacturing Activities under any other circumstances.

Manufacturing Activities

For Manufacturing Activities you can use only one of the articles (14 OR 17 OR 29 OR 22) AND/OR DEMINIMIS

In case the Host Organisation is a Large Enterprise and Article 29 applies, the project must involve small and medium-sized enterprise(s) (SMEs) with at least 30% of the total eligible costs.

For Article 22: Aid for start-ups (Up to €0.5M in all areas or €0.75M in RAM "c" areas)

For De Minimis each Member State cannot give more than €300,000 over 3 years to a single undertaking (meaning the enterprise that receives the aid and linked enterprises).

Development Activities

Overhead costs are defined at a rate of up to 20% of the direct costs, with the exception of costs for the external services.

The Costs for external services must not exceed 50% of the project budget related to the Experimental Development activities.

SOS

Complete the Sheet
STEP BUDGET
CALCULATIONS and
covert to pdf and
merge with the Part
B-Technical Annex

CALCULATION OF BUDGET (ACCORDING TO PARTICIPANT CATEGORY, TYPE OF ACTIVITIES AND OTHER SPECIAL PROVISIONS)									
MANUFACTURING COSTS									
You can Use only one of the following articles (14 OR 17 OR 29 OR 22) AND/OR DEMINIMIS AND/OR ARTICLE 31	Personnel Costs for Manufacturing	Equipment Costs for Manufacturing	Other Expenses	External Services for Other Activities	Travel Costs for Other Activities	Manufacturing Budget	% Aid Intensity	Maximum Requested Funding	Requested Funding
	HO								
Participant Category	-Select Category-								
ARTICLE 14			N/A	N/A	N/A	0	#N/A	#N/A	
ARTICLE 17			N/A	N/A	N/A	0	#N/A	#N/A	
ARTICLE 29				N/A	N/A	0	#N/A	#N/A	
ARTICLE 22 (Up to 10.5M or 10.75M in RAM "c" areas)			N/A	N/A	N/A	0	#N/A	#N/A	
DE MINIMIS AID (Up to 1300.000)				N/A	N/A	0	#N/A	#N/A	
ARTICLE 31- TRAINING ACTIVITIES	N/A	N/A	N/A			0	#N/A	#N/A	
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0		#N/A	0.00
	PA1 for Manufacturing Activities								
	-Select Category-								
ARTICLE 29				N/A	N/A	0	#N/A	#N/A	
	PA2 for Manufacturing Activities								
	-Select Category-								
ARTICLE 29				N/A	N/A	0	#N/A	#N/A	

SOS
 Complete the Sheet
 STEP BUDGET
 CALCULATIONS and
 covert to pdf and
 attach to Part B-
 Technical Annex

DEVELOPMENT COSTS												
Additional Aid Intensity for Experimental Development (Please select YES or NO if one of the provisions below are fulfilled by the prepared research project) The project involves substantial collaboration between a company and a research organization, provided that the research organization undertakes at least 10% of the eligible expenses of the project and has the right to publish the results which arise from the research carried out at that organization OR The Project results are widely disseminated through conferences, publications, free access repositories or through free software or open source software.												NO
HO												
	Personnel for Development Activities	Equipment for Development Activities	Travel Cost for Development Activities	Consumables for Development Activities	Other Expenses for Development Activities	Overheads for Development Activities (UP TO 20%)	External Services for Development Activities	Total Development Budget	% Aid Intensity	Maximum Requested Funding	Requested Funding	Final % Aid Intensity
EXPERIMENTAL DEVELOPMENT (ARTICLE 25)								0		\$VALUE!		\$DIW/0!
INNOVATION COST (ARTICLE 28)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		0	\$N/A	\$N/A		\$DIW/0!
PA1 for Development Activities												
Participant Category	-Select Category-											
	Personnel for Development Activities	Equipment for Development Activities	Travel Cost for Development Activities	Consumables for Development Activities	Other Expenses for Development Activities	Overheads for Development Activities (UP TO 20%)	External Services for Development Activities	Development Budget	% Aid Intensity	Maximum Requested Funding	Requested Funding	Final % Aid Intensity
EXPERIMENTAL DEVELOPMENT (ARTICLE 25)								0	\$N/A	\$N/A		\$DIW/0!
INNOVATION COST (ARTICLE 28)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		0	\$N/A	\$N/A		\$DIW/0!

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Technical Annex

PROJECT BUDGET AND REQUESTED FUNDING SUMMARY (in Euros)						
Participant	Manufacturing Budget	Development Budget	Total Budget	Manufacturing Requested Funding	Development Requested Funding	Total Requested Funding
HO	0	0	0	0	0	0
PA1	0	0	0	0	0	0
PA2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0

► Proposal Sections

ANNEX I – **Curricula Vitae - Mandatory Submission** (document to be uploaded as an Annex on the IRIS Portal in PDF format and includes the CV of the Coordinator). It is recommended that, CVs are created according to the EUROPASS format and do not exceed 5 pages per person.

ANNEX II – Call Specific Information (document to be uploaded as an Annex on the IRIS Portal in PDF format) - **Mandatory Submission** :

- (a) Technoeconomic analysis and Business Plan.
- (b) Contract of employment of the Project Coordinator with the Host Organisation.
- (c) Cost estimation for machinery and equipment necessary for the set-up of the facility / production line (which are included in the proposed project's budget) based on a minimum of 3 offers from 3 different suppliers who can meet the Host Organisation's requirements.

► Proposal Sections

ANNEX III – Call Specific Information (document to be uploaded as an Annex on the IRIS Portal in PDF format) - **Mandatory Submission** :

- (a) An expert opinion on the eligibility of the selected State Aid article for activities related to the creation of facilities and production lines.
- (b) Documentation of own funding, through a declaration of funding sources (e.g., secured loan, own capital, investments, etc.).
- (c) Results of the analysis for the unrestricted ability to commercially exploit the project results ('freedom to operate'), including existing intellectual property rights held by the Host Organisation that are relevant to the project, as well as commercial exploitation licenses (if applicable).
- (d) Documentation proving the initiation of necessary contacts with the relevant authorities regarding the acquisition of licenses, certifications, etc.
- (e) Sufficient documentation demonstrating the ability to access materials and/or components, etc., that meet the required quality and specifications for the proposed product/service, where applicable.
- (f) Any other supporting documentation deemed necessary to substantiate the claims made in the proposal.

► Evaluation Procedure

1. Preliminary Review process

All requested documents are considered essential. If any required documents are not submitted at the proposal stage, the proposal will be considered invalid and will not proceed to scientific evaluation.

2. Scientific Evaluation

- (a) 3 independent thematic evaluation committees (advanced digital technologies, clean and resource-efficient technologies, and biotechnologies).
- (b) Each committee will consist of five (5) experts plus an expert on state aid issues
- (c) The committees will create a ranking list of proposals for each sector.
- (d) Once the evaluation process is complete, the Project Coordinator will receive the Evaluation Report, which will outline the Committee's rationale behind their decision.
- (e) The results are final, and no appeals will be allowed.

Compatibility Check

- (a) the compatibility of the proposal with the **objectives of the Program** and the Call, and
- (b) the compatibility of the proposed technologies with the definition of **critical STEP technologies** (those introducing an innovative, emerging cutting-edge element with significant economic potential to the internal market, or those contributing to the reduction or prevention of strategic dependencies within the Union), and
- (c) the compatibility with the **STEP definition for Manufacturing Activities related to the creation of facilities and production lines** (*Manufacturing activities include setting up production lines, first-of-a-kind-facilities, the extension or repurposing of existing facilities, scaling up processes to meet demand, and/or implementing quality control mechanisms to ensure the consistent production of high-quality products.* This approach ensures that innovations are not only technologically advanced but also economically viable and ready for widespread adoption across the Union, enhancing the strategic autonomy and competitiveness of the Union in key technological sectors. STEP does not cover the installation and development of final products but focuses on the related services that are critical and specific to the development and manufacturing of these products within the STEP sectors.), and
- (d) the compatibility with the **STEP definition for Development Activities** (Development activities include achieving technological breakthroughs and perfecting the technology for market needs), and
- (e) the compatibility **with the selected STEP Sector** ((i) Digital technologies, including those contributing to the targets and objectives of the Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030, multi-country projects as defined in Article 2(2) of Decision (EU) 2022/2481, and deep tech innovation; (ii) Clean and resource efficient technologies, including net-zero technologies as defined under the Net-Zero Industry Act; and (iii) Biotechnologies, including medicinal products on the Union list of critical medicines and their components), and
- (f) the compatibility of the **proposed type(s) of activities** with the proposed Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) and those allowed by the Call for Proposals, and

Evaluation Criteria

1. Excellence – Weight 30%

- (a) Quality of Project Objectives
- (b) Innovative Character
- (c) Technological Feasibility
- (d) Proposed Production Facility
- (e) Readiness for Production
- (f) Intellectual Property Strategy
- (g) Criticality of the Technology
- (h) Innovative Elements
- (i) Emerging Elements
- (j) Cutting-Edge Elements

2. Added Value and Benefit – Weight 35%

- (a) Market Development
- (b) Business Opportunity
- (c) Customer Validation
- (d) Market Penetration Strategy
- (e) Business Plan
- (f) Regulatory Compliance and Certifications
- (g) Scalability of Production
- (h) Broader Impact
- (i) STEP Impact

3. Implementation – Weight 35%

- (a) Project Plan
- (b) Project Budget
- (c) Team
- (d) Adequacy of Resources and Infrastructure
- (e) Risk Mitigation
- (f) Economic Viability
- (g) Return on Investment (ROI)

Additionally, the ***appropriateness of the selected State Aid Article*** for financing the proposed activities will be assessed, without scoring, to ensure it aligns with the activities outlined in the proposal.

Selection

Proposals in each sector will be evaluated and ranked based on their score. Funding will initially be allocated among the three sectors. Any remaining budget will be used to fund other proposals, regardless of sector, according to their score. The total approved funding for the projects will not exceed the overall budget of the Call.

Funding Payment

- Pre-financing: 60% of the requested funding will be provided after the signing of the contract for each activity separately, based on the scheduled start month of the activity.
- Interim Payment: 20% of the requested funding, is paid upon approval of the Payment Request and the Interim Report for each Activity separately. More specifically, the interim payment is normally paid only in the case where the eligible costs for the first period exceed 50% of the advance.
- Final Payment: the final payment may cover the remaining balance of the Requested Funding, depending on the eligible project expenses and the Final Aid Intensity.

How to submit a proposal

1. Study the relevant documents
2. Contact RIF and book an appointment for support (Open Day - 2 July)
3. Start collecting all necessary documents necessary to submit the proposal
4. Contact relevant experts and authorities to secure necessary documentation
5. Register on IRIS the Coordinator, the Legal Representative and Organisation
6. Contact Suppliers to acquire offers

RIF can provide continuous support thought out the submission process.

Q&A

1. There is a need for to build new offices to create the required workspace and facilities for new software products. Does STEP support these activities?
2. XXXX Ltd is a 10 years old company, can we benefit from the STEP program?
3. We want to understand about in-Kind contribution. What counts as in In-Kind contribution.
4. Given that STEP is a leverage product development programme, does it also offer opportunities for expansion or collaboration with other European companies for an already existing programme?
5. Is assembling OK or only manufacturing from scratch?

► Contact / Support



For More Information:

RIF Website: www.research.org.cy

IRIS Portal: <https://iris.research.org.cy/>



**FAQ Document
will be
published soon**

Supporting RIF's Clients

RIF Support Service:

support@research.org.cy | Τηλ. 22-205000



Thank You...