

Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP) Marks First Year, Mobilizing €15 Billion for Critical Tech Development

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The Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP) today celebrates its first anniversary, marking a year of significant progress in bolstering Europe's competitiveness in critical technology sectors. STEP has successfully pooled the investment resources of 11 EU programs, mobilizing over €15 billion to drive innovation and manufacturing in digital technologies, clean technologies, and biotechnologies.

To date, €9.1 billion in EU funds have been allocated to STEP through five directly managed Commission programs, including Digital Europe, the European Defence Fund, EU4Health, Horizon Europe, and the Innovation Fund. An additional €6.1 billion has been leveraged through the reprogramming of cohesion policy funds by 11 pioneering EU Member States.

The Commission's STEP Taskforce, working in close collaboration with EU Member States, has focused on streamlining funding access and addressing industry needs. Extensive outreach, including a survey of 500 research and industry organizations, highlighted the strong demand for simplified funding procedures.

Building on STEP's success, President von der Leyen has proposed expanding its scope to include all technologies relevant to the defense sector.

Enhanced Funding Access and Project Promotion

The STEP Portal, a user-centric platform, provides a centralized access point for funding opportunities across EU programs and Member States. Approximately 60 calls for proposals have been published, with 40 remaining open for submissions.

The portal also showcases 142 high-potential projects awarded the STEP Seal by the Commission. These projects gain increased visibility to private and public investors, including the European Investment Bank (EIB) Group and National Promotional Banks, and receive access to funding opportunities and advisory services.

Notable STEP Seal Recipients:

- **Digital Tech:** OpenEuroLLM, aiming to develop open-source Large Language Models for all EU languages.
- **Clean Tech:** Energy Observer 2, a hydrogen-powered cargo ship designed to significantly reduce maritime freight emissions.
- **Bio Tech:** PHARMSD 3.0, focused on establishing new standards for continuous pharmaceutical manufacturing.

STEP aims to de-risk private investment in high-potential EU projects. The STEP Taskforce is actively engaging with private investors to promote STEP Seal projects and facilitate investment pathways.