



EUCLUSTERS  TALKS ★

# European Investment Agenda:

Mobilising Capital for Innovation and Industrial Transformation

**22 October 2025**

08:30-09:45 CET

**Online**

# Agenda

1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

**Nina Hoppmann**, Team Member European Cluster Collaboration Platform

2. European Investment Agenda

**Calin Danilescu**, Senior Policy Analyst, Joint Research Centre, European Commission

3. Panel debate

**Anne Lebreton-Wolf**, Founder, ALW Finance & Innovation

**Daniel Stadler**, Cluster Manager, EIN Quantum NRW; Spokesperson, ClusterAllianz.NRW

**David García Núñez**, President, Madrid World Capital of Engineering, Construction and Architecture

**James Wilson**, General Director, Orkestra - Basque Institute of Competitiveness

**Stamatiki Kritas**, Cluster Manager, HBIO; Managing Director, CEBR

4. Funding opportunities

**Nina Hoppmann**, Team Member European Cluster Collaboration Platform

# Housekeeping rules

Andrew Lansley, presenter

- We will use **slido** to launch a poll. 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



<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/033a5c46-ddd7-300c-fe7e-514b429f22fe>

# Commission unveils 2026 work programme

The European Commission has unveiled its [2026 work programme](#), which outlines a series of actions to help build **a more sovereign and independent Europe**.

The work programme, entitled 'Europe's independence moment', addresses current and future challenges arising from threats to our security and democracy, to conflicts and geopolitical tensions, to risks to our economy and industry, and accelerating climate change.

## Commission work programme - key figures

➤ **38**

New policy objectives

➤ **25 out of 47**

legislative initiatives have a significant simplification dimension

➤ **20**

Evaluations to stress-test the stock of EU legislation, to identify potential to simplify, to reduce costs and to consolidate rules.

➤ **25**

Proposals for withdrawal

➤ **1**

Proposals to repeal

➤ **111**

Pending proposals

# Recovery and Resilience Facility Annual Report 2025

As the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) is nearing its 2026 deadline, it continues to deliver tangible results and long-lasting impact on Europeans' daily life.

With €367 billion disbursed, so far, and over 2,700 milestones and targets achieved, the RRF is driving sustainable growth through transformative reforms as well as key projects.

The **report** stresses the **need for EU Member States to fast-track the implementation** of their recovery and resilience plans to meet the August 2026 deadline and emphasizes the **spillover benefits** strengthening the entire EU economy.



# Report: Mid-term evaluation of the cohesion policy programmes 2021-2027

The purpose of the [mid-term evaluation](#) is to make a comprehensive assessment of the **programmes for the 2021-2027** period. This includes taking stock of progress made in implementing the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund (CF), and the Just Transition Fund (JTF)**, and analysing the uptake of the main legal novelty and the consequences of more recent context and legal changes.



# ECCP Investment Survey, give us your feedback!

As part of the Summary Report 2025, the ECCP team is collecting **information on major investments** attracted by European clusters. The aim is to showcase the impact of cluster organisations in fostering investment activity and regional development.

For this, we need your input! Which investments has your cluster organisation helped to attract over the last years? The short survey should take no more than 5–10 minutes of your time. Thank you for your contributing to the ECCP Summary Report 2025!

Complete the survey [here](#)

Name of your cluster organisation:

Your EU Member State:

Your region:

Sector(s) covered by your cluster organisation:

Since January 2022, has your cluster attracted any significant private investment in your ecosystem (e.g., in member companies, infrastructure, R&D projects, production facilities, etc.)?

Yes  
 No



# ECCP European Events 2025



## Kuopio, Finland

Cluster Summit Finland & C2 Lab | **28-30 October 2025**



## Pamplona, Spain

Clusters meet Regions & ECCP Matchmaking | **12-13 November**



## Alentejo, Portugal

Clusters meet Regions | **18-19 November**



## Regensburg, Germany

Clusters meet Regions & ECCP Matchmaking | **26-27 November**



## Copenhagen, Denmark

Clusters meet Regions | **2-3 December**





# European Innovation Council (EIC) Accelerator

Backing visionary entrepreneurs

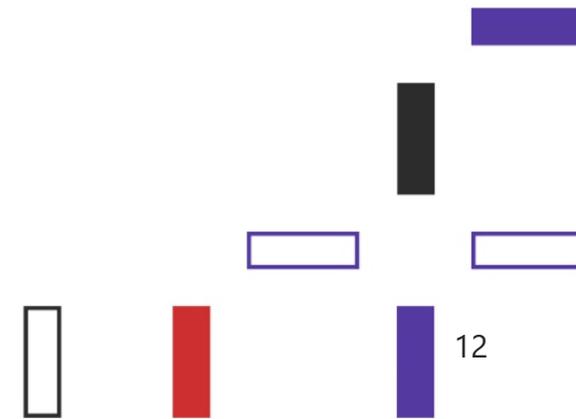
*Calin Danilescu – Policy Officer, Access to Finance  
DG Grow – European Commission*

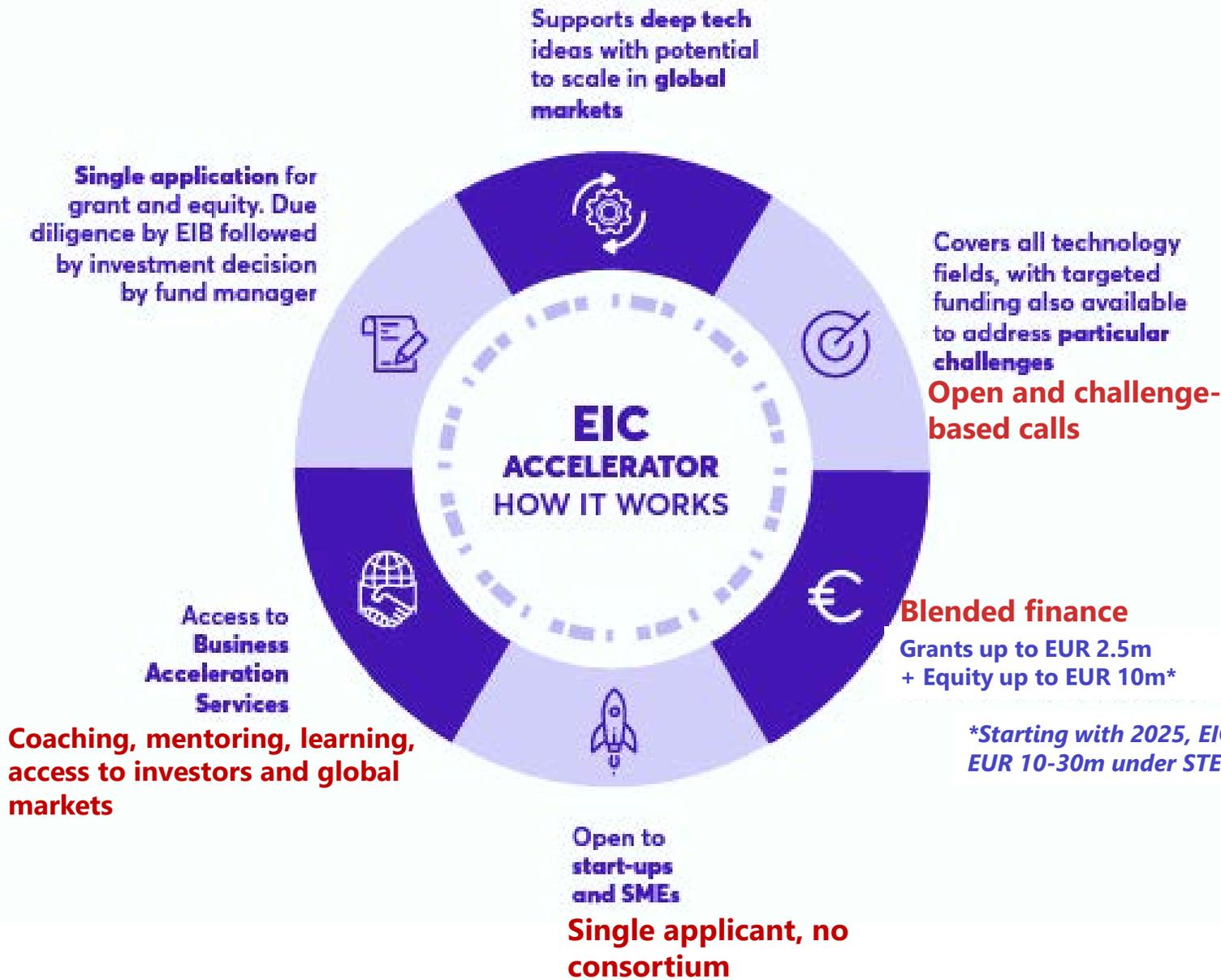
# EIC Accelerator



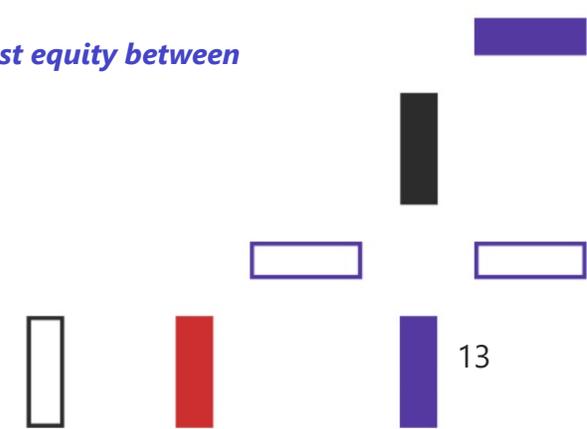
- Are you a start-up or a SME seeking to scale up **high impact innovation** with potential to create new markets or disrupt existing ones?
- Does your innovation build on a scientific discovery or technological breakthrough (**‘deep tech’**)?
- Is the investment **too risky** for private investors alone?
- Do you need **significant funding** over a long timeframe?

**Are we the  
right investor  
for you?**





# What do we offer?





# Who can apply?

- **Single companies** (i.e. no consortia, subcontracting and affiliated entities are possible)
- **SMEs according to EU definition:** < 250 employees, < 50 million EUR turnover or < 43 million EUR total balance sheet, data from linked or partner enterprises might need to be taken into account\*
- **Small mid-caps** (up to 499 employees) – for rapid scale up only
- **Natural person(s) or legal entity**
  - from Member State (MS) or Associated Country (AC) intending to establish an SME or small mid-cap in MS or AC by the time of signing the EIC Accelerator contract.
  - From a non-associated third country intending to establish an SME or to relocate an existing SME to a MS or AC (establishment prior to full proposal!)

[More details and self-assessment tool](#)



# What are the funding options?

## Grant only

If you can prove that you have sufficient financial means for deployment and scale-up

## Grant & Investment (Blended Finance)

If you need support for development (TRL 5/6 → 8), deployment and scale-up (TRL 9)

## Investment only (Equity Only)

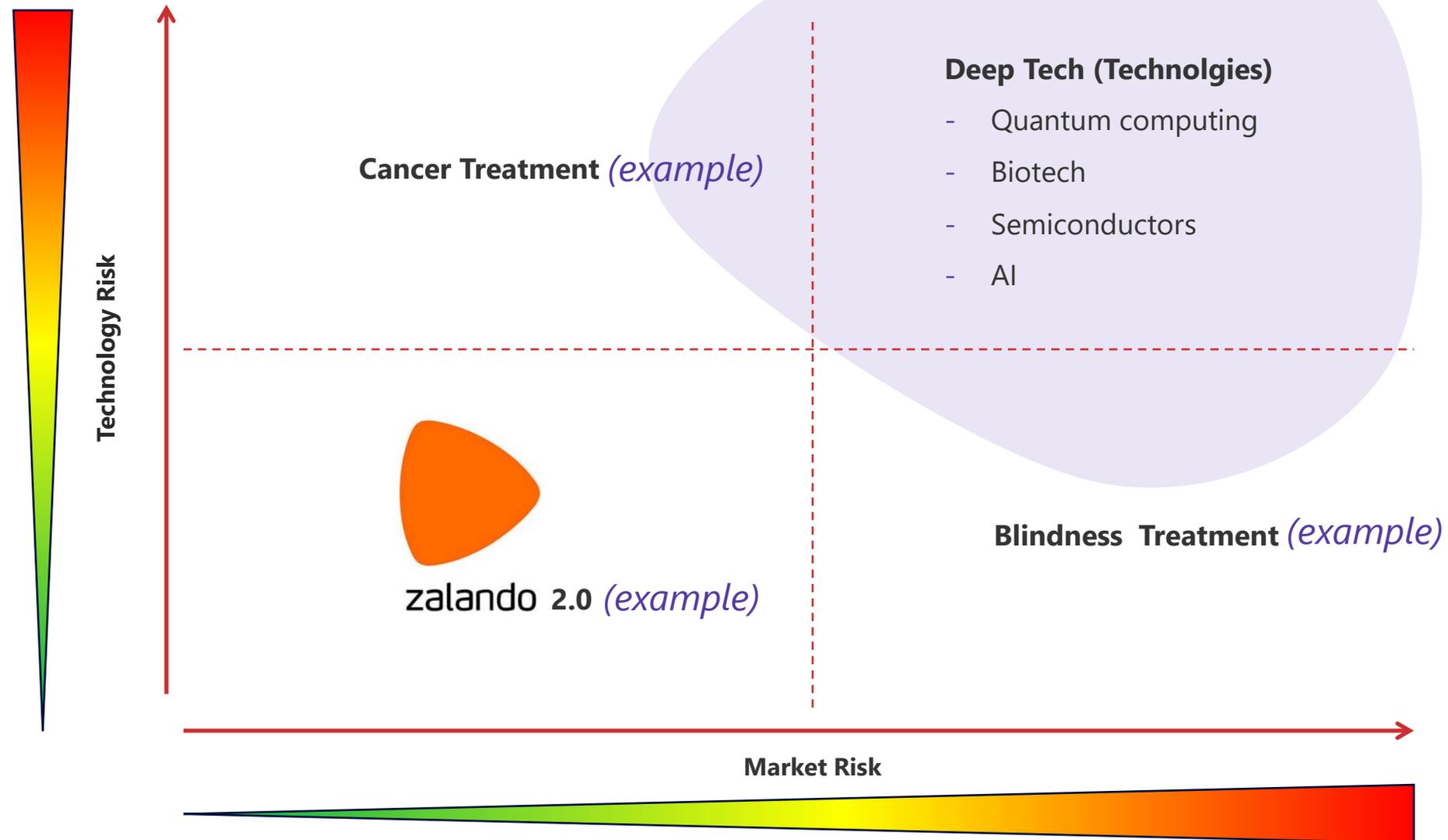
If you are looking to fill the funding gap for rapid scale-up of your high-risk innovation and you don't need a grant

**Technology riskiness**

**We help companies derisk their technologies until they become interesting for private investors**



# What are the primary investments of the EIC Fund?



# Blended finance combines Grant and Equity



## Grant component

- Maximum **€2.5 million**
- eligible costs are reimbursed up to a maximum of **70%**
- Technology in TRL from 5/6 to 8



## Investment component

- Between €0.5 million and **€ 10 million**
- Usually in the form of direct **equity** or **quasi-equity** (i.e. convertible loans)
- TRL 9

Starting 2025: **Equity only** available for amounts between **€ 10** and **€ 30 mio**

# EIC Accelerator equity funding – general principles



- Intended to finance **market deployment and scale up**.
- **Crowd in** of private co-investments in EIC funded companies
- EIC Fund participates with **max 50%** of the funding round and **does not lead** the round
- The EIC may reserve **follow-on capital** to invest in subsequent series
- The EIC provides **patient capital**: investments are made with a long average perspective (7-10 years) with a maximum of 15 years.
- The EIC usually targets **minority ownership** stakes (from 10 to 25%), and up to a blocking minority in cases identified by the EC as of strategic interest for the EU.
- Budget of the EIC Accelerator in 2025:
  - Open: **€384 million**
  - Challenges: **€250 million**
  - **STEP (new): € 300 million**



## SELECTION PROCESS

## INVESTMENT PROCESS

- The **EIC Accelerator evaluation process** is composed of the **following phases**:
- **Screening of short proposals**: performed by four remote evaluators, which leads to a GO or NO-GO to the next evaluation stage (4-6 weeks),
- **Evaluation of full proposals**, performed by three remote evaluators, which leads to a GO or NO-GO to the next evaluation stage,
- **Interviews with participation of Jury Members** which leads to establishing the list of GO (funded) and NO-GO (non-funded) proposals
- GO (funded) project will go to the **European Investment Bank (EIB)** (advisor of the fund) for **Due Diligence**

Submission any  
time

Submission by:  
12/03/2025  
01/10/2025



## SELECTION PROCESS

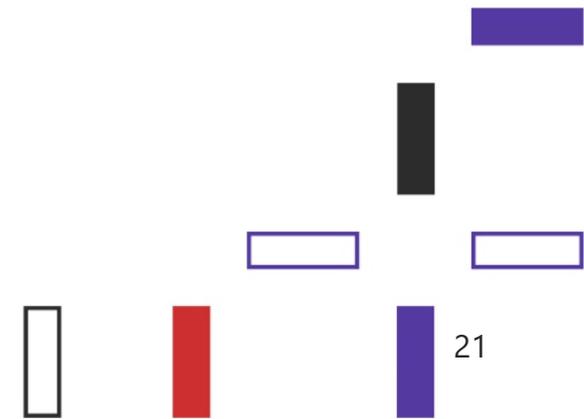
## INVESTMENT PROCESS

- 1. Due diligence** (**EIB**, unless performed by co-investors) + **KYC-compliance** checks (EIC Fund).
- 2. Investment Recommendation** (**EIB**), potential draft financing terms discussed with the beneficiary and co-investors (if any).
- 3.** Investment Recommendation is assessed by the **Advisory Committee** for final check of company and alignment with EIC Fund Investment Guidelines\*
- 4. Investment decision** (external **EIC Fund Manager**), which will either approve (sometimes with conditions), including the amount and terms, propose grant-first or reject the operation.
- 5. Investment agreement and disbursement.** The EIB will guide the preparatory work of legal documentation for signature by the **EIC Fund Manager**.
- 6. Portfolio monitoring and management** (**EIC Fund Manager** supported by the EIB).

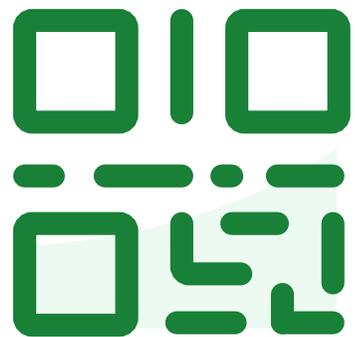
# Useful sources



- [Tips for applicants - EIC Accelerator \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eic/accelerator/tips-for-applicants)
- [Guide for applicants \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eic/guide-for-applicants)
- [EIC Frequently asked questions \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eic/faq)



Thank you for your attention



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#Investment**



**What are in your view the main obstacles to access to finance for MSMEs in clusters looking to grow their businesses ? (please pick one or two)**

# Panel debate

**Anne Lebreton-Wolf, Founder**, ALW Finance & Innovation

**Daniel Stadler**, Cluster Manager, EIN Quantum NRW; Spokesperson, ClusterAllianz.NRW

**David García Núñez**, President, Madrid World Capital of Engineering,  
Construction and Architecture

**James Wilson**, General Director, Orkestra - Basque Institute of Competitiveness

**Stamatiki Kritas**, Cluster Manager, HBIO; Managing Director, CEBR

# FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

# Expanding Investment Ecosystems

- The call aims to **increase cross-border venture capital flows** into emerging and moderate innovator regions, helping local startups expand into stronger EU markets and bridging gaps in later-stage financing. Projects should run **at least two years**, co-designed by business acceleration providers, investor networks, or innovation hubs from both strong and emerging ecosystems. Eligible activities include:
  - Market orientation programmes for investors and startups (information on legislation, incentives, taxation).
  - Assistance for investors throughout the investment process (legal, cultural, linguistic).
  - Roadshows and international forums showcasing local ecosystems and startups.
  - Peer-matching and networking between investors, business angels, and buyers of innovation.
  - Repositories of best practices and recommendations for regulators to ease cross-border investment.
- Activities must align with one or more of the **five “burning challenges”** of the New European Innovation Agenda: reducing reliance on fossil fuels, increasing food security, mastering digital transformation (incl. cybersecurity), improving healthcare, and achieving circularity.
- Topic ID: HORIZON-EIE-2026-01-CONNECT-02
- Deadline: 20 January 2026
- Published on [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#)

# Scaling up deep tech ecosystems

- The call seeks to **strengthen inclusive, interconnected, and efficient innovation ecosystems** across the EU by linking diverse actors, regions, and resources. It **promotes collaboration** between innovation leaders and less advanced territories to boost competitiveness, sustainability, and cohesion, while supporting the green, digital, and social transitions.
- The call underpins a **sustainable and inclusive European innovation model**, enabling companies to thrive with access to new markets, talent, and resources, while addressing **Europe’s “burning challenges”**:
  - Reducing reliance on fossil fuels
  - Increasing global food security
  - Mastering digital transformation (incl. cybersecurity)
  - Improving healthcare
  - Achieving circularity
- Topic ID: HORIZON-EIE-2026-01-CONNECT-03
- Deadline: 20 January 2026
- Published on [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#)

# Uptake Acceleration Services

- The objective of the call is to accelerate the **market uptake** of EU-funded **security research** by providing **specialised services and advisory support** to SMEs, start-ups, and security practitioners.
- Projects are expected to contribute to:
  - Accelerated **innovation uptake** within the security ecosystem
  - A **self-sustained service mechanism** acting as a market catalyst
  - Stronger **collaboration between research, SMEs/start-ups**, and **security practitioners**
  - Improved **technology transfer** and **market access** for innovative solutions
- Topic ID: HORIZON-CL3-2025-01-SSRI-02
- Deadline: 12 November 2025
- Published on [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#)

# Register for the next Talk

**5 November**

Life Sciences and Biotech in Europe: Policies, Clusters, and the Road Ahead

**19 November**

Joint Cluster Initiative: Presenting the new Euroclusters I

# Continue the discussion



<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/9503062/>

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THANK YOU

