



How green innovation in food systems boosts competitiveness

Future-Proofing Europe's Agri-Food Sector: Innovation, Resilience, Sustainability, and Competitiveness brought forward by the LIFE Programme

Bologna, 4 December 2025

Giuseppina Luvarà

*EU Commission DG RTD.B2,
"Bioeconomy and Food Systems"*

- Synergies among EU funding instruments
- Food 2030 and Horizon 2020/Europe
- EU policy initiatives and Life Science Strategy

LIFE synergies with other EU funds and programmes

LIFE synergies with other EU funding instruments can manifest in different ways e.g.:

- effective transition of research projects funded under Horizon 2020/Europe, through demonstration and best practice initiatives under LIFE.
- transition of projects piloted and upscaled under LIFE to their large-scale deployment through European Structural and Investment Funds (ERDF and EAFRD) and Interreg

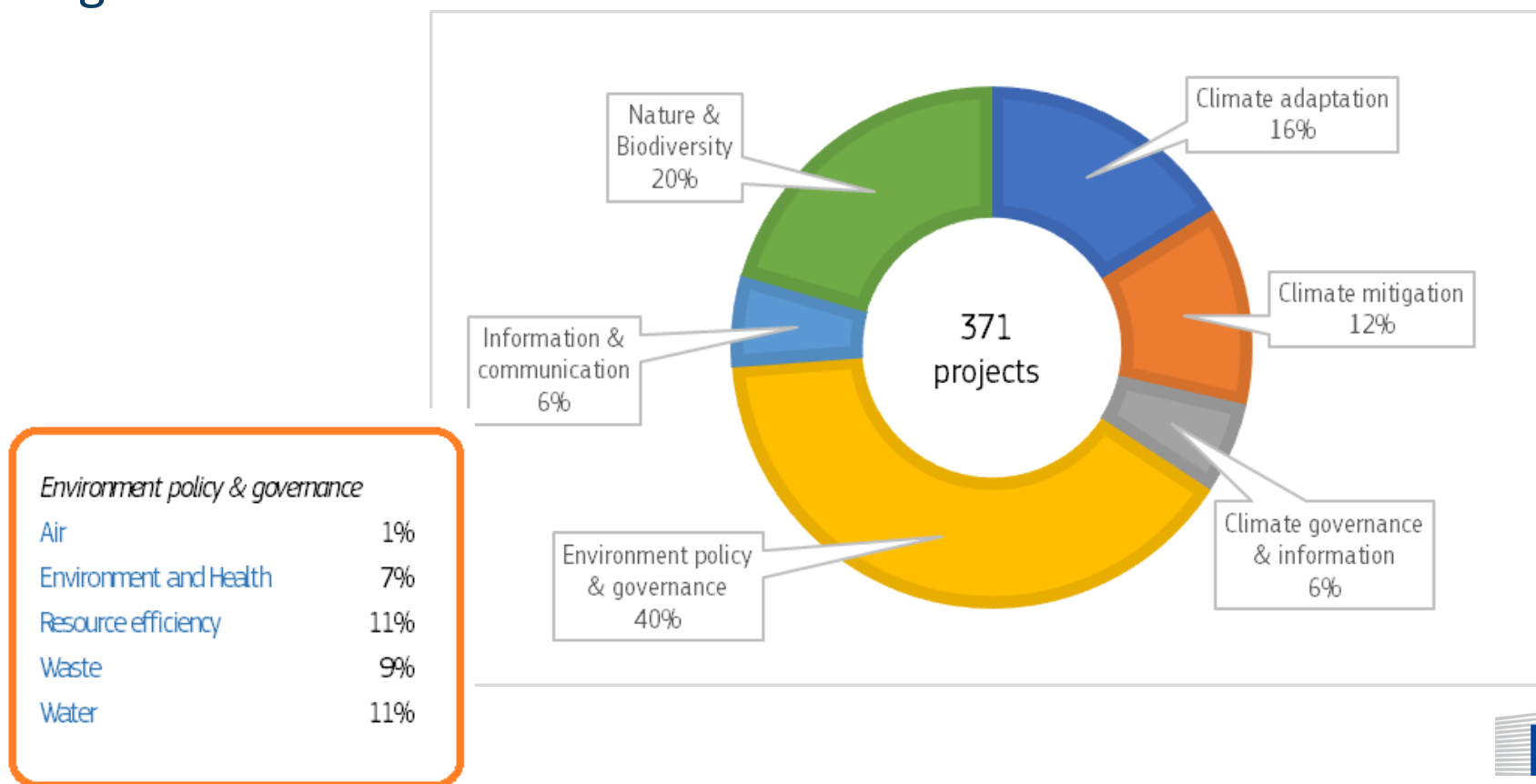
Examples of LIFE projects developing synergies with other EU programmes

- The [LIFE-ACCLIMATE project](#)
- The [LIFE Future Farming project](#)
- The [LIFE CrossBorderBog project](#)

LIFE synergies: bonus

Uptake EU-research results

LIFE 2014-20 programme proposals that took up the results of environmental and climate-related research and innovation projects financed by Horizon 2020 or by preceding Framework Programmes



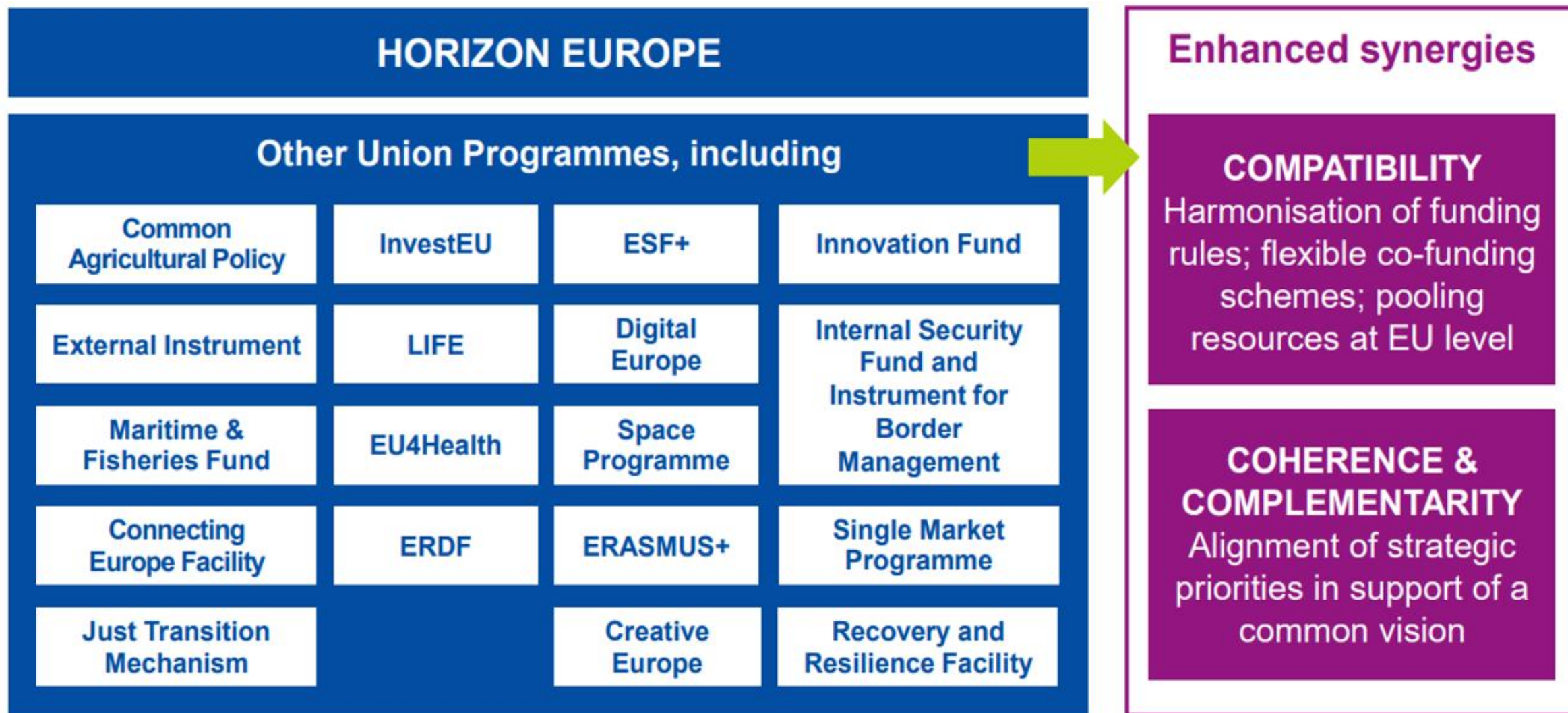
LIFE and other Union programmes

Other EU programmes for which LIFE beneficiaries considered applying for or applied for funding

Source: Study supporting the evaluation – Case study “Synergies”

Programme	Responses
Horizon 2020	411
INTERREG	308
European Regional Development fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund	131
Innovation Fund	71
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EARDF)	50
European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)	26
Connecting Europe facility (CEF)	20
European Social Fund (ESF)	40

HORIZON EUROPE and synergies with other EU funds and



Horizon and Food 2030 as a lever for food systems transformation

- Food 2030 is the R&I policy framework supporting the transition towards sustainable, healthy and inclusive food systems.
- Food 2030 is underpinned by the need to foster **multi-actor** and **systemic approach** to research and innovation capable of **delivering co-benefits** for people's health, our climate, our planet and communities.



[Food 2030 - European Commission](#)

Food 2030: EU R&I Policy Framework future-proofing



Priorities



-  **NUTRITION** for sustainable and healthy diets
-  **CLIMATE** smart and environmentally sustainable food systems
-  **CIRCULARITY** and resource efficiency of food systems
-  **INNOVATION** and empowerment of communities

Drivers

-  **Research breakthroughs**
-  **Innovation and Investment**
-  **Open Science**
-  **International collaboration**

- Need for a systemic approach to future-proofing food systems by structuring, connecting and scaling-up R&I
- To provide **evidence** for policies and **solutions** (knowledge, methods, technologies, services, business models, etc) addressing 4 priorities.

Research and Innovation

















New Food 2030 Pathways for action 2.0 report

Over 100 Projects
Over 760 M EUR



Systemic approach – delivering co-benefits,
inter/transdisciplinary and multi-actor
Placed-based approaches for testing, demonstrating,
experimenting, deploying, partnering, learning, sharing !!

All types of innovation

FOOD 2030 Pathways		 Nutrition	 Climate	 Circularity	 Communities
	PATHWAY 1 GOVERNANCE FOR FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE	+++	+++	+++	+++
	PATHWAY 2 URBAN FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION	++	+++	+	+++
	PATHWAY 3 FOOD FROM THE OCEAN & FRESHWATER RESOURCES	++	+++	+++	+++
	PATHWAY 4 ALTERNATIVE PROTEINS FOR DIETARY SHIFT	+++	+++	++	+++
	PATHWAY 5 FOOD WASTE & RESOURCE- EFFICIENT FOOD SYSTEMS	++	+++	+++	++
	PATHWAY 6 THE MICROBIOME WORLD	+++	+++	++	+++
	PATHWAY 7 NUTRITION & SUSTAINABLE HEALTHY DIETS	+++	++	+	++
	PATHWAY 8 FOOD SAFETY SYSTEMS OF THE FUTURE	+++	+++	++	+++
	PATHWAY 9 FOOD SYSTEMS AFRICA	+++	+++	+++	+++
	PATHWAY 10 DATA & DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION	+++	+++	+++	+++
	PATHWAY 11 ZERO-POLLUTION FOOD SYSTEMS	++	+++	+++	+++

© European Union, 2023

More on our work



Shaping the future of food research and innovation

Following the Food 2030 Pathways for action structure, ten experts have identified potential gaps and synergies to be addressed by EU research and innovation policy on food systems.



Microbial blueprints for bioeconomy

This CORDIS Results Pack showcases the application of 12 EU-funded projects in the field of microbiome R&I, with benefits ranging from improved soil and ecosystem health to new high-value bio-based products.



Strengthening the EU's prosperity through sustainable and circular bioeconomy innovations

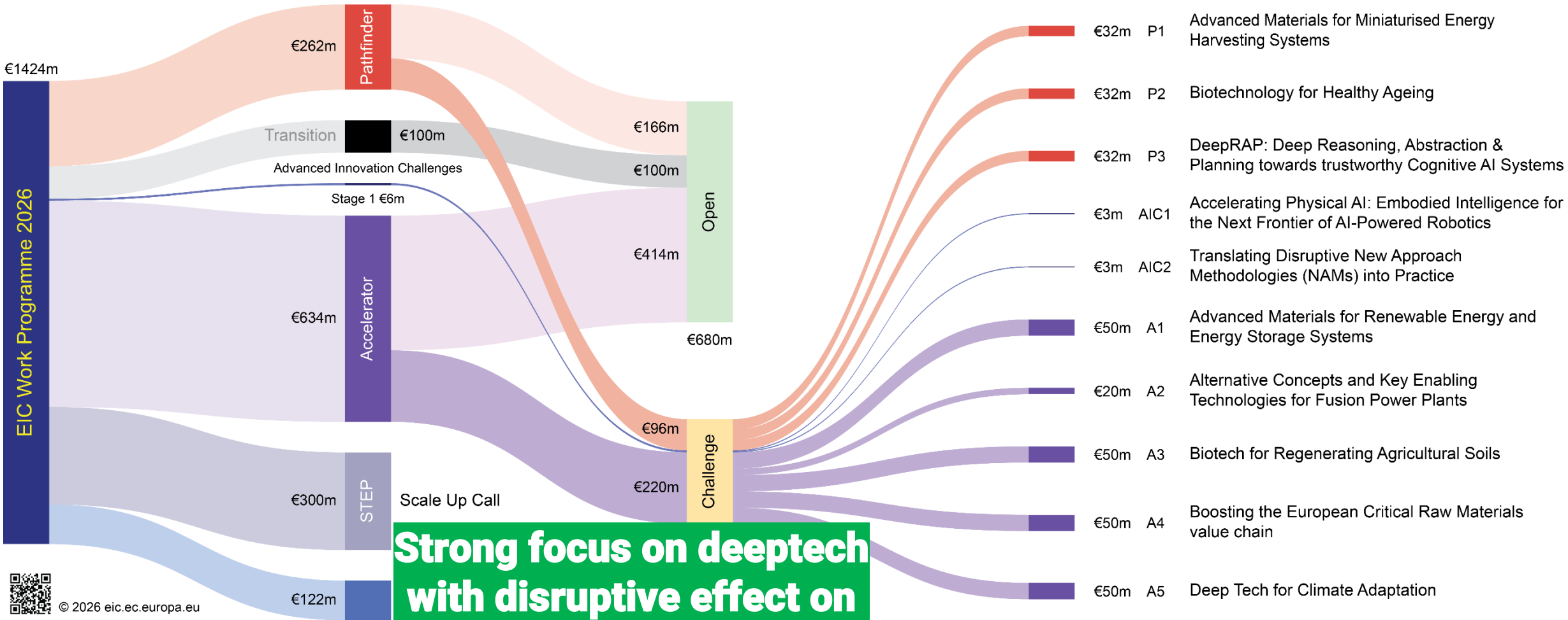
This CORDIS Results Pack features 15 EU-funded research and innovation projects in the field of bioeconomy.

EU boosts innovation funding

- 27 November 2025: COM adoption of the 2026 European Innovation Council (EIC) program, unlocking more than €1.4 billion to help companies turn high-risk ideas into marketable technologies.
- Funding will be available through five streams: EIC Pathfinder (€262m) for early-stage research; EIC Transition (€100m) to turn scientific results into applications; the new EIC Advanced Innovation Challenges (€6m) supporting deep-tech ventures; EIC Accelerator (€634m) for SME and startup scale-ups; and EIC STEP Scale Up (€300m) offering €10–30m equity for digital, clean-tech, resource-efficient, and biotech projects.



Top-down and
bottom-up approaches
are implemented
simultaneously



Strong focus on deeptech
with disruptive effect on
the market

Information on Accelerator on the EIC website, but call application is via the usual funding and tenders portal

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/HORIZON-EIC-2026-ACCELERATOR-01?order=DESC&pageNumber=1&pageSize=50&sortBy=startDate&keywords=HORIZON-EIC-2026-ACCELERATOR-01&isExactMatch=true&status=31094501,31094502,31094503&frameworkProgramme=43108390>

Info Days recordings:

Online Info Day - EIC Work Programme 2026 - European Innovation Council

Online Info Day – EIC Work Programme 2026 - Accelerator Challenges - European Innovation Council

Relevant ongoing policy initiatives

Adopted strategies

To be adopted

25/05
2025
[EU
Startup
and
Scaleup
Strategy](#)

04/06 2025
[Water
Resilience
Strategy](#)

11/06
2025
[Ocean
Pact](#)

02/07 2025
[EU Life
Sciences
Strategy](#)

27/11 2025
[A strategic
Framework
for a
competitive
and
Sustainable
EU
Bioeconomy](#)

Call for evidence
until 10 /09 and
the public
consultation for
2nd quarter of '25
[European
Research Area
Act](#)

*Planned
adoption: 3rd
quarter 2026*

Call for evidence
until 11/09
[EU
Cardiovascular
Health Plan](#)

*Planned
adoption: 4th
quarter 2025*

Public
consultation until
03/10
[European
Innovation Act](#)

*Planned
adoption: 1st
quarter 2026*

Public
consultation until
06/11
[Circular
Economy Act](#)

*Planned
adoption: 4th
quarter 2026*

Public
consultation
open until 10/11
[Biotech Acts](#)

*Planned
adoptions
2025/2026*

Public
consultation 4th
quarter 2025
[European
climate
resilience and
risk
management –
integrated
framework](#)

*Planned
adoption: 4th
quarter 2026*



Choose Europe for Life Sciences

Why?

- Life sciences generated **€1.5 trillion** (9.4% of EU GDP) and employed 29 million people in 2022.
- Closes the innovation and investment gap with global competitors (US, China) and ensures EU health and climate security.

Optimise the R&I ecosystems

- Strengthen European R&I via **ecosystems** (e.g., bioclusters, partnerships).
- Leverage the power of **data and AI** (e.g., European Health Data Space).
- Invest in **skills & talent** for future-ready professionals (Union of Skills).

Ensure smooth & rapid market access

- Propose the **EU Biotech Act** to make the regulatory system innovation-friendly.
- Simplify regulations for **Medical Devices and Diagnostics**.
- **Unlock public & private investment** by bridging the venture capital gap and de-risking investments.

Boost uptake and use

- Engage with citizens to **build public trust** and counter disinformation.
- Work closely with **end-users** to ensure solutions meet specific societal needs.
- Support the uptake of innovation through **public procurement**.

Actions

Life Science Strategy on food systems



The strategy recognizes that the European agriculture and food sectors are a hub for innovation, and vibrant rural areas and innovative food industries rely on advancements delivered by life sciences

The strategy is committed to expand its efforts on the topic of food, building upon the Vision for Agriculture and Food

Flagship actions: Promoting a holistic approach to the life sciences

- The Commission will develop a strategic R&I agenda on food systems (2026)

Events – Save the dates!



European Research and Innovation Days 2025

*16–17 September 2025
Brussels and online*

**Danish Presidency event on
Bioeconomy and Food**
*2-3 December 2025
Copenhagen*

EU Agri-Food Days
*15-17 December 2025
Brussels*

Thank you for your attention



*Subscribe to the [Food 2030 Stakeholders list](#)
for regular updates*

[CORDIS | European Commission](#)

