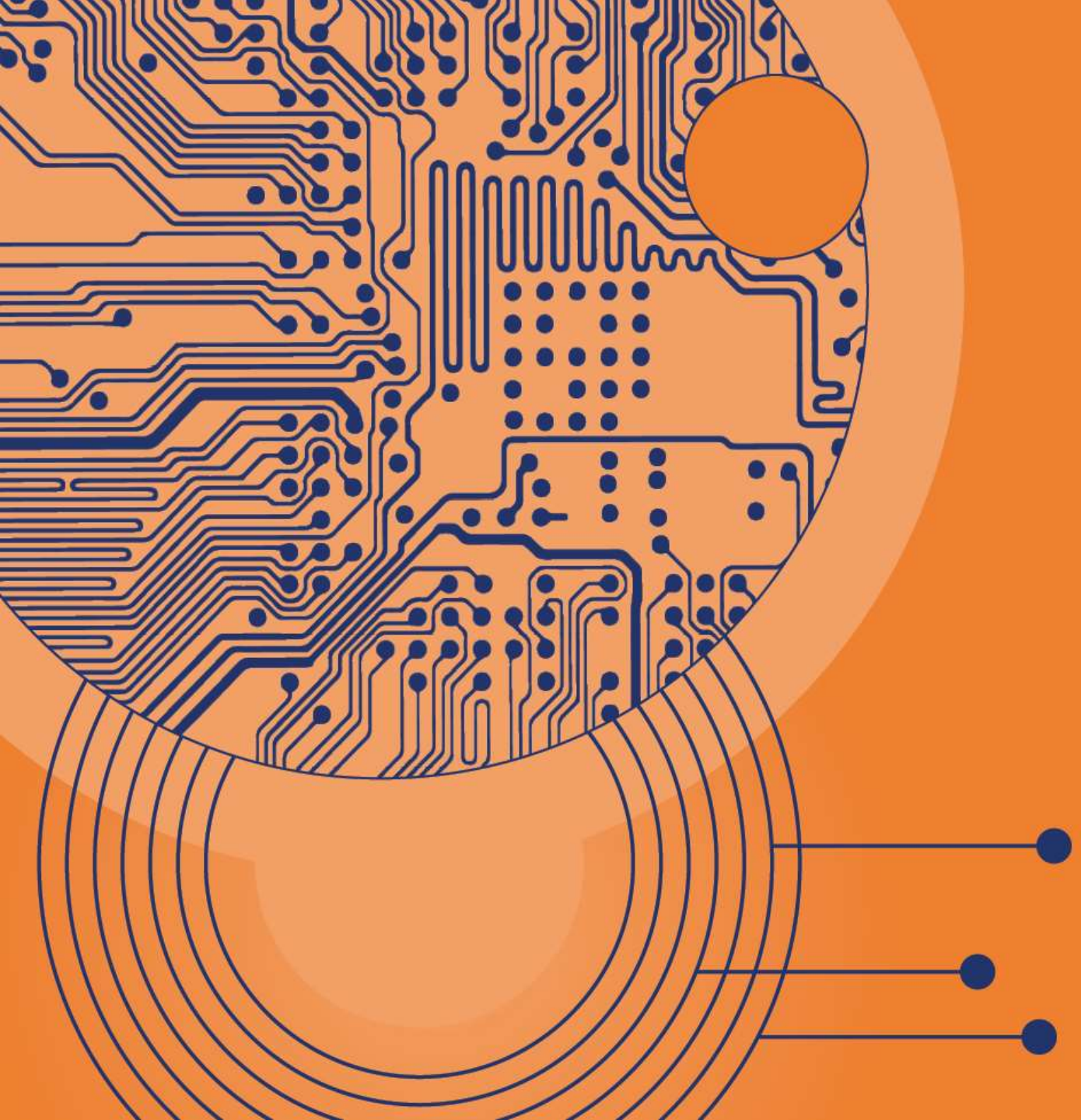
Interregional
Innovation
Investments
Instrument

Info Session:

I3 Instrument Call - Strand Cap2b - Capacity Building in Less Developed Regions

19 November 2025, 9:30 - 12:00 CET



Moderated by

Eric Koch

EISMEA I.01, Head of Sector

Housekeeping rules

Please note that your camera and phone are muted by default.

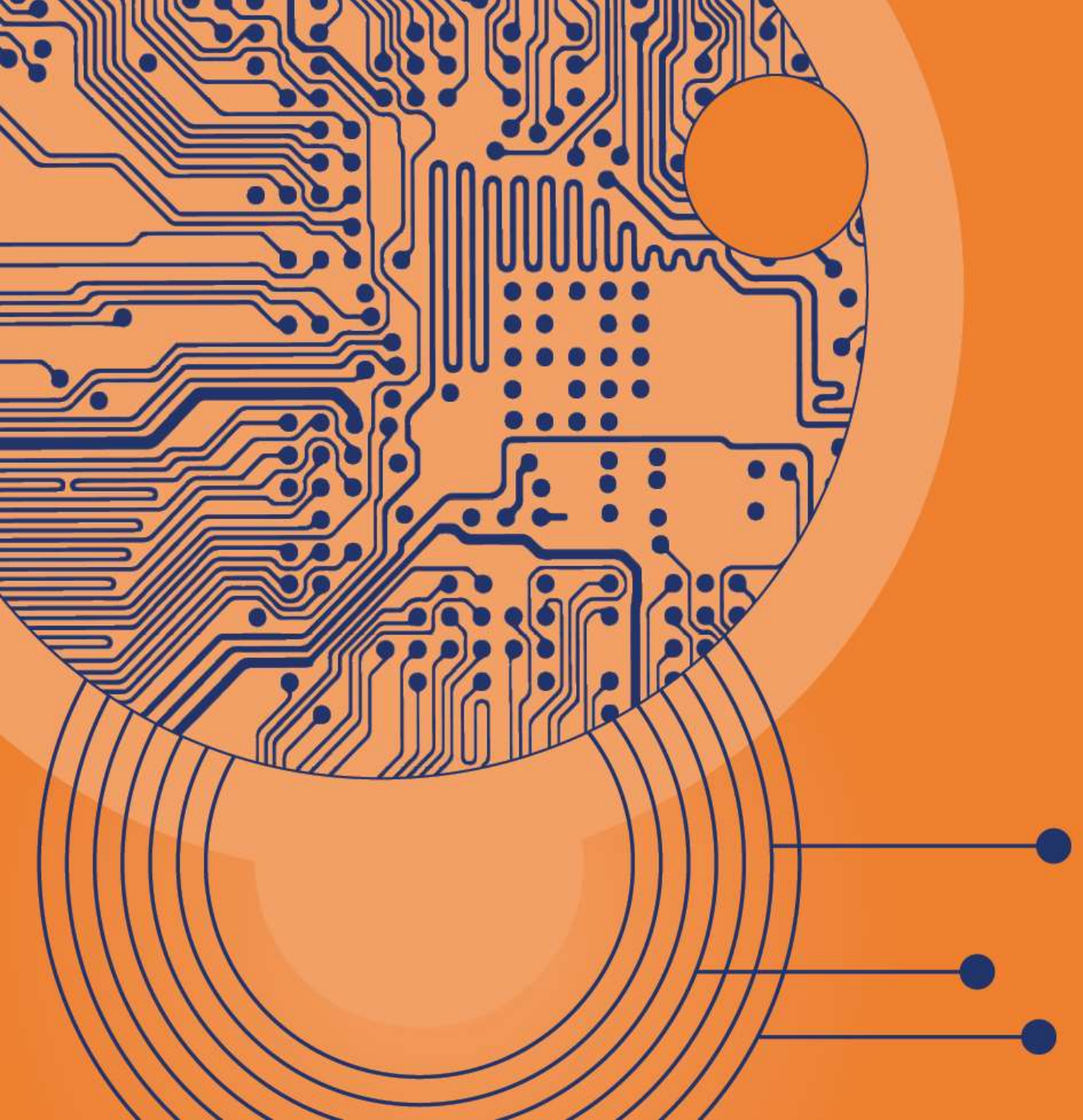
Questions can be asked only via Slido (event code #I3Instrument).

This info session is recorded: if you don't want your name to appear in the recording, please submit the questions in Slido as "Anonymous".

The recording and presentation will be published on the I3 Instrument webpage in the days following the event.

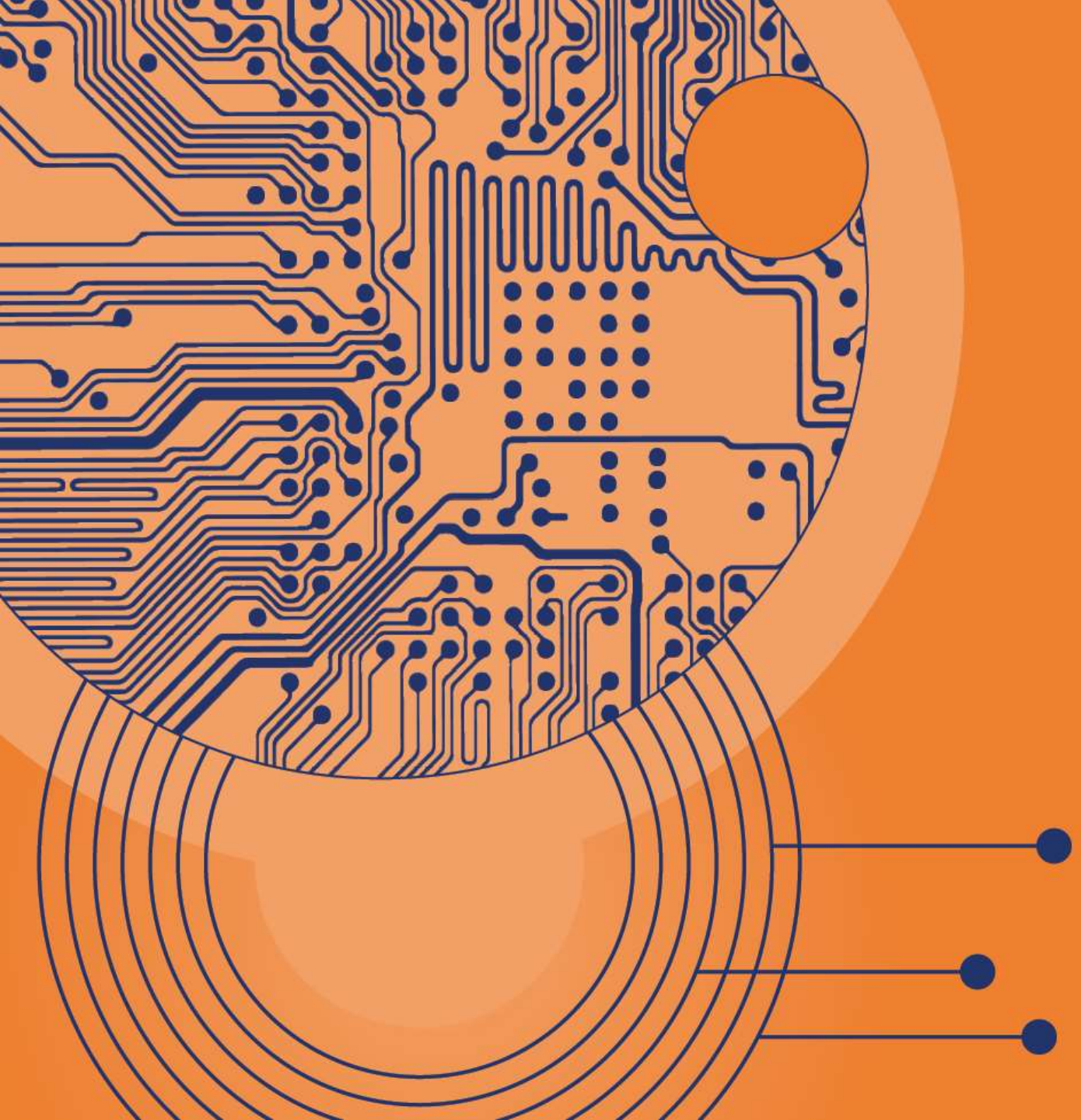
Agenda

9:30	Welcome and introduction
9:40	Policy background
9:50	Strand 2b – Capacity Building in Less Developed Regions
10:25	Detailed budget table
10:40	Legal / financial validation of applicants
10:50	Submitting a good proposal / experience from a running Cap2b project
11:10	Q&A
11:50	Closing remarks



Welcome & introduction

Wolfgang Munch, DG REGIO
Francesca Doria, EISMEA



Policy background

Tomislav Pinter
REGIO G.1, Policy Officer

Why I3 capacity-building?

Europe's competitiveness increasingly depends on how regions collaborate, not only how they perform individually.

Interregional cooperation is essential for scaling innovation, reducing fragmentation, and giving less developed regions access to advanced innovation ecosystems.

Capacity building is not only about ideas and project preparation. It gives administrations and partners the structures, skills and cooperation models they need to take part in EU value chains.

Why I3 capacity-building? (Examples)

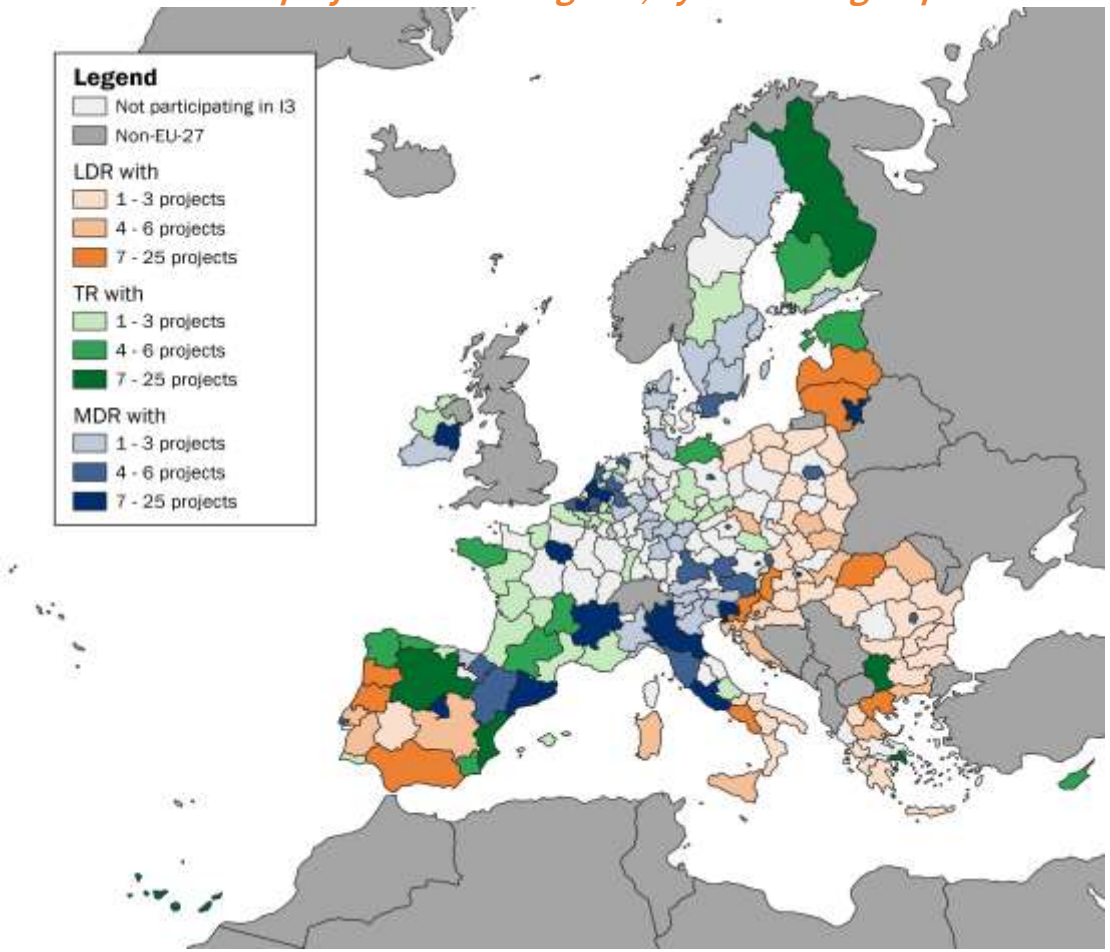
GreenStep is building a shared cooperation platform and a common roadmap that brings together public authorities, SMEs and other regional actors to drive green and digital innovation.

IRM HUB is establishing a Meta-Hub network of regional hubs that help public administrations and regional partners map and engage in critical raw material value chains.

GREET CE builds capacity in clean and sustainable technologies, helping regional ecosystems prepare for interregional value-chain projects and future investment opportunities.

I3 helps spread innovation

Involvement in I3-projects across regions, by cohesion group



Source: I3 project data (last updated 04.09.2025).

No part of Europe should be excluded from participating in innovation and value-chain opportunities.

Obstacles for successful partnerships: fragmented ecosystems, weak coordination, and limited strategic links with research organisations, investors, and industry partners.

These gaps are not only local — they affect Europe's broader competitiveness.

When some territories cannot contribute, the entire innovation landscape becomes less resilient.

I3 in Cohesion policy perspective

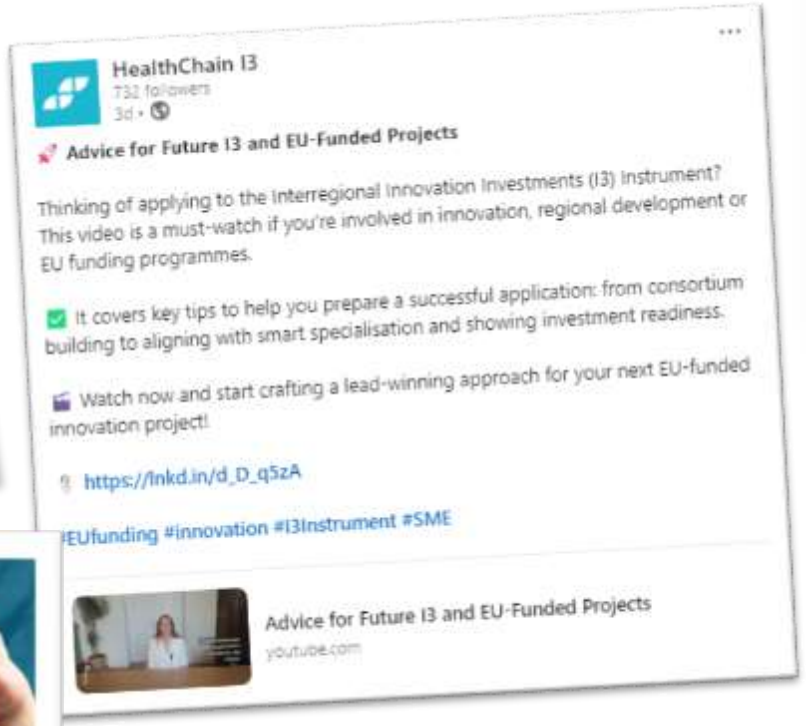
- Added value when:
  - supporting regions with specific challenges, such as difficulties in retaining and attracting talents.
  - promoting the participation of EU outermost regions.
- Projects are encouraged to experiment "out-of-the-box" approaches to deliver validated solutions and tested models that can increase the capacity of regional actors to engage effectively in interregional innovation processes.

I3 supports the Talent Booster Mechanism by promoting tailor-made solutions that help regions retain and develop talent.

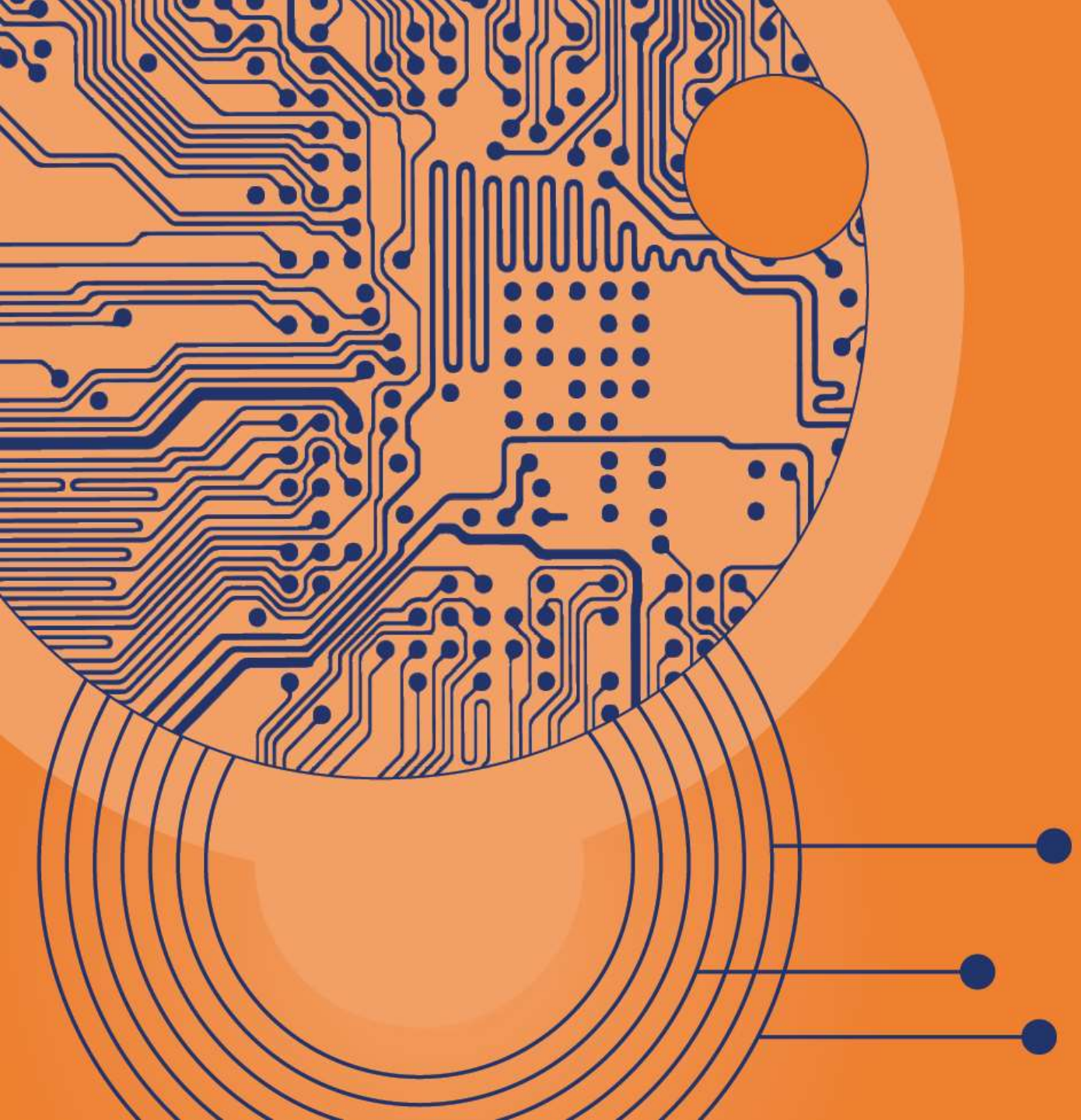
I3 Instrument – Why to apply?

- Concrete opportunity for partnerships to organise themselves for the future.
- Build a stronger foundation for cooperation, clarify your priorities, and prepare for meaningful engagement in European value chains.
- Partnerships that build capacity now will be better placed for the next generation of I3 calls.
- I3 Capacity building: your chance to move from potential to preparedness — and from preparedness to impact.

I3 Instrument – Learn by example



#I3Instrument



Strand 2b – Capacity Building in Less Developed Regions

Valentina Pinna
EISMEA I.01.2, Call coordinator

The I3 Instrument: Driving Cohesion through Smart Specialisation

1. **Funding Source**

   Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) Instrument under the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** Regulation (Article 13)

2. **Core Principle**

   Supports interregional cooperation in innovation, guided by **Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3)**

3. **Policy Goal**

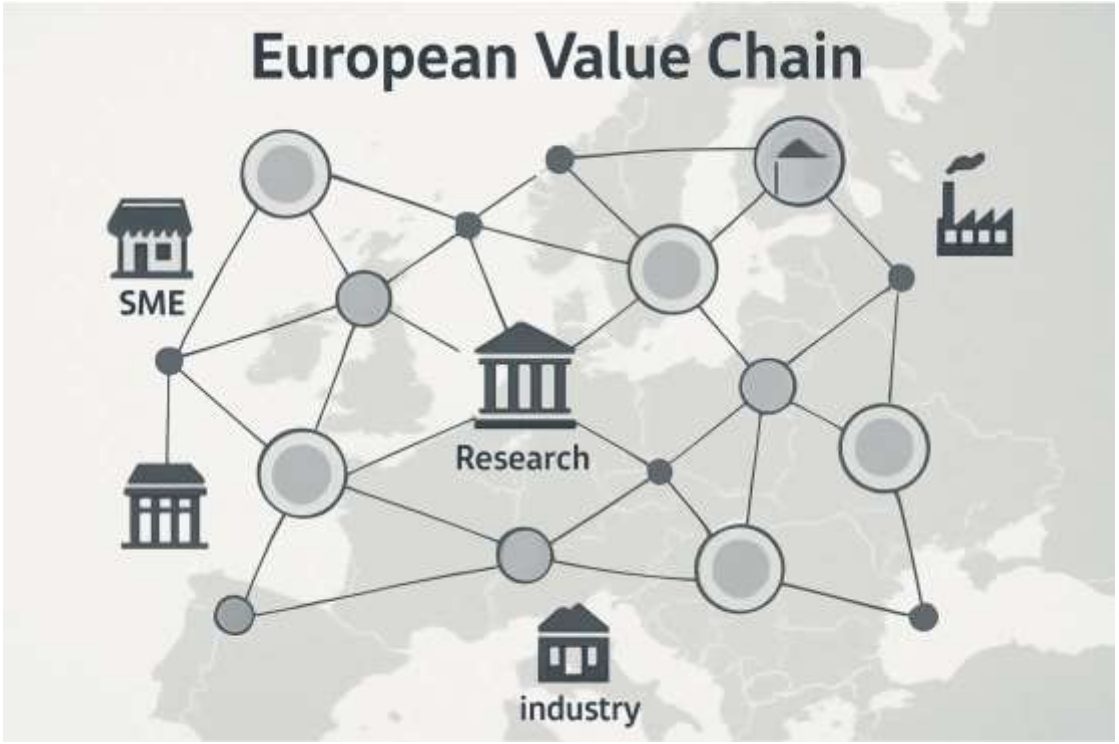
   Develop and strengthen **EU and regional value chains**, with focus on less developed and outermost regions

4. **Mechanism**

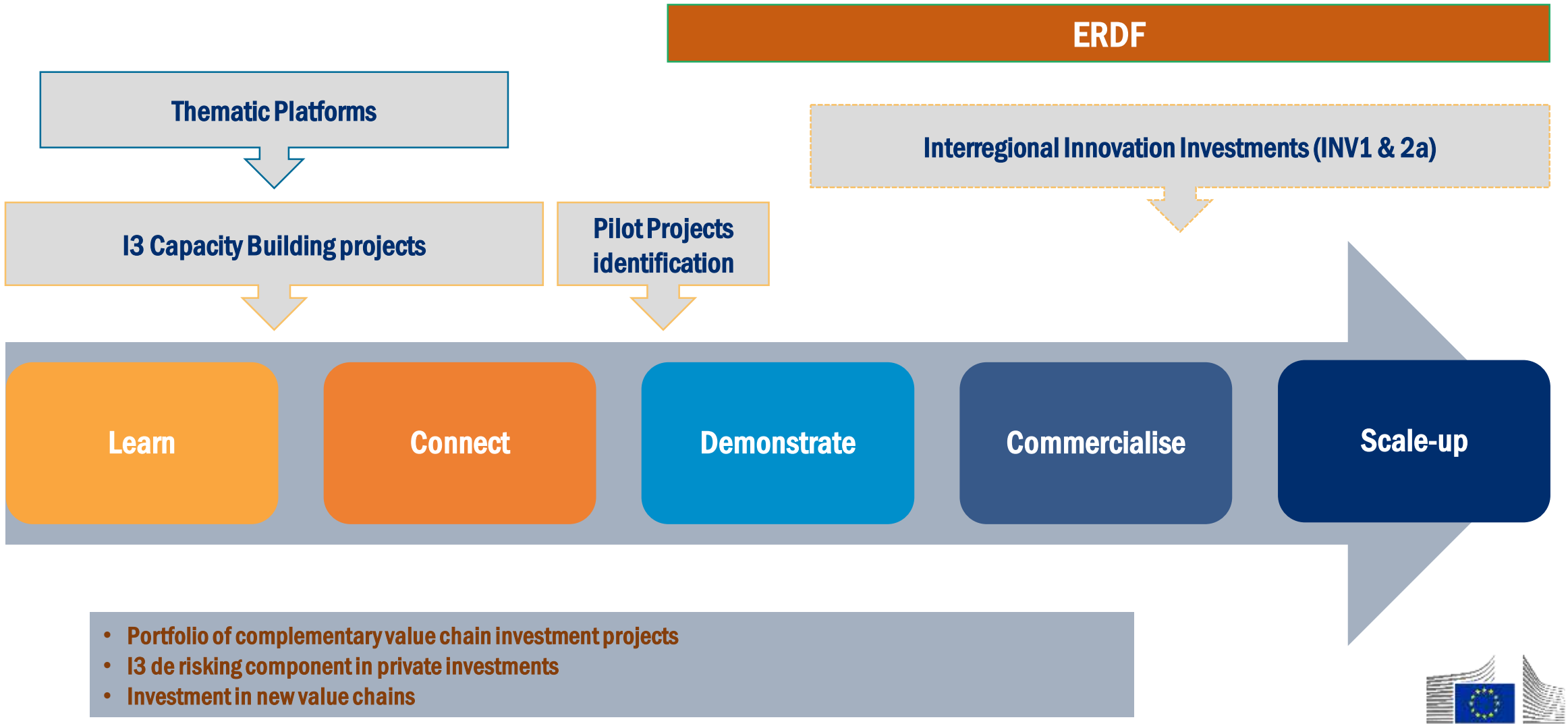
   Promotes innovation creation and diffusion (uptake), by linking regions with **shared or complementary capabilities**

5. **Stakeholders**

   Encourages cooperation across the **Quadruple Helix** (public authorities, businesses, academia, civil society)



I3 Methodology for interregional cooperation



I3 Strand 2b: Bridging Capacity Gaps to Unlock Investment Potential

1 **Core Function**

While Strands 1 and 2a support investment-ready projects, Strand 2b focuses on strengthening regional innovation ecosystems

2 **Target Regions**

Less Developed Regions (LDRs), Transition Regions (TRs), Outermost Regions, and those facing specific challenges

3 **Identified Weaknesses**

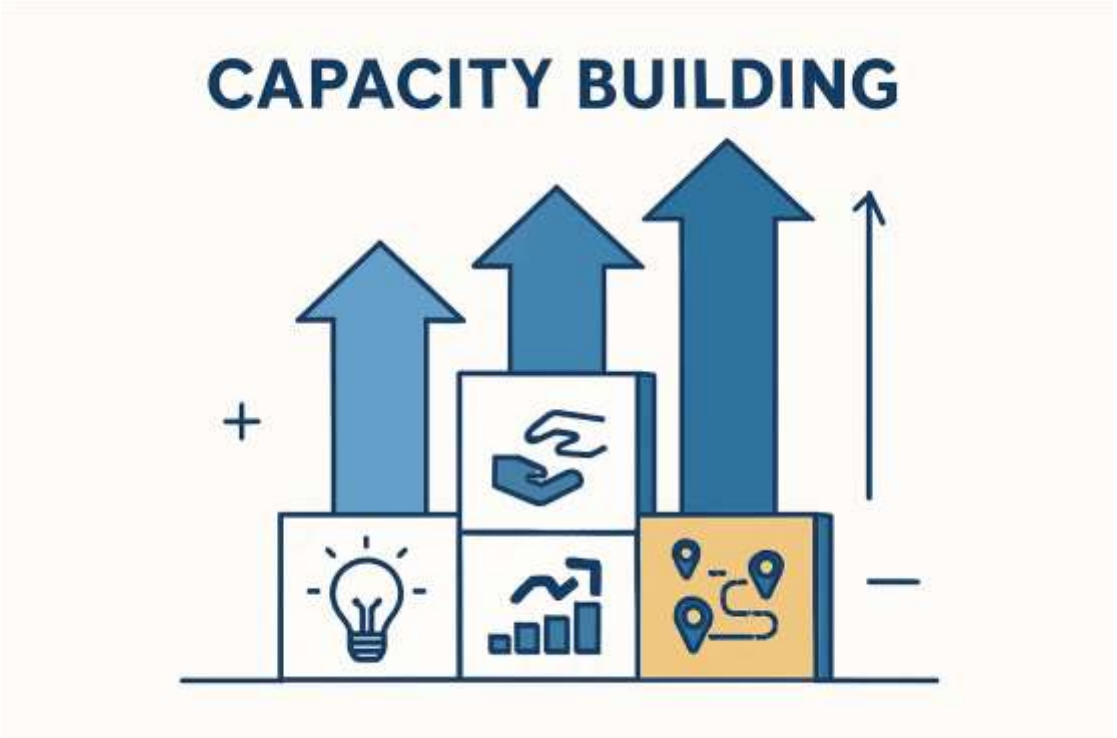
Institutional/administrative shortcomings, fragmented ecosystems, human capital constraints, limited interregional collaboration

4 **The Consequence**

Underrepresentation in EU funding, restricted market access, reduced capacity to tackle global challenges

5 **The Solution provided by I3 CAP 2b**

Build operational, technical, institutional, and governance capacities to prepare for future participation in I3 Investment projects



Call Objectives: Empowering Less Developed Regions to Engage in EU Value Chains

General Call Objective

Build capacity in **less developed regions** to develop and strengthen their **regional innovation ecosystems** and **value chains** through **coordinated and interlinked investments** in several regions.

Support actions focused on **SMEs** to help them cooperate, grow, compete, and play an important role in Europe's economy.

Help less developed regions to **connect to EU value chains** and prepare for future interregional investment projects.

Call Specific Objectives

1. **Capacity Improvement**
   Improve capacity of **public authorities and innovation intermediaries** to support companies in identifying interregional investment portfolios
2. **Interregional Cooperation**
   Enhance interregional cooperation with focus on identifying and sharing **good practices (including** investments identification)
3. **Innovation Approaches**
   Experiment with new approaches to capacity building and ecosystem strengthening
4. **Policy Recommendations for Evidence-Based Policy interventions**
   Develop practical policy recommendations and **strengthen institutional capacities**

   Design evidence-based, targeted **policy interventions**, including updates to regional S3 strategies and innovation policy frameworks for investments

6. **Added Value**
   Promote participation of EU **outermost regions** and support regions with **specific challenges**

CAP 2b - Eligible Activities: A Comprehensive Approach to Capacity Building

1

Institutional & Governance

Strengthening institutional and governance frameworks, fostering **policy learning**, and embedding effective practices.

2

Policy Alignment

Policy focus linked to **EU strategic priorities**: New European Innovation Agenda, Clean Industrial Deal, STEP, Blue Economy.

3

Investment Portfolio Identification

Developing methodologies and tools for mapping and identifying **interregional investment opportunities**.

4

Skills & Talent Development

Fostering staff exchange, peer learning, and talent development to strengthen human capital and transfer know-how.

5

Ecosystem Connection

Enabling cluster/company missions and connecting regional ecosystems through **twinning activities**.

6

Innovation Management

Building capacity of innovation managers and business developers to engage in **interregional investment processes**.

Capacity Building opportunities for regional innovation ecosystems (CAP 2b)

Support for creating & reinforcing innovative and resilient ecosystems

Advice for the identification of value chain investment projects

Optimising the relevant **local administrative structures** and **governance processes**

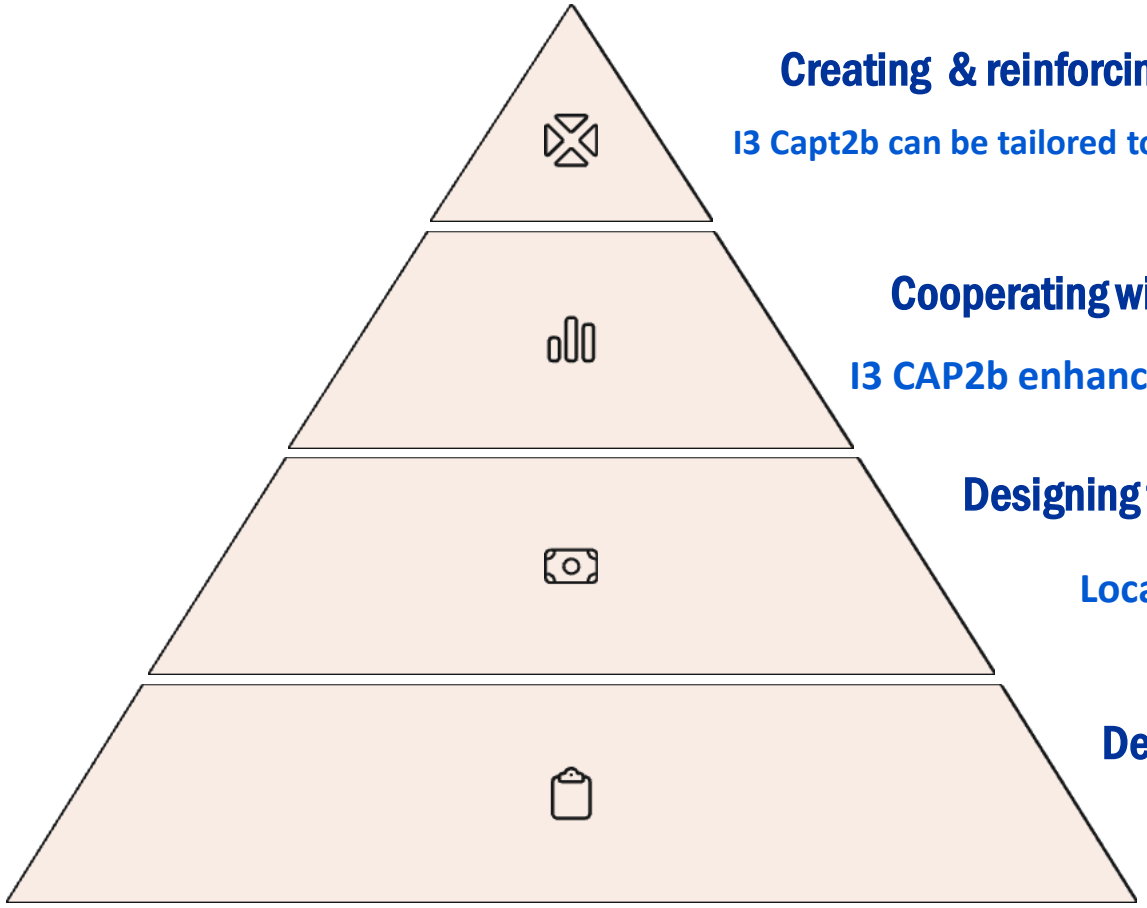
Strengthening links & structures among the stakeholders of **quadruple-helix ecosystems**

- Building Capacity in LDRs to **deliver concrete interregional innovation investments** along the **S3 priorities**
- Building capacity to **participate in EU global competitive value chains, in partnerships with other regions.**

VALUE CHAIN INVESTMENTS

S3 SMART SPECIALISATION

Core Actions: Ecosystem Building and Connection



Creating & reinforcing resilient interregional innovation ecosystems

I3 Capt2b can be tailored to regional strengths, reinforce the ecosystems internally activating innovation intermediaries

Cooperating with industry associations, TTOs & other key players

I3 CAP2b enhance quadruple-helix collaboration capabilities, innovation capacity and knowledge transfer.

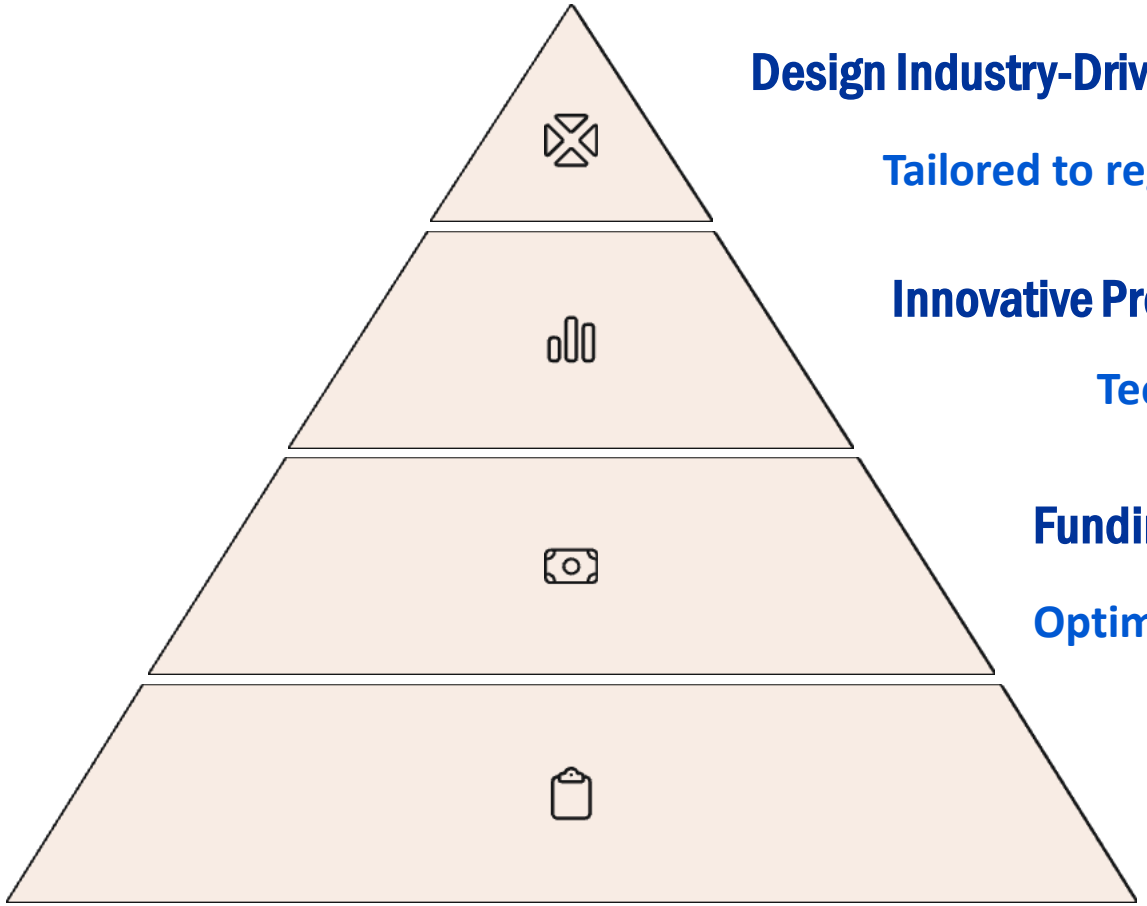
Designing the policy mix for innovation & internationalization in SMEs

Local / regional roadmaps connecting SMEs to EU /global Value Chains

Developing tools/know-how for the participation in international alliances, networks & partnerships

This strengthens the entire ecosystem internally and create the conditions to connect externally.

Core Actions: Support for investment project identification



Design Industry-Driven Value Chain Initiatives

Tailored to regional strengths & coherent with S3

Innovative Project Feasibility Assessment

Technology, Business & Market readiness

Funding Mix Identification

Optimal financing structure development, evaluation bankability

Legal and Technical Support

Comprehensive pre-piloting assistance

This strengthens the entire project development cycle.

Comprehensive Support Actions

Mapping & Benchmarking

Value chain analysis and ecosystem performance assessment including skills gaps and talent pipelines

Matchmaking

Connecting competencies with business opportunities

Networking

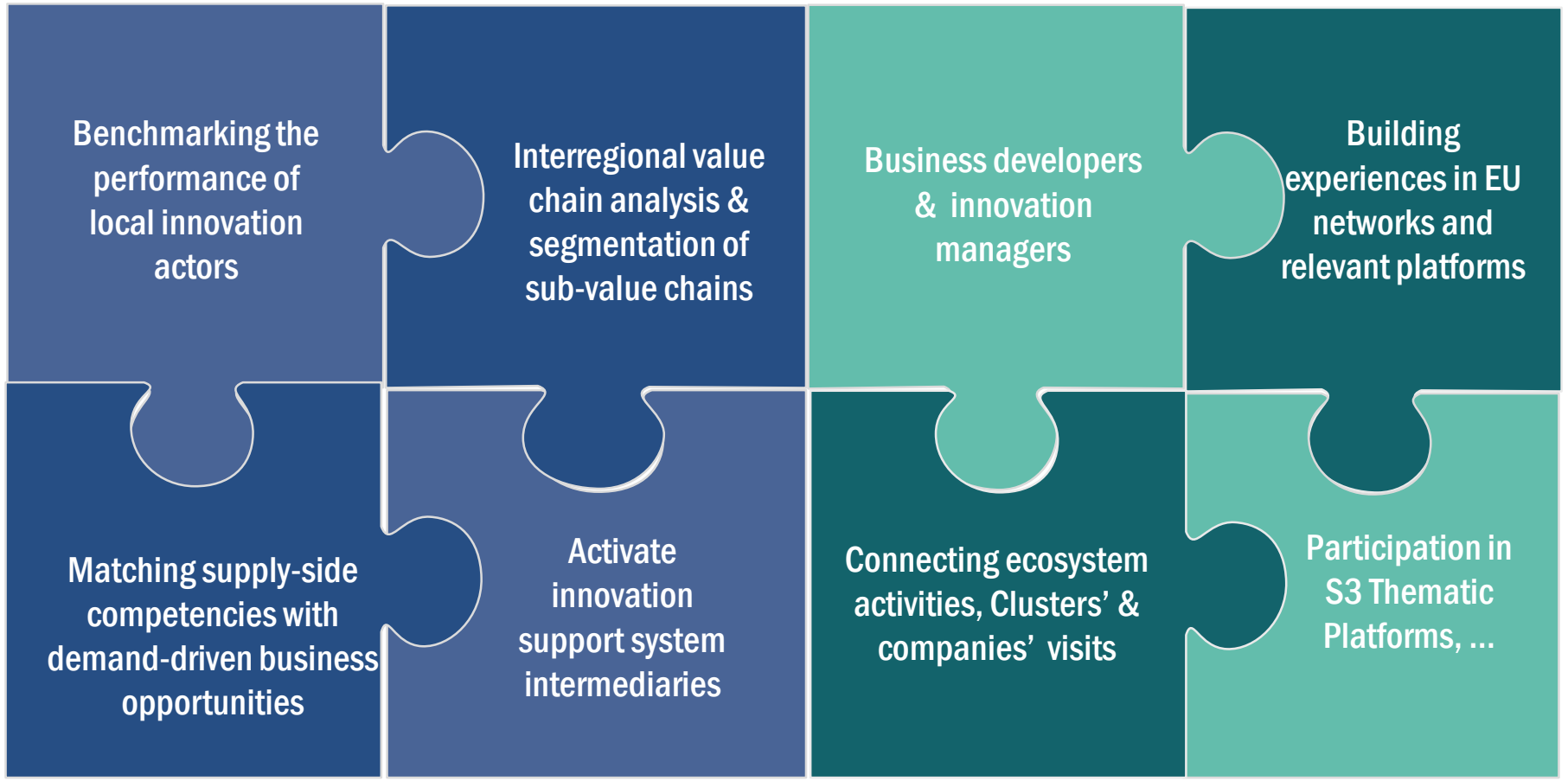
Participation to Thematic S3 Platforms/partnerships & cluster integration

Staff Exchange

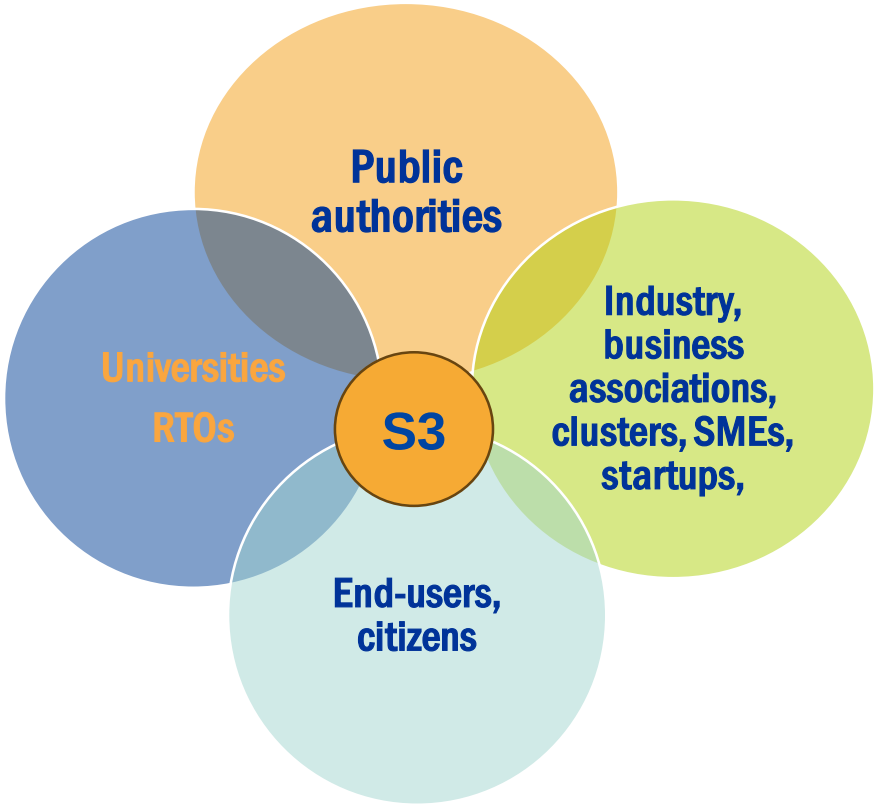
Knowledge transfer among business developers & innovation actors from LDR and MDRs

I3 Cap2b activate innovation intermediaries and SMEs throughout the support system. This creates sustainable regional development pathways.

Examples of Support activities



Who can benefit from I3 capacity building opportunities?



Q-helix partnership

on behalf of regional / national innovation ecosystems

Partners from regions with different cohesion status

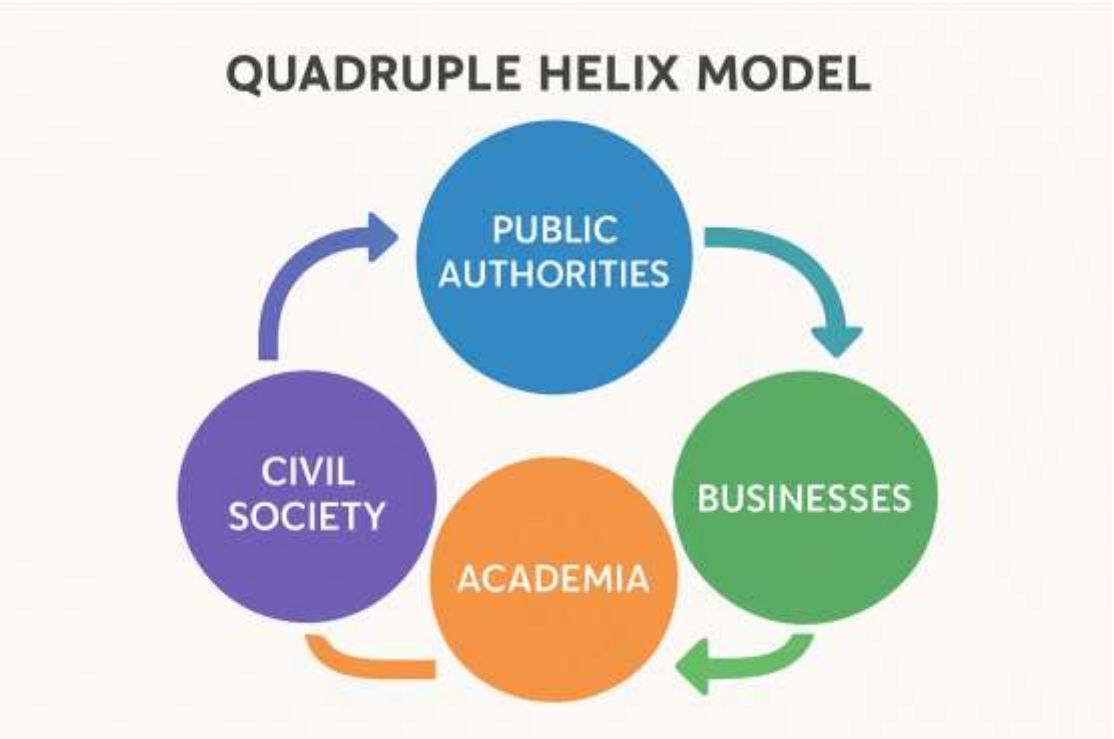
(MRD, LDR, TR) at the appropriate NUTS level

(different for strand 1 and 2a, Cap2b)

Consortium covering demand & supply side

Consortium Requirements: Mandatory conditions

1. **Minimum Size**
   Minimum two independent legal entities from two different eligible countries
2. **Regional Balance**
   Must represent at least one "less developed region" and one "more developed region" of an EU Member State
3. **Stakeholder Inclusion**
   Must include Quadruple-Helix innovation actors (public administration, research/academia, industry, end-users)
4. **Intermediary Role**
   Must include innovation intermediaries with umbrella role (e.g., clusters, RTOs) to maximise SME participation
5. **Coordinator Mandate**
   Coordinator must be established in an LDR or Outermost Region of an EU Member State and be a public body, non-profit, or entrusted entity



Key Performance Indicators: Demonstrating Tangible Impact

Interregional Dimension

- **Number of regions** at different levels of development involved

Innovation Dimension

Innovative approaches used for the animation of regional innovation ecosystems and the promotion of companies' engagement

Interregional alliances established or in preparation

Policy Dimension

- Number of **S3 Partnerships** in
- which regions actively participate

Number of **policy measures** conceived to engage ecosystems externally

Socio-Economic Dimension

- **Value chain analyses**
- **Intermediaries engaged** in
- interregional activities

Investment Dimension

- **Number of business cases** identified for each value chains investments,

Number of companies involved in business cases

Gender Dimension

- **Targets in women's participation**
- (e.g. women innovators)

Gender equality measures in participating organisations

Gender-specific innovations based on gender and intersectional analysis

*Consortia are encouraged to **identify and measure tailored KPIs** (quantitative and qualitative) in addition to those listed above, including **action plans, indicators** related to specific **business cases** and **ecosystem governance arrangements.***

Expected Results: Concrete Outputs and Long-Term Outcomes

Concrete Outputs

- **Policy measures** (in place or ready for adoption) to increase innovation capacity
- **Cooperation arrangements** with industry associations and key players
- **Membership** in relevant networks and innovation platforms
- **Tested tools** for mapping demand-driven business opportunities
- **Pipeline** for I3 investment projects based on value chain mapping
- **Business cases** ready to apply for I3 investment calls
- **Increased maturity of business cases** (technology, business, market readiness assesment)
- **Dissemination and exploitation plan** for replication and scaling up

Outcomes

- **Increased capacities of less developed regions** to deliver concrete interregional innovation investments
- **Enhanced capacity of regional innovation ecosystems** to strengthen participation in EU value chains
- **Capacity to design synergies** and to tap into other funding instruments to cover additional funding needs
- **Enhanced SME capacity** to cooperate in interregional value chains
- **Ability to attract** private investments or create public-private partnerships

Long-Term Impact

- **Committed intermediaries** supporting companies in innovation and value chains
- **Increased capacity** to contribute to Europe's innovation competitiveness
- **Improved support measures** for innovation diffusion and collaboration
- **Improved cooperation to de-risk investments** and leverage market potential
- **Improved business climate** for competitive ecosystems
- **Reinforced cooperation** capacity of quadruple-helix ecosystems
- **Increased readiness** to cooperate in globally competitive EU value chains

Financial and Administrative Overview

Available Call Budget

EUR 9,800,000

Estimated total budget. The Agency reserves the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between I3 call strands.

Indicative Project Budget Range

EUR 500K – EUR 1.5M

Expected range per project. Proposals requesting other amounts may be considered if duly justified.

Indicative Project Duration

18 to 24 months

Projects should range between 18 and 24 months. Extensions possible if duly justified.

Submission Deadline

19 March 2026

17:00:00 CET (Brussels). Submit electronically via Funding & Tenders Portal.

Mandatory Document

Endorsement Letter from Member State's or regional competent body for all consortium members, confirming alignment with national/regional S3 policies

Proposal Limit

Maximum 70 pages

Part B of Application Form. Evaluators will not consider additional pages or annexes

Seize the Opportunity: Engage with I3-2026-CAP2b

Next Steps for Applicants

1. **Review Documentation**
   Carefully read the Call document, Model Grant Agreement, and EU Grants AGA for complete guidance
2. **Build Your Consortium**
   Ensure compliance with mandatory composition: LDR/MDR balance and Quadruple-Helix representation
3. **Focus on Impact**
   Detail collaboration with key networks (EEN, S3 CoP) and elaborate strong exploitation and sustainability plans
4. **Submit Electronically**
   Submit via Funding & Tenders Portal before deadline: 19 March 2026 – 17:00:00 CET (Brussels)
5. **Seek Support**
   Refer to the "Help" section of the Call document and consult the Online Manual for additional guidance

Strategic Imperative

Invest in Capacity, Connect to Value Chains,

Drive European Innovation

This call represents a unique opportunity to strengthen regional innovation ecosystems, build institutional capacity, and prepare less developed regions to participate in globally competitive EU value chains.

By addressing structural and thematic challenges through coordinated interregional cooperation, Strand 2b projects create the foundation for sustainable innovation, growth and enhanced European competitiveness.

Choose an approach and use guiding questions for building your projects

- ✓ *sectorial approach,*
- ✓ *technology enabling approach,*
- ✓ *challenge driven approach,*
- ✓ *open innovation approach/living lab*
- ✓ *etc.*

1 - Reinforcing regional innovation ecosystems:

How does your project strengthen collaboration among EU regions

How are the different stakeholders of the Q-Helix involved?

2- Creating the right framework conditions for innovation

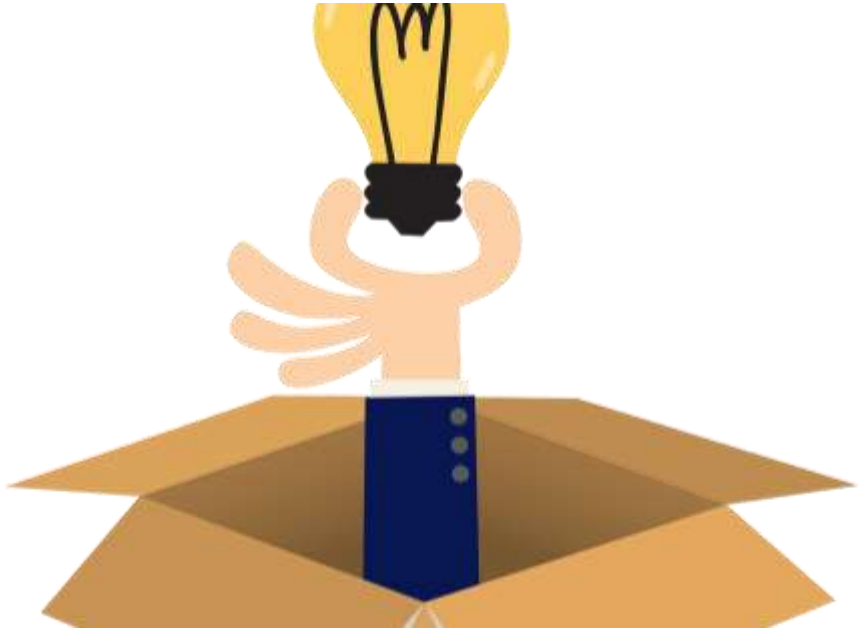
How do you work with Managing Authorities or ERDF implementing bodies?

Does your project promote any regional reforms or transformation processes?

How are you addressing these aspects in your dedicated deliverables?

Cooperating with I3 Support Facility, Capacity Building Heros (coming soon)

3 - Addressing specific regional challenges:



Does your project contribute to the industrial transition or just transition goals?

How is your project tackling "specific challenges" such as talent attraction, or innovation in outermost regions, isolated or sparsely populated regions?

How is my project contributing to the twin transition?

4 - How do you identify, support and boost the interregional innovation cases?

*How do you plan to identify, support and boost individual **interregional innovation cases**? What **methodology** do you use to select and bring innovative investments into your pipeline?*

*Developing the **interregional dimension**:*

Will your project collaborate with EU networks such as EEN, S3 CoP, TSSP Platforms, EDIH, EIT, ECCP or other EU relevant umbrella organisations?

If yes, how are you engaging with them?

enterprise europe network

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

EDIH European Digital Innovation Hubs Network

EUROPEAN CLUSTER COLLABORATION PLATFORM

5 - Value chain dimension

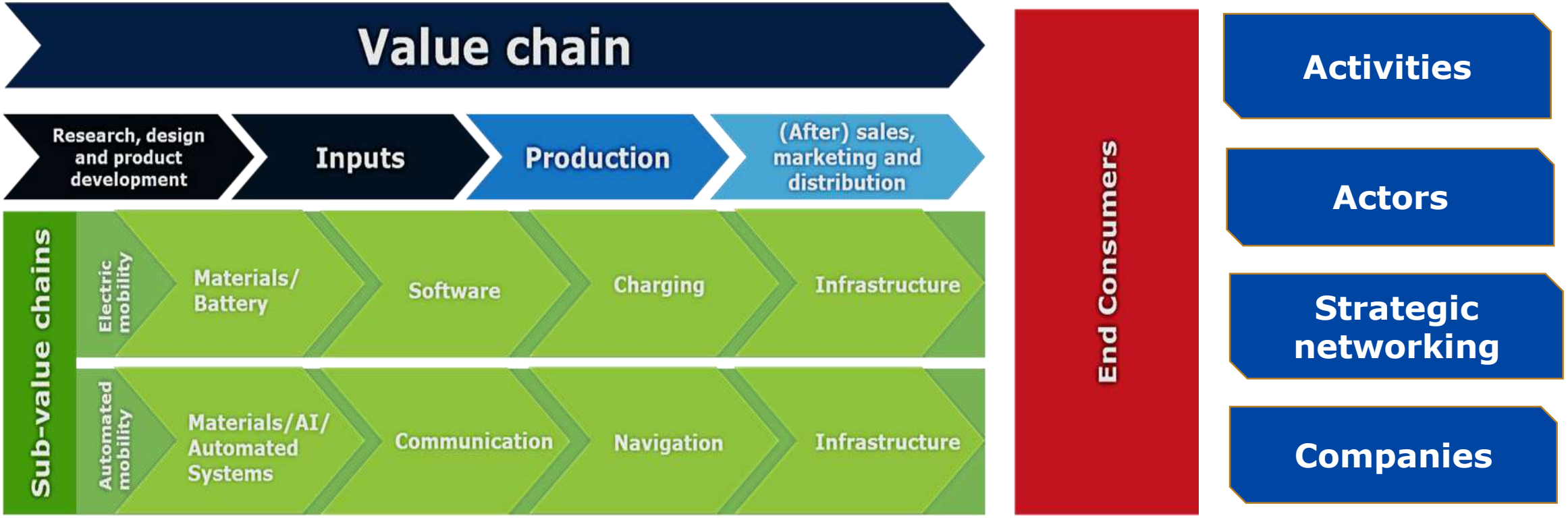
*How are you planning to use **Smart Specialisation Strategies** (S3) to identify the **role of different regions in the value chains**? How wil you build on the consortium strengths and complementarities?*

From S3 thematic platforms to I3 projects or vice versa**: try to explain how you will use **S3CoP** and **I3 Support Facility

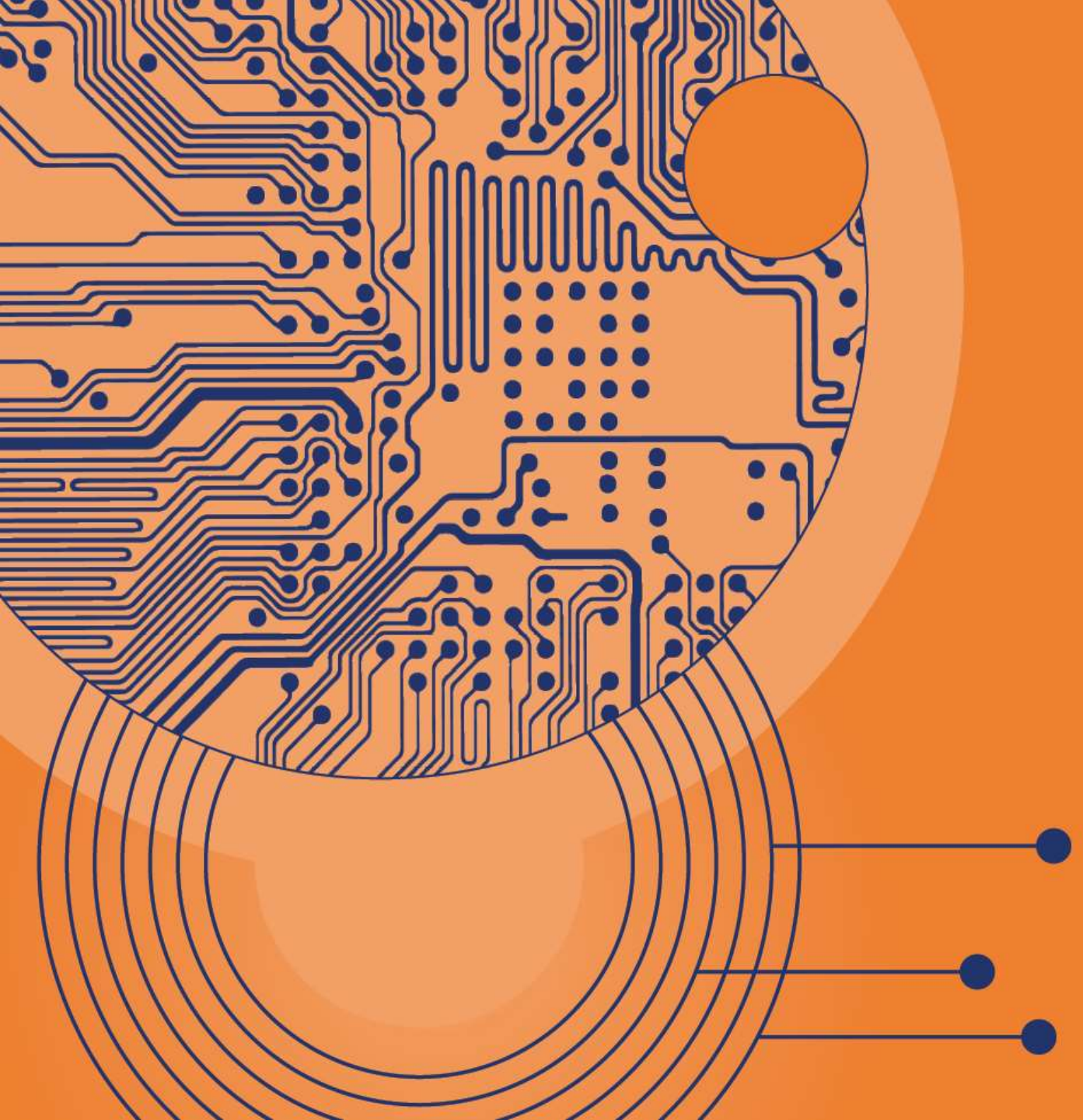
*How will you identify **synergies**? How will you involve **companies** in the value chain?*

What is a value chain?

Example of Autonomous Vehicles



Interconnected across sectors and borders



Detailed budget table

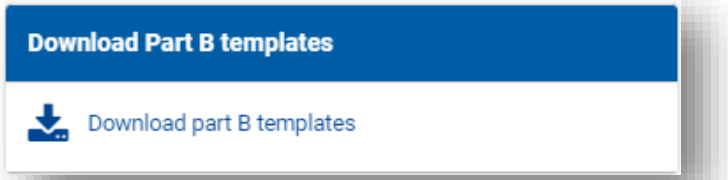
Anna Batra
EISMEA C.01.2, Financial Officer
Jana Doblasova
EISMEA C.01.2, Financial Officer

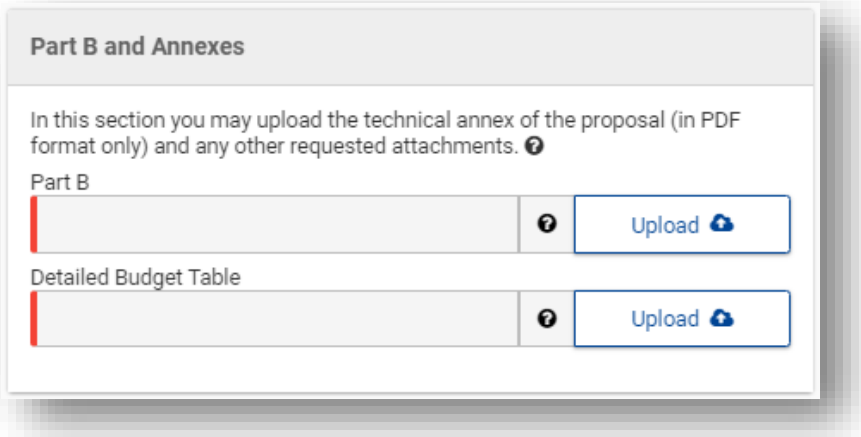
Financial documents for submission

Summarised budget table (Application Form Part A – manually filled online)

Detailed budget table (Annex to Application Form Part B – template to be uploaded in allowed format)

- financial data in both tables need to match – if not, Summarized budget table takes precedence
- no paper (hard copy) submission – all submission is online!

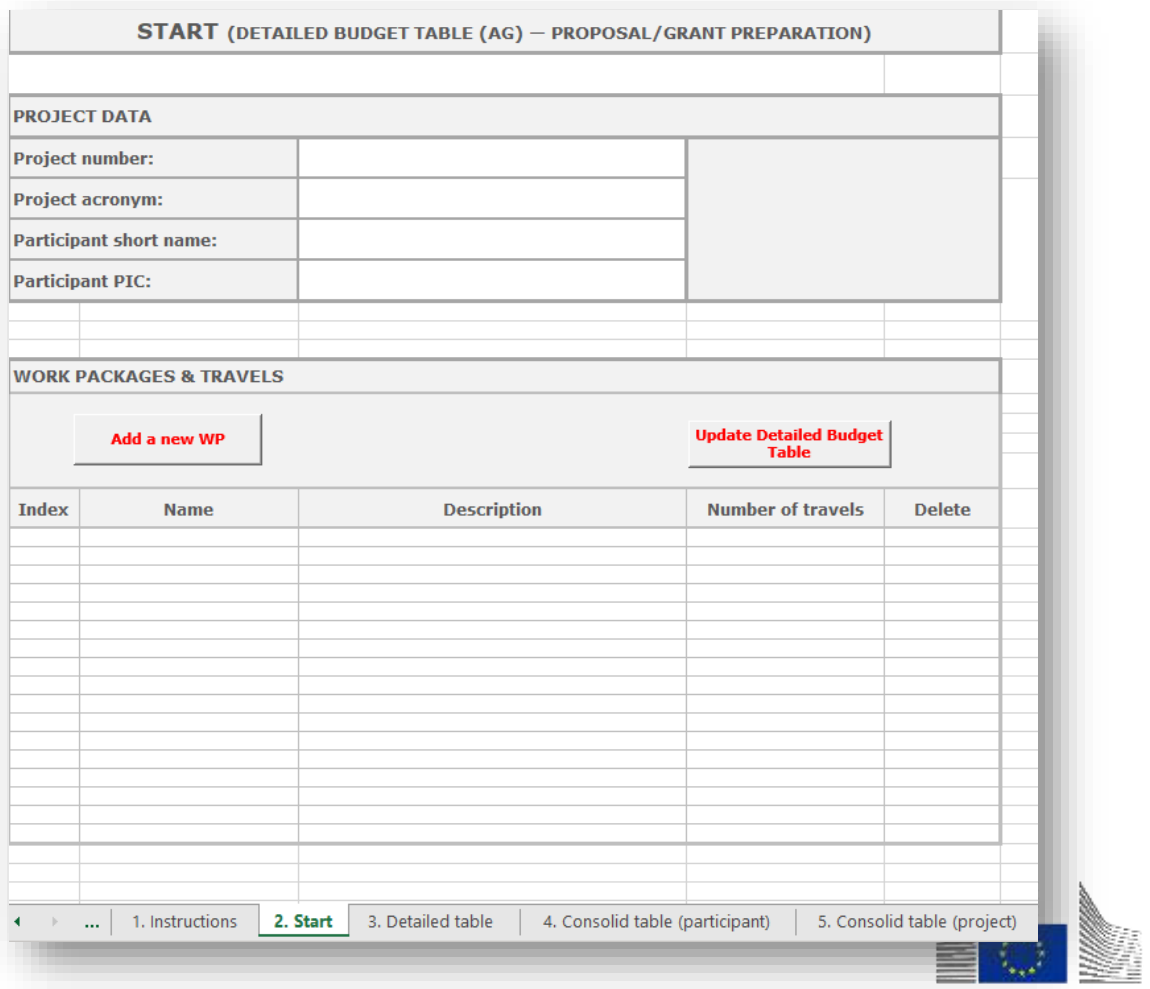




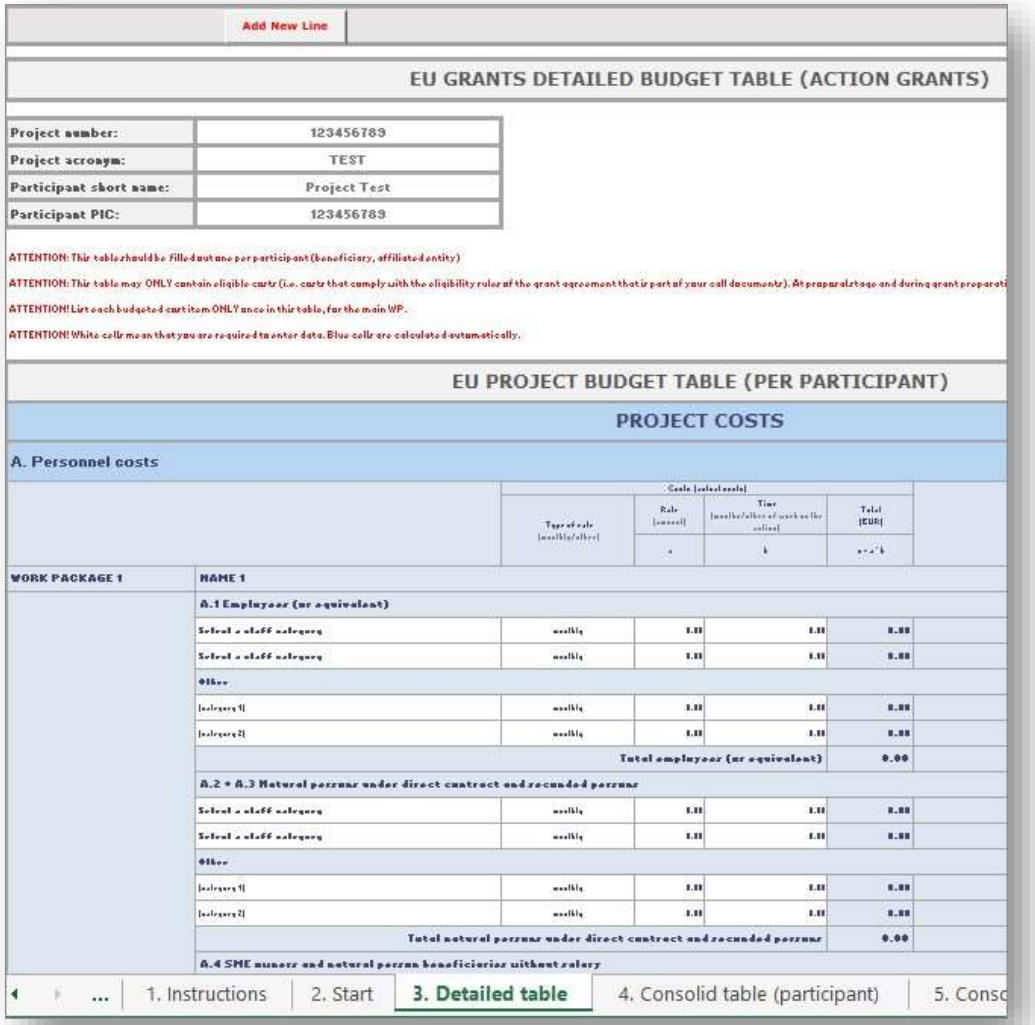
Detailed budget template

- Introductory pages (not to be submitted)
- **Sheet 2. Start** – fill in the project data and add the WPs

  -> update table
- Submit only sheets 3, 4 & 5



Detailed budget template



Add New Line

EU GRANTS DETAILED BUDGET TABLE (ACTION GRANTS)

Project number:	123456789
Project acronym:	TEST
Participant short name:	Project Test
Participant PIC:	123456789

ATTENTION: This table should be filled out one per participant (beneficiary, affiliated entity)

ATTENTION: This table may ONLY contain eligible costs (i.e. costs that comply with the eligibility rules of the grant agreement that is part of your call documents). At preparatory stage and during grant preparati

ATTENTION! List each budgeted cost item ONLY once in this table, for the main WP.

ATTENTION! White cells mean that you are required to enter data. Blue cells are calculated automatically.

EU PROJECT BUDGET TABLE (PER PARTICIPANT)

PROJECT COSTS

A. Personnel costs

		Type of role (monthly/other)	Rate (amount)	Time (months/other unit of work on the action)	Total (EUR)
			a	b	a*b
WORK PACKAGE 1	NAME 1				
	A.1 Employees (or equivalent)				
	Select a staff category	monthly	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Select a staff category	monthly	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Other				
	[category 1]	monthly	0.00	0.00	0.00
	[category 2]	monthly	0.00	0.00	0.00
				Total employees (or equivalent)	0.00
	A.2 + A.3 Natural persons under direct contract and seconded persons				
	Select a staff category	monthly	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Select a staff category	monthly	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Other				
	[category 1]	monthly	0.00	0.00	0.00
	[category 2]	monthly	0.00	0.00	0.00
				Total natural persons under direct contract and seconded persons	0.00
	A.4 SME owners and natural persons beneficiaries without salary				

... | 1. Instructions | 2. Start | 3. Detailed table | 4. Consolid table (participant) | 5. Consc

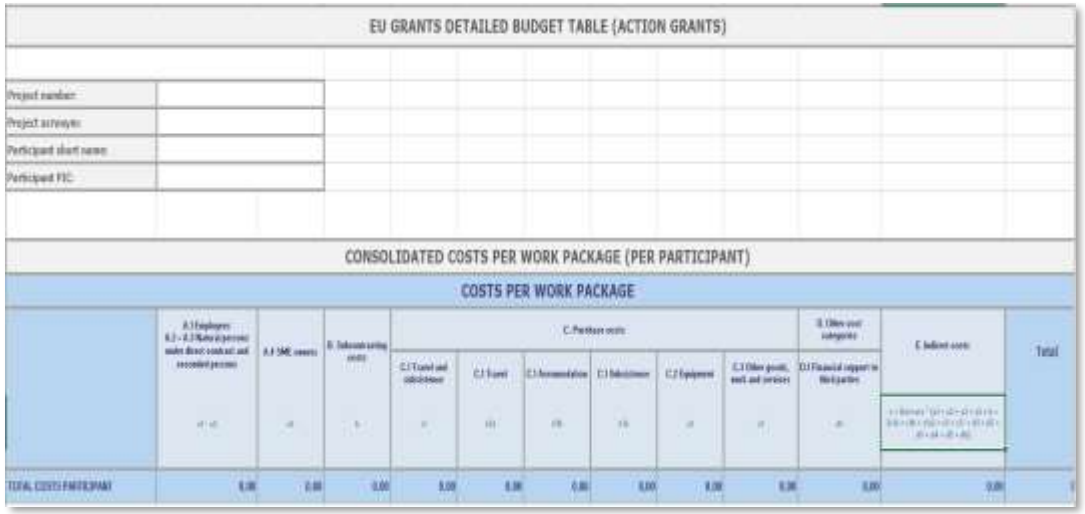
Sheet 3. Detailed table

- **Complete 1 Detailed budget table per each member or affiliated entity! HOW?**
- If no cost in a certain category – box to be left empty
- Eligible costs only
- List each item only once
- List each costs in its main WP section
- Use your (best) estimates
- White cells: data to enter / Blue cells: auto-calculated

Detailed budget template

Sheet 4. Consolidated table per participant

- Shows different cost heading per work package
- Upon correct entry of data in the Detailed table this table is automatically calculated by the system

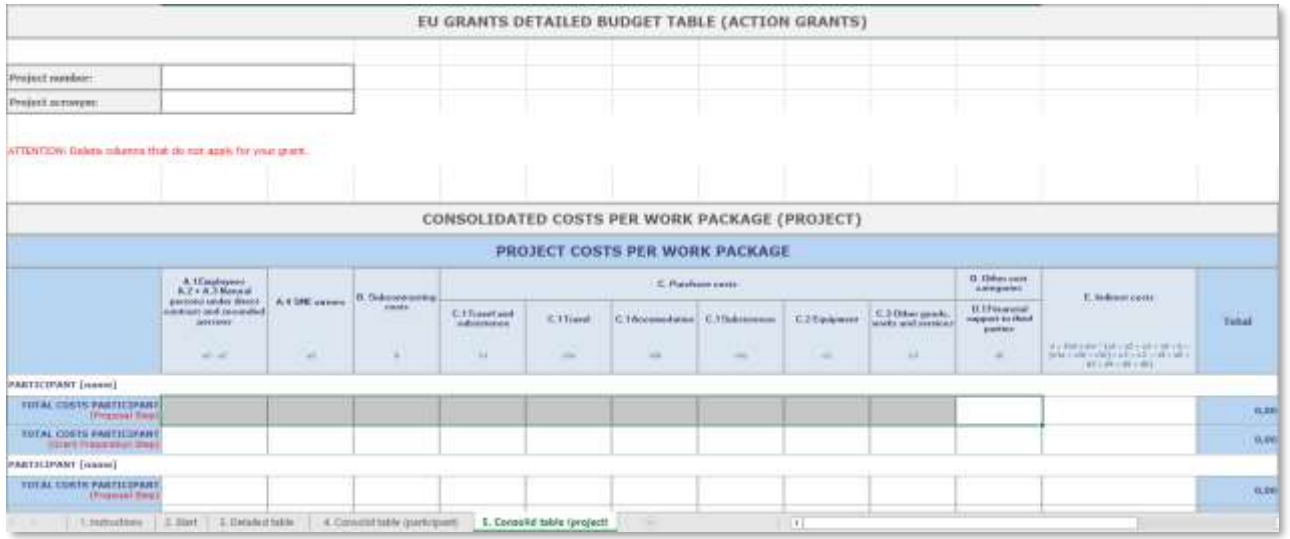

EU GRANTS DETAILED BUDGET TABLE (ACTION GRANTS)

CONSOLIDATED COSTS PER WORK PACKAGE (PER PARTICIPANT)

COSTS PER WORK PACKAGE

Sheet 5. Consolidated table per project

- Shows costs per work package/ per participant
- To be manually filled in by the Coordinator
- Must match financial data entered and automatically calculated in other tables and budget in Part A


EU GRANTS DETAILED BUDGET TABLE (ACTION GRANTS)

CONSOLIDATED COSTS PER WORK PACKAGE (PROJECT)

PROJECT COSTS PER WORK PACKAGE

Detailed budget table – per beneficiary

Project costs

- A. Personnel costs
- B. Subcontracting
- C. Purchase costs
- E. Indirect costs

Project income

- EU contribution
- Revenues and contributions by third parties
- Own resources

A. Personnel costs

A.1 Employees (or equivalent)

- **Eligible personnel**: employment contract (or equivalent) with the beneficiary + assigned to the action;
- **Eligible cost:** salaries, social security contributions, taxes and other costs linked to the remuneration (if arise from national law or the employment contract + **actually incurred**).
- **Monthly rates** for each person who will work on the action to be presented in the Detailed budget table.

A.2 Natural persons under a direct contract and A.3 Seconded persons

Natural persons under direct contract (not employment): civil, free-lance or expert, eligible if:

- Works under similar conditions as employees (supervision, office presence, etc)
- Costs are not significantly different from those for personnel performing similar tasks
- Work results belong to the beneficiary
- Costs declared amount solely to remuneration + taxation costs for the person in question

Seconded persons by a third party against payment

A. Personnel costs

A.4 SME owners and natural persons without salary

SME owners are eligible if:

- Owner/co-owner + beneficiary of the action + SME + not receiving a salary;
- SME status declared in the Portal

Natural person beneficiaries: beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary

Cost calculation method:

- Unit cost (daily rate) x number of day-equivalents worked on the action
- Unit cost (daily rate) to be used: Commission Decision C(2020)7715 or Annex 2a
- Horizontal ceiling of 215 days per year

A. Personnel costs

PROJECT COSTS								
A. Personnel costs								
		Costs (actual costs)						
		Type of rate (monthly/other)	Rate (amount)	Time (months/other unit of work on the action)	Total (EUR)		Also working for other work packages? YES/NO and which WP	Description of project role/activities/responsibilities
			a	b	c = a*b			
WORK PACKAGE 1	0							
	A.1 Employees (or equivalent)							
	Senior experts/advisors/researchers	monthly	0,00	0,00	**0,00**			
	Administrative personnel	monthly	0,00	0,00	**0,00**			
	Senior experts/advisors/researchers	monthly	0,00	0,00	**0,00**			
	Other							
	[category 1]	monthly	0,00	0,00	**0,00**			
	[category 2]	monthly	0,00	0,00	**0,00**			
				Total employees (or equivalent)	**0,00**			
	A.2 + A.3 Natural persons under direct contract and seconded persons							
	Select a staff category	monthly	0,00	0,00	**0,00**			
	Select a staff category	monthly	0,00	0,00	**0,00**			
	Other							
	[category 1]	monthly	0,00	0,00	**0,00**			
	[category 2]	monthly	0,00	0,00	**0,00**			
				Total natural persons under direct contract and seconded persons	**0,00**			
	A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries without salary							
	SME owners/natural person beneficiaries without salary	daily	0,00	0,00	**0,00**			
				Total SME owners and natural person beneficiaries without salary	**0,00**			
				Total personnel for this WP	**0,00**			

B. Subcontracting costs

B. Subcontracting costs					
		Costs (actual costs)		Also used for other work packages? YES/NO and which WP	Description of subcontracted project tasks/activities
WORK PACKAGE 1	0				
	1 [Subcontract short name]	0,00			
	2 [Subcontract short name]	0,00			
	Total subcontracting for this WP	0,00			

Subcontracting

Subcontracting

Give details on subcontracted project tasks (if any) and explain the reasons why (as opposed to direct implementation by the Beneficiaries/Affiliated Entities).
Subcontracting — Subcontracting means the implementation of 'action tasks', i.e. specific tasks which are part of the EU grant and are described in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.
***Note:** Subcontracting concerns the outsourcing of a part of the project to a party outside the consortium. It is not simply about purchasing goods or services. We normally expect that the participants have sufficient operational capacity to implement the project activities themselves. Subcontracting should therefore be exceptional.*
Include only subcontracts that comply with the rules (i.e. best value for money and no conflict of interest; no subcontracting of coordinator tasks).

Work Package No	Subcontract No (continuous numbering linked to WP)	Subcontract Name (subcontracted action tasks)	Description (including task number and BEN/AE to which it is linked)	Estimated Costs (EUR)	Justification (why is subcontracting necessary?)	Best-Value-for-Money (how do you intend to ensure it?)
	S1.1					
	S1.2					

Other issues:	Insert text
If subcontracting for the project goes beyond 30% of the total eligible costs, give specific reasons.	

C.1 Travel, accommodation and subsistence costs

Be justified: necessary under the action, planned in the description of the action, supported by the relevant documents, made following the usual practice of the beneficiary

Budgeted as UNIT costs using the values from the Commission Decision C(2021)35, as amended by Commission Decision C(2024)5405)

- Calculations for **travel costs** are made on the basis of the distance between the departure and arrival point -> Flight and rail calculator to be used
- **Accommodation** and **subsistence rates** are fixed per each country *(for calls with opening date as from 13 May 2025)*
- Actual costs - only if the particular instance of travel is not covered in the EC Decision above

C.1 Travel, accommodation and subsistence costs

C. Purchase costs

C.1 Travel and subsistence

		Costs (actual costs)	Costs (unit cost)			Also part of other work packages? YES/NO and which WP	Description (e.g. international/not international; place of activity/destination; number of days; number of persons (speakers, personnel and participants whose costs will be covered); transport means; average price per person, subsistence cost/daily allowances)
			Amount per unit	Number of units	Total (EUR)		
WORK PACKAGE 1	0						
	Example: Consortium meetings						
	Speakers						
	Travel costs	0,00	0,00	0,00	**0,00**		
	Accomodation costs	0,00	0,00	0,00	**0,00**		
	Subsistence costs	0,00	0,00	0,00	**0,00**		
	Personnel						
	Travel costs	0,00	0,00	0,00	**0,00**		
	Accomodation costs	0,00	0,00	0,00	**0,00**		
	Subsistence costs	0,00	0,00	0,00	**0,00**		
	Participants						
	Travel costs	0,00	0,00	0,00	**0,00**		
	Accomodation costs	0,00	0,00	0,00	**0,00**		
	Subsistence costs	0,00	0,00	0,00	**0,00**		
	Total travel costs for this travel	**0,00**					
	Total accomodation costs for this travel	**0,00**					
	Total subsistence costs for this travel	**0,00**					
	Total travel	**0,00**					
	Total travel costs for this WP	**0,00**					
	Total accomodation costs for this WP	**0,00**					
	Total subsistence costs for this WP	**0,00**					
	Total travel for this WP	**0,00**					
WORK PACKAGE 2	0						

C.2 Equipment costs

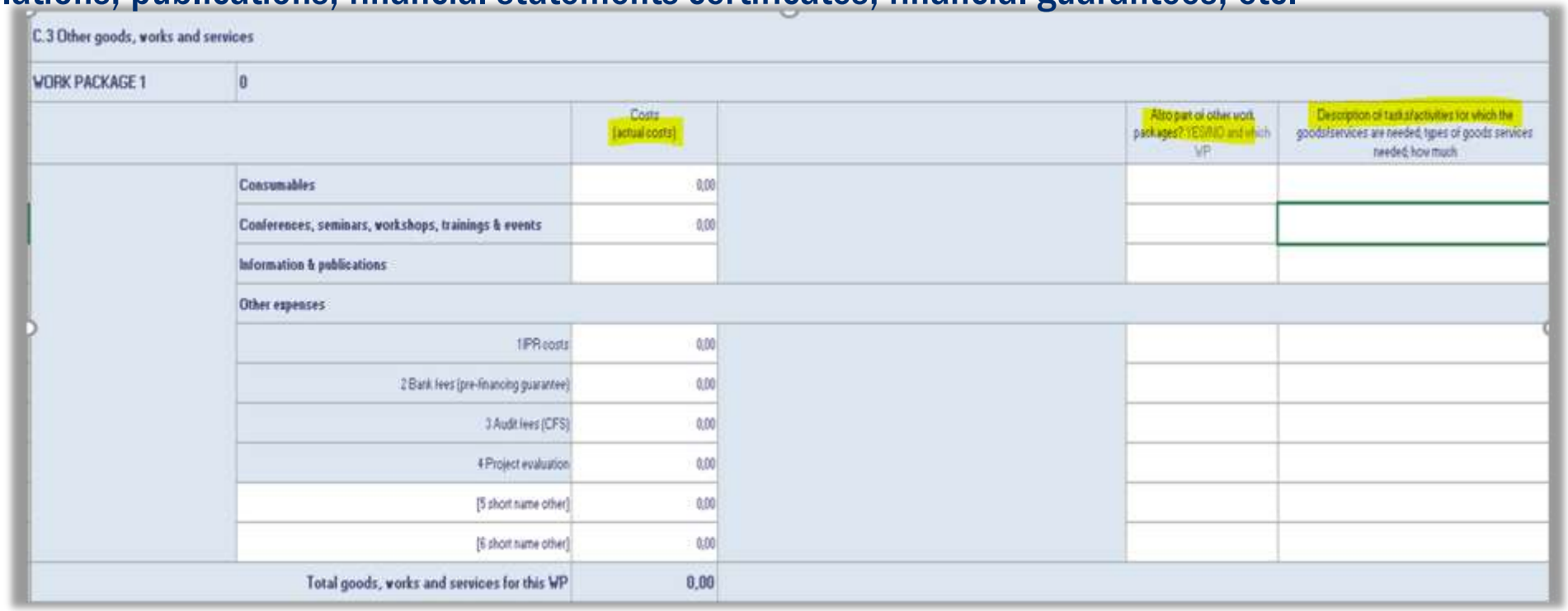
- New or second-hand
- Renting and leasing (different box in the detailed budget table)
- Basic rule: **Depreciation**
- Eligibility: Corresponds to **duration** of the action + **rate** of actual use for the action
- Recorded in the assets register (acc. to international accounting standards or usual practice of the beneficiary)

C.2 Equipment								
WORK PACKAGE 1	0							
	C.2.1 Purchase (depreciation/full cost)							
		Costs (actual costs)					Also part of other work packages? YES/NO and which WP	Description of task/s/activities for which the equipment is needed
		Price	Depreciation method (e.g. 36 month or 60 month)	Number of months allocated to the action	Rate of use for the action (100% or less if used also for other purposes)	Total (EUR)		
		a	b	c	d	e = (c/b * d) * a		
	1 [Equipment short name]	0,00	0	0,00	0%	**0,00**		
	2 [Equipment short name]	0,00	0	0,00	0%	**0,00**		
	3 [Equipment short name]	0,00	ATTENTION! Can be used only if full cost option in the grant agreement			**0,00**		
					Total depreciation	**0,00**		
	C.2.2 Rental and leasing (rate of use/full cost)							
		Costs (actual costs)					Also part of other work packages? YES/NO and which WP	Description of task/s/activities for which the equipment is needed
		Monthly rent/fee	Number of months of use for the action		Rate of use for the action (100% or less if used also for other purposes)	Total (EUR)		
		a	b		c	d = a*b*c		
	1 [Equipment short name]	0,00	0,00		0%	**0,00**		

C.3 Other costs

- Purchased specifically for the implementation of the action
- Best value for money or the lowest price
- Declared costs actually incurred

Examples: catering, meeting room rent, leaflets printing, consumables and supplies, dissemination, translations, publications, financial statements certificates, financial guarantees, etc.



C.3 Other goods, works and services					
WORK PACKAGE 1	0				
		Costs (actual costs)		Also part of other work packages? YES/NO and which WP	Description of task/activities for which the goods/services are needed, types of goods services needed, how much
	Consumables	0,00			
	Conferences, seminars, workshops, trainings & events	0,00			
	Information & publications				
	Other expenses				
	1 IPR costs	0,00			
	2 Bank fees (pre-financing guarantee)	0,00			
	3 Audit fees (CFS)	0,00			
	4 Project evaluation	0,00			
	[5 short name other]	0,00			
	[6 short name other]	0,00			
	Total goods, works and services for this WP	0,00			

E. Indirect costs

Running or operating costs (overheads)

- Not directly linked to the action implementation and not to be attributed directly to it
- Example: stationery, rent of the office, utilities etc.
- No breakdown of these costs is required
- **7% flat rate of Σ A. Personnel costs + B. Subcontracting + C. Purchase costs**

E. Indirect costs			
		Costs (flat-rate)	
ALL WORK PACKAGES	Total estimated direct costs (on which indirect cost flat-rate is based, see GA eligibility article)	0,00	
	Flat-rate (%)	7%	ATTENTION! Check that the rate is in line with the call conditions. Put 0% if you receive an EU Operating Grant and are not eligible to charge indirect costs*
	Total indirect costs	0,00	
Total indirect costs		**0,00**	
TOTAL COSTS PARTICIPANT		**0,00**	

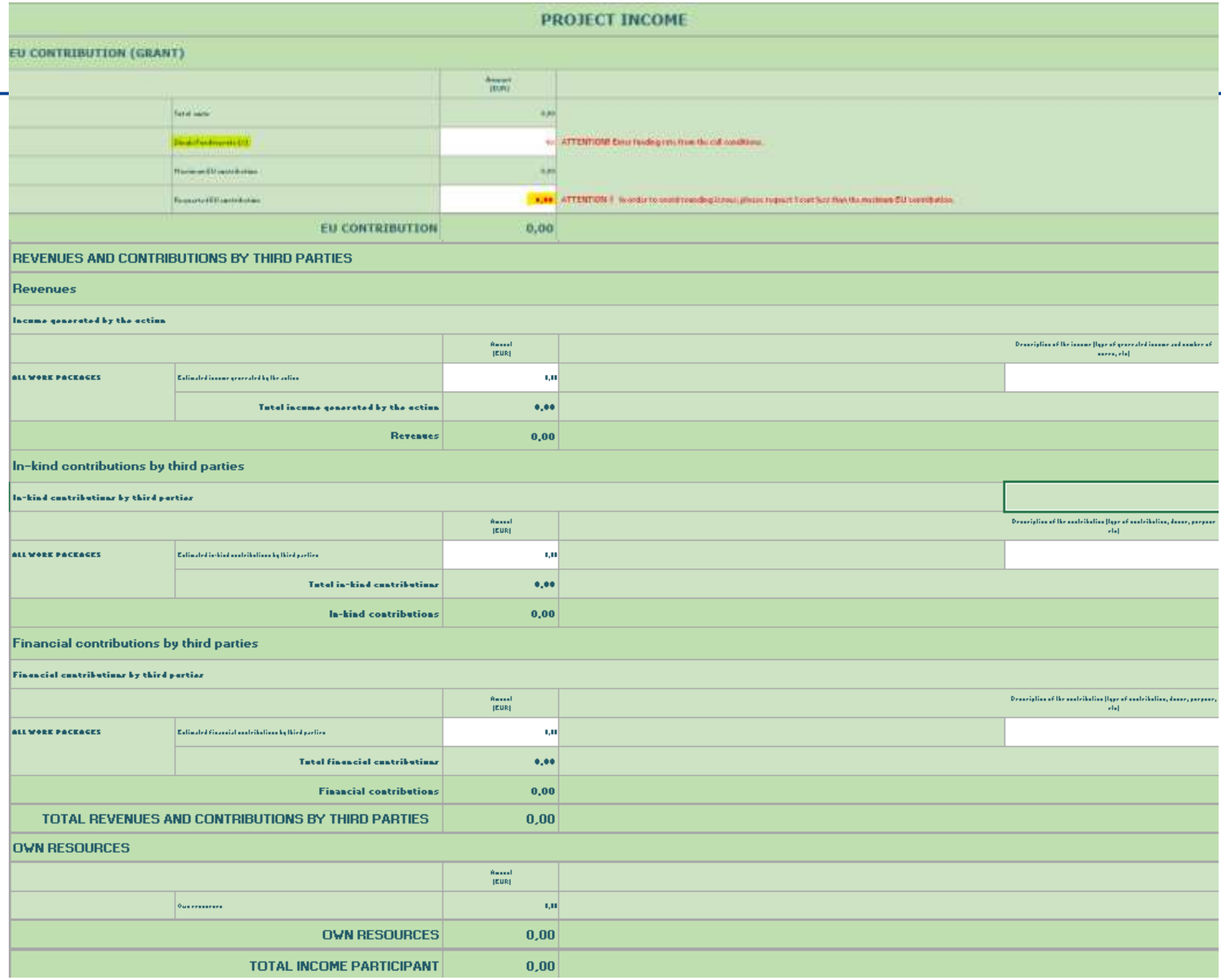
Project income

EU contribution (grant): 100% for all other cost categories.

Revenues and contributions by third parties:

- **income generated by the action** such as direct revenues or receipts (e.g. conference participants fees, sales of books)
- **financial contributions FROM third parties**

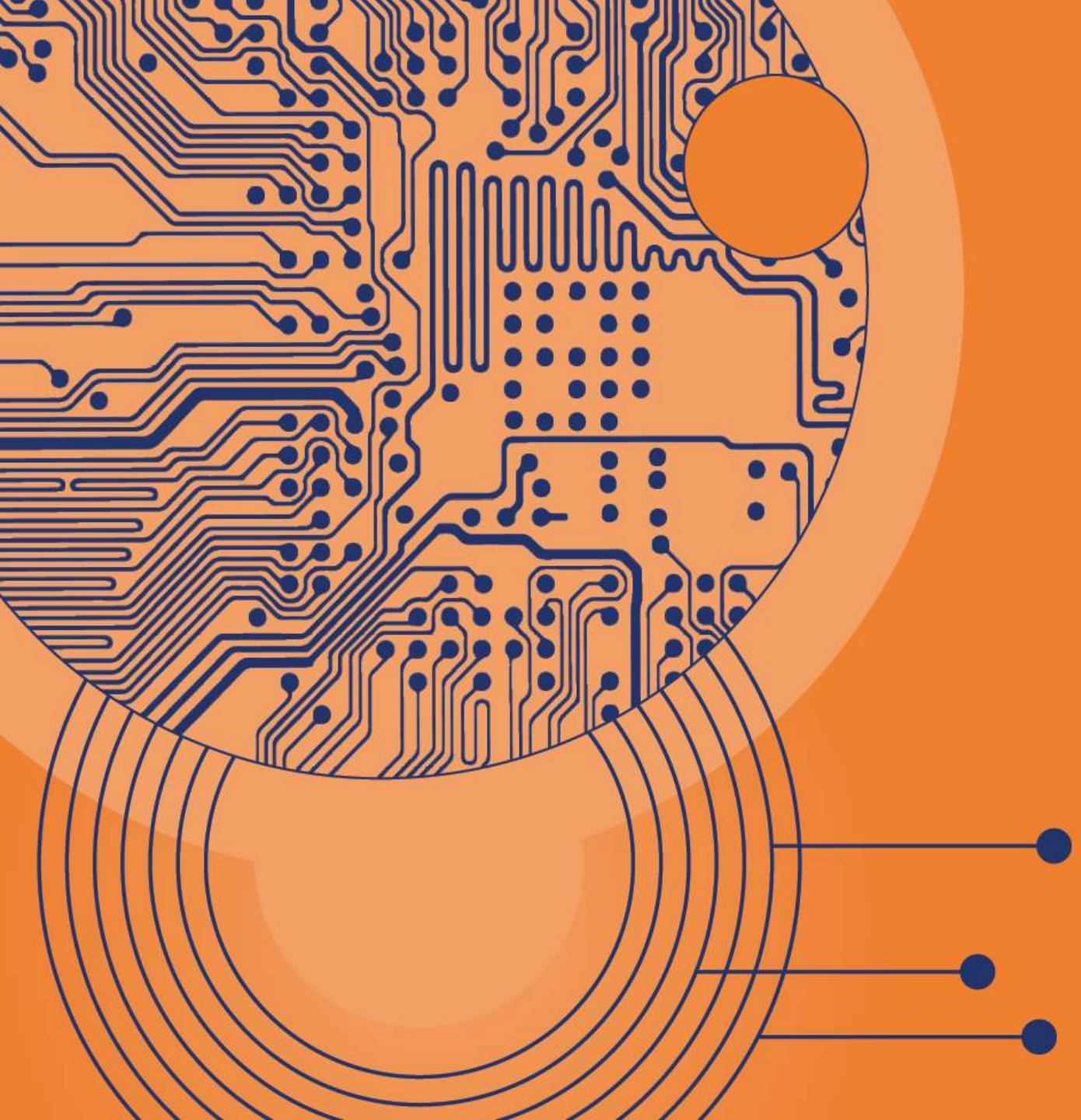
Own resources or the own contribution of the beneficiary



PROJECT INCOME			
EU CONTRIBUTION (GRANT)			
		Amount (EUR)	
	Total costs	0,00	
	Maximum EU contribution	0,00	
	EU CONTRIBUTION	0,00	
REVENUES AND CONTRIBUTIONS BY THIRD PARTIES			
Revenues			
Income generated by the action			
		Amount (EUR)	Description of the income (type of generated income and number of assets, etc)
ALL WORK PACKAGES	Estimated income generated by the action	1,11	
	Total income generated by the action	0,00	
	Revenues	0,00	
In-kind contributions by third parties			
In-kind contributions by third parties			
		Amount (EUR)	Description of the contribution (type of contribution, donor, purpose etc)
ALL WORK PACKAGES	Estimated in-kind contributions by third parties	1,11	
	Total in-kind contributions	0,00	
	In-kind contributions	0,00	
Financial contributions by third parties			
Financial contributions by third parties			
		Amount (EUR)	Description of the contribution (type of contribution, donor, purpose, etc)
ALL WORK PACKAGES	Estimated financial contributions by third parties	1,11	
	Total financial contributions	0,00	
	Financial contributions	0,00	
TOTAL REVENUES AND CONTRIBUTIONS BY THIRD PARTIES		0,00	
OWN RESOURCES			
		Amount (EUR)	
	Own resources	1,11	
	OWN RESOURCES	0,00	
	TOTAL INCOME PARTICIPANT	0,00	

Frequent mistakes

- Missing necessary details in **Description fields** of the Detailed budget table
- **Discrepancies in amounts** budgeted in Detailed budget table and in the Estimated budget online
- **Discrepancies in person-months** (efforts) between the Detailed budget table and Annex 1A
- **Discrepancies in subcontracting** between the Detailed budget table and Annex 1B
- **Travel costs**: Incorrect unit costs used, use of actual costs fields instead of unit costs fields



Legal Validation & Financial Capacity Assessment

Mariadomenica Cugnidoro
Validation unit, REA D.04

Blanca Bermejo Callejo
Validation unit, REA D.04

Presentation outline

REA Central Validation Service

Registration of Participants

Legal validation and LEAR

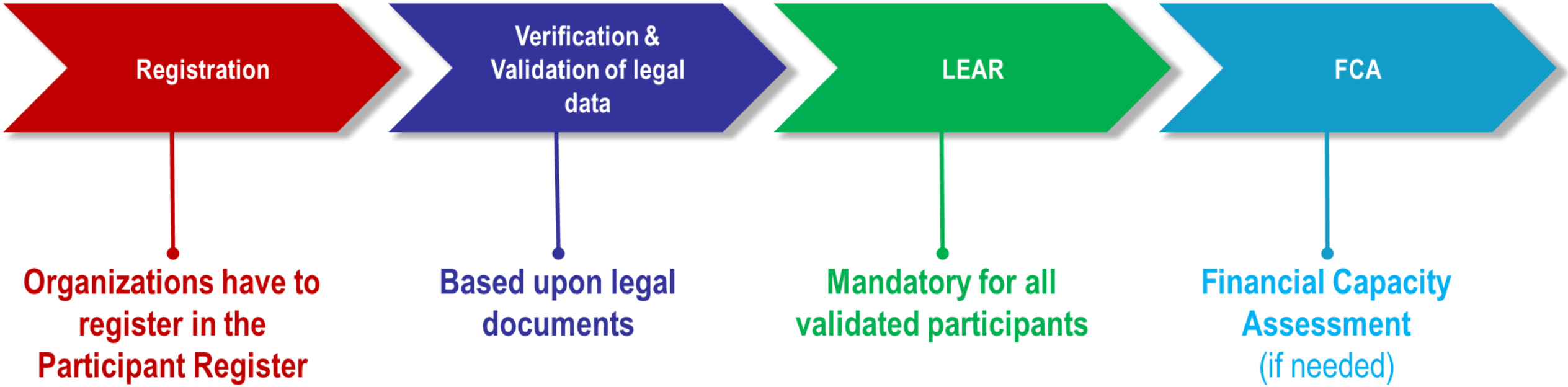
Communication

Financial capacity assessment

REA Central Validation Service (REA CVS)

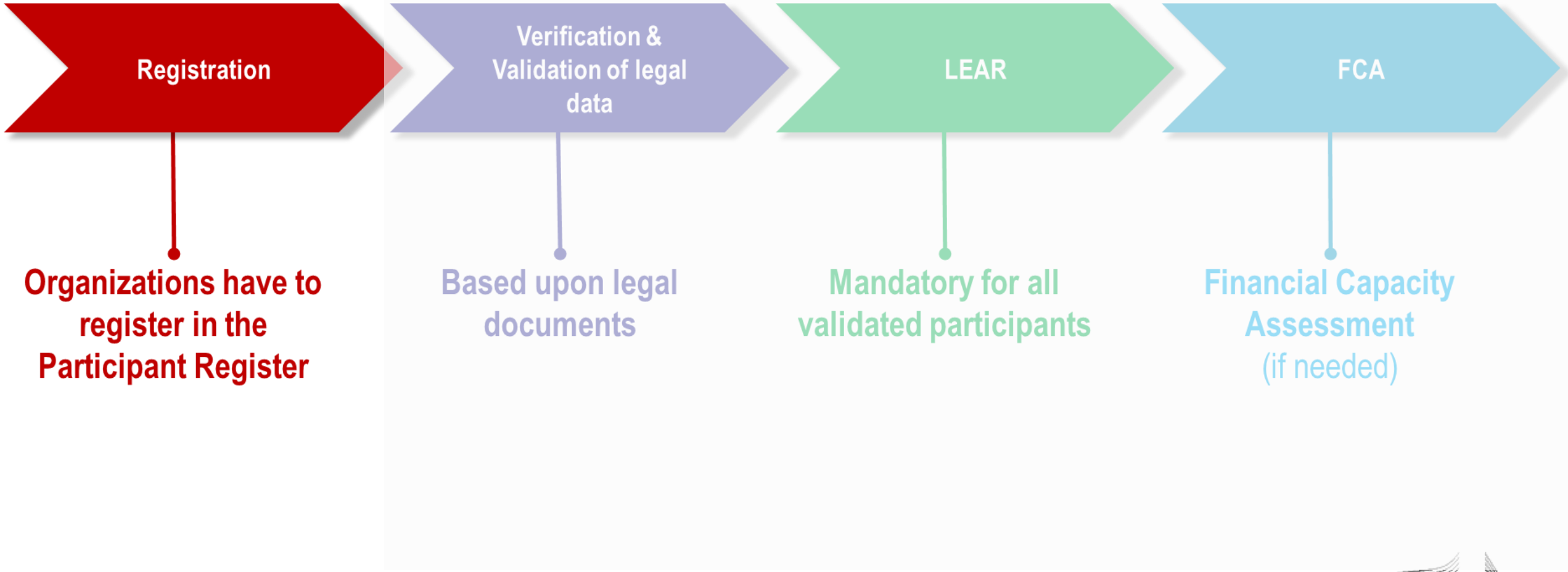
- Verifies **legal existence and legal statuses** of entities
- Validates the appointment of **Legal Entity Appointed Representatives (LEARs)**
- Validates **legal changes** of validated entities
- Assesses **universal takeovers (UTROs)** of validated entities
- Encoding **Bank Account requests**
- Prepares the **Financial Capacity Assessment**
- Performs **ownership control assessments** for specific programmes
- Performs ex-post status verifications (e.g. **SME & MID cap status checks**)

Validation Process Overview

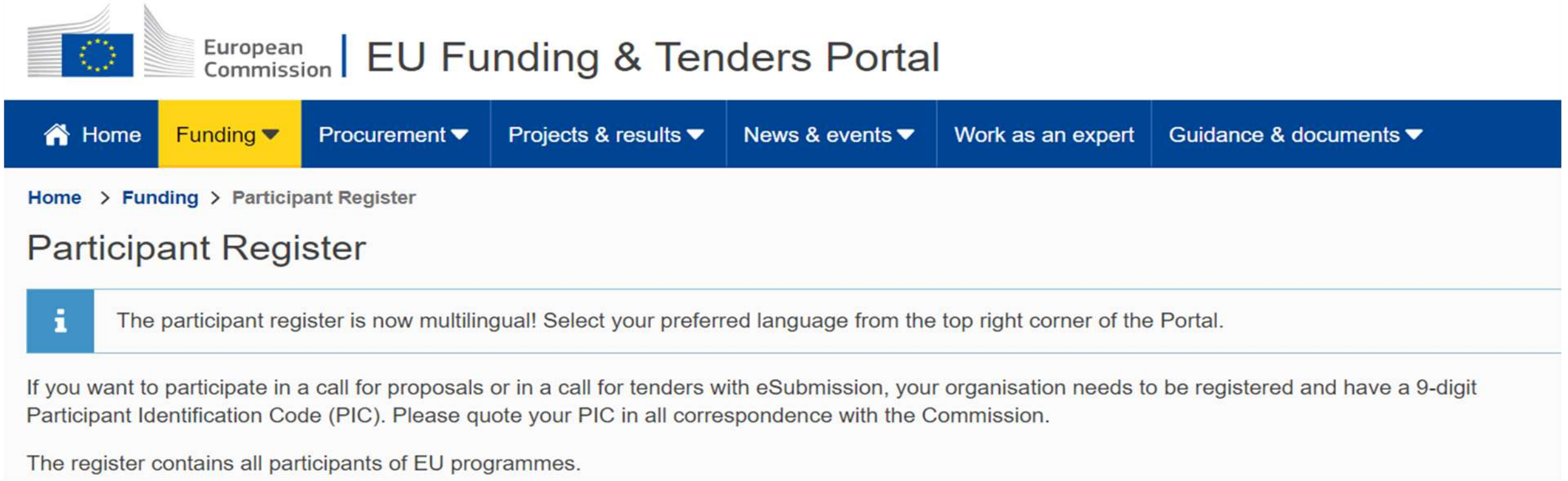


COMMUNICATION VIA PARTICIPANT REGISTER

Validation Process Overview

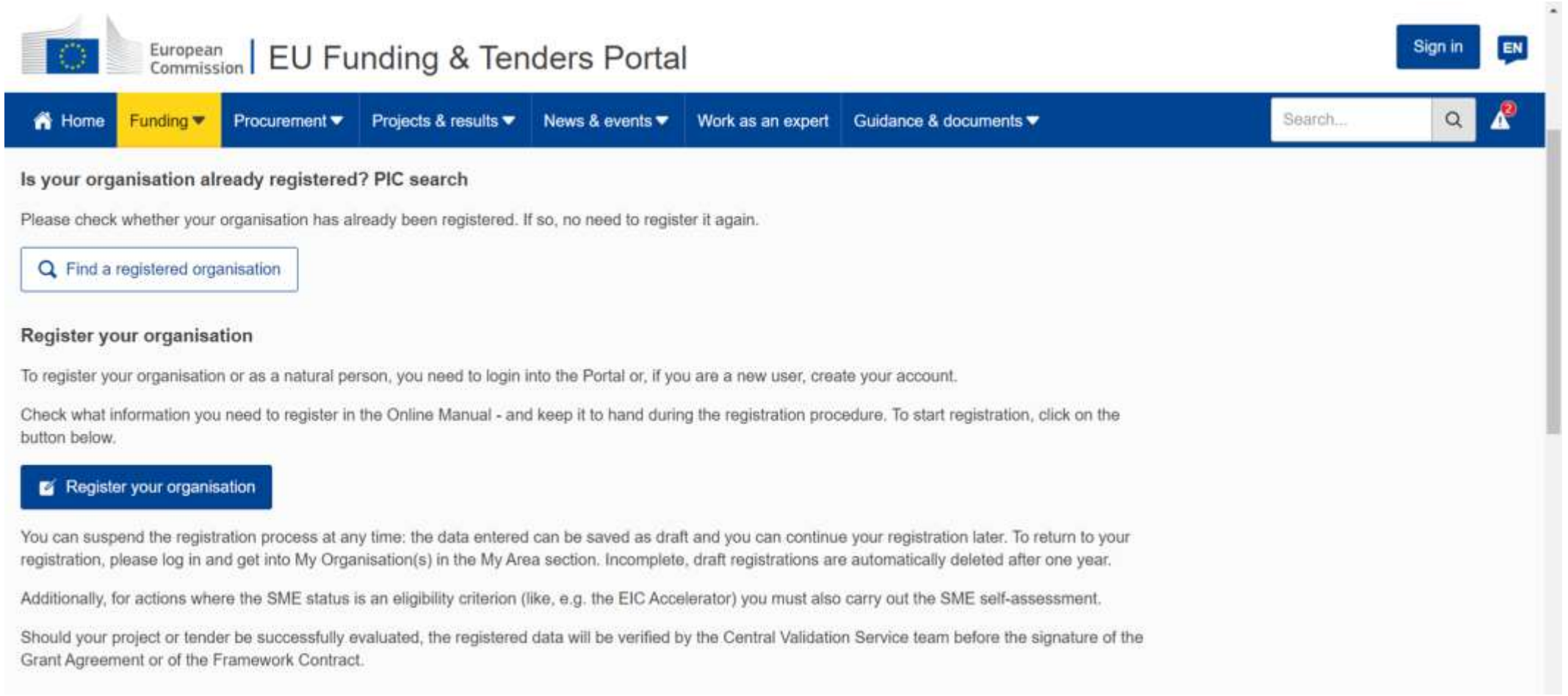


Registration of an organisation (at proposal stage)



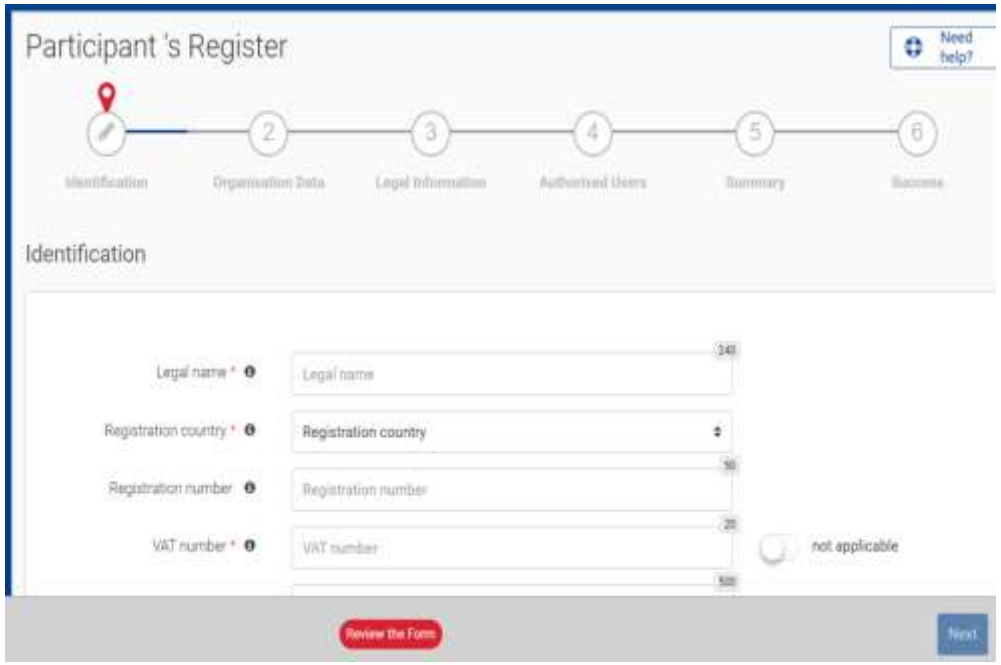
Registration | Validation & Verification of Legal Data | LEAR | FCA

Registration of an organisation (at proposal stage)



Registration | Validation & Verification of Legal Data | LEAR | FCA

How to register in the Participant Register



Identification

Organisation data

Legal information

Authorised users

Registration completed

New Participant Identification Code (PIC) in a "declared" status

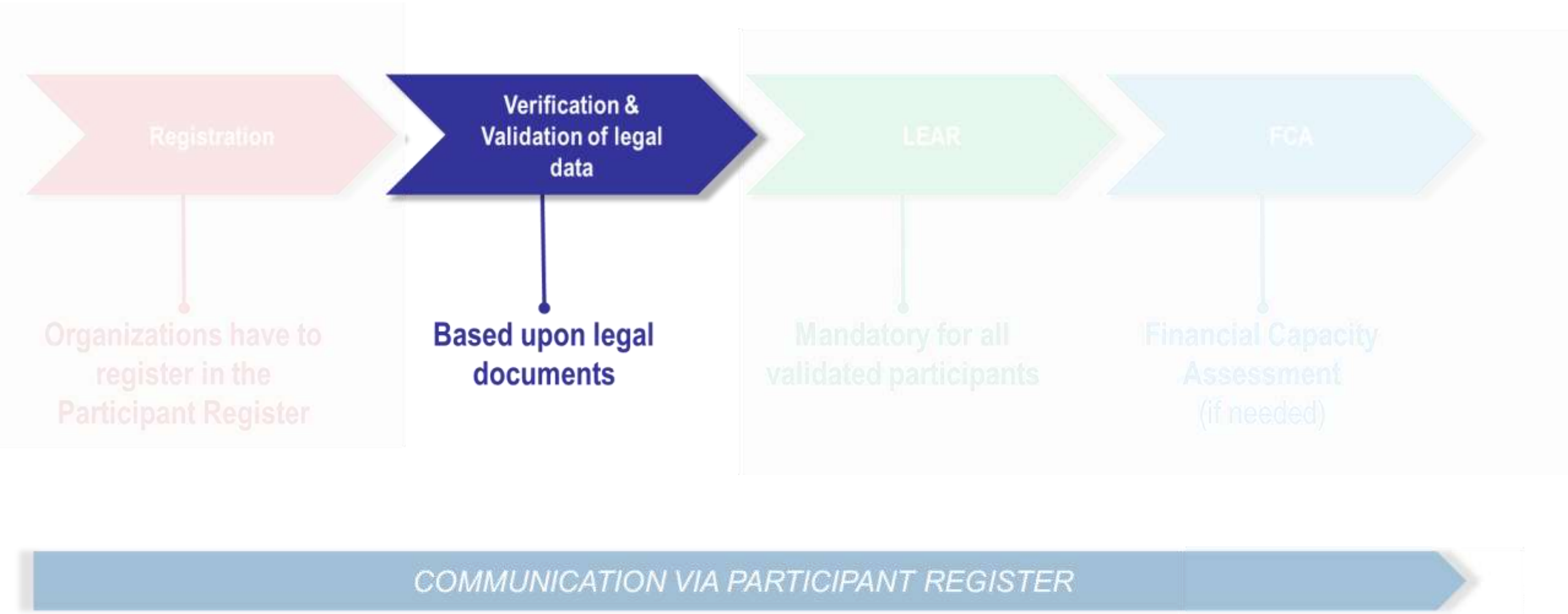
Registration

Validation & Verification of Legal Data

LEAR

FCA

Validation Process Overview



Legal validation

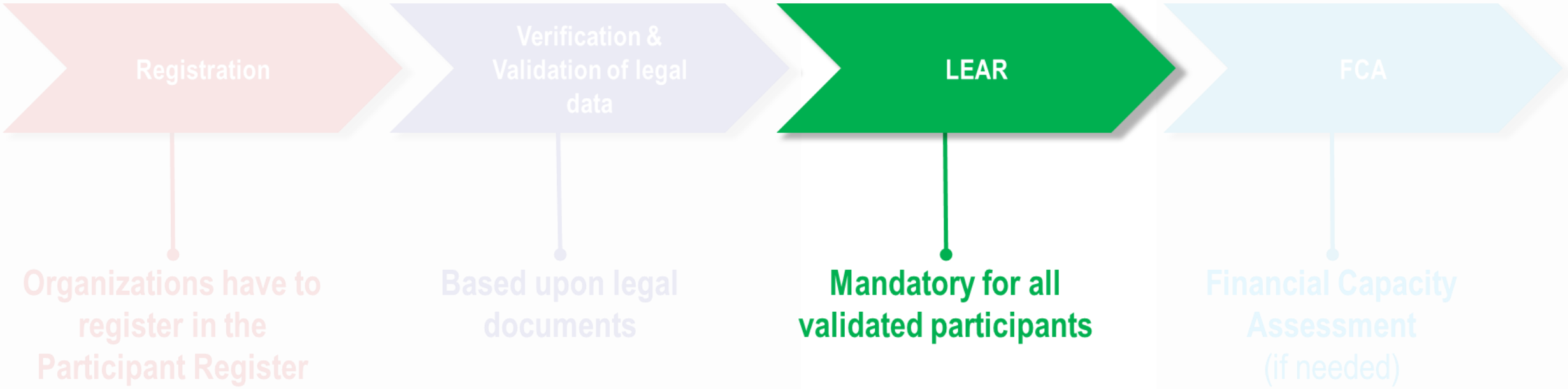
- Project PROPOSALS can be submitted with a DECLARED (*NON-VALID)* PIC
- Validation of the PIC: registration data is verified by the REA Central Validation Service *before* the signature of the first grant agreement or contract
- The legal validation of a participant is *done once:* a valid PIC is *reused* for future EU-funded project participations

Validation is based on legal supporting documents, in accordance with the EU Financial Regulation and the Rules on Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment

Legal validation documents

- ✓ **Registration extract** (< 1 year) – for private law bodies
- ✓ **VAT extract** (< 1 year)
  - ✓ *If not registered for VAT – proof of VAT exemption*
- ✓ **Law/decree/decision** – for public law bodies
- ✓ **Treaty** – for international organisations
- ✓ **Statutes** – for non-profit organisations

Validation process overview



LEAR roles and duties

The *Legal Entity Appointed Representative* (LEAR):

- Notifies the EU of changes in legal data/status
- Submits legal and financial documents if required
- Manages access rights of persons in the organisation (but *not* at the project level)
- Nominates 'Account Administrators' and individuals authorised to sign:
  - ✓ Contracts/grant agreements and their amendments (Legal signatories, i.e. **LSIGN**)
  - ✓ Financial statements (Financial signatories, i.e. **FSIGN**)

LEAR appointed documents

1. LEAR appointment letter (duly signed by both the legal representative and the LEAR)
2. Official proof of identity (ID-card/passport with photo and signature)

   of the legal representative and the LEAR
3. Proof of empowerment of the legal representative

Scanned version *of these documents shall be uploaded in the Participant Register.*
Original of 1 *must be kept in the entity's premises.*

Communication

All communication is exclusively managed **through the Participant Register**

European Commission <EC-NO-REPLY-GRANT-MANAGEMENT@nomail.ec.europa.eu>
to me

Europa / Funding & Tenders Portal notification

Dear User,

You have been granted the role of **Self Registrant** for the organisation arquicios.

In order to access your organisation data on the Funding & Tenders Portal/Supplier portal, you need to log in on the F&T Portal/Supplier Portal. If you did not have an EU Login yet, it was launched automatically for a separate e-mail with a hyperlink to finalise your account.

For more information on the Funding & Tenders Portal roles, please refer to the Online Manual if you participate in the programmes managed on the Funding & Tenders Portal.
For more information on the roles for e-Procurement, please refer to the e-Procurement wiki page, if you participate in a tender call.

With kind regards,
EU Single Electronic Data Interchange Area - F&T Portal team

This email has been auto-generated. Please do not reply to this account. Your email will not be read. For any inquiries please contact the Grants Procurement Systems Support +32 (2) 29 71063 or EC-FUNDING-TENDER-SERVICE-DESK@ec.europa.eu.

Messages are notified via e-mail to the contact person (i.e. self-registrant or the appointed LEAR)

Access lost to declared or valid PIC

Declared PIC

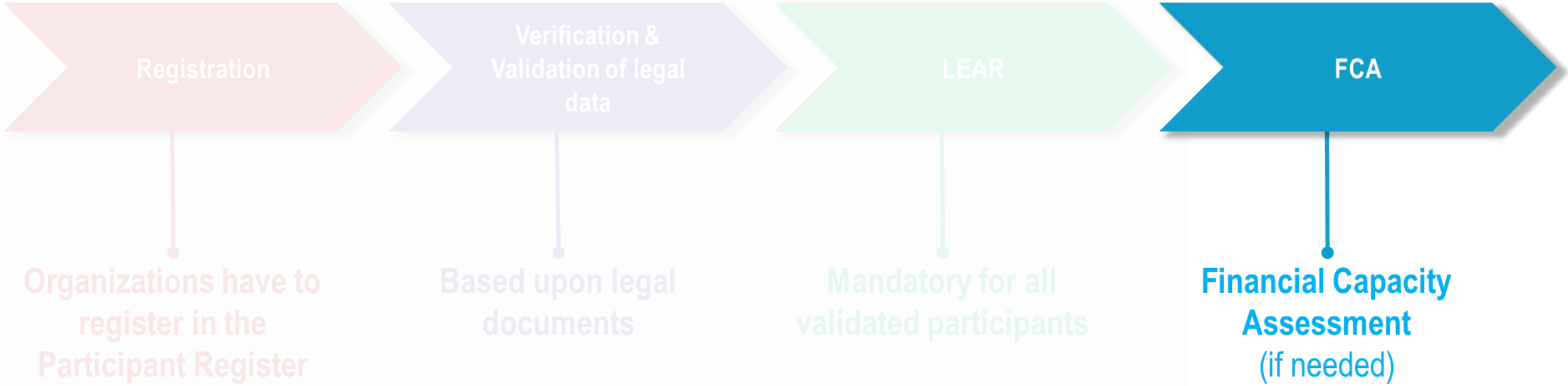
- In case the self-registrant left the organisation, and no one has access to a declared PIC – a new PIC needs to be created, and REA CVS informed

Valid PIC

- If the LEAR is not available anymore, and there are no Account Administrators, a new LEAR needs to be appointed – LEAR recovery procedure

https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/urf/lear-recovery/request/

Validation Process Overview



Financial Capacity Assessment (FCA)

Legal basis:

1. Financial Regulation (2024/2509) arts. 199 and 201

2. Rules on Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment for EU Grants and Tenders

3. Respective call document under the section for financial and operational capacity and exclusion

⟶ FCA will be done in principle for all privately held entities requesting > or = 500.000 EUR.

If FCA must be done, the participant will be contacted by the Central Validation Service via the Participant Register in the F&T Portal

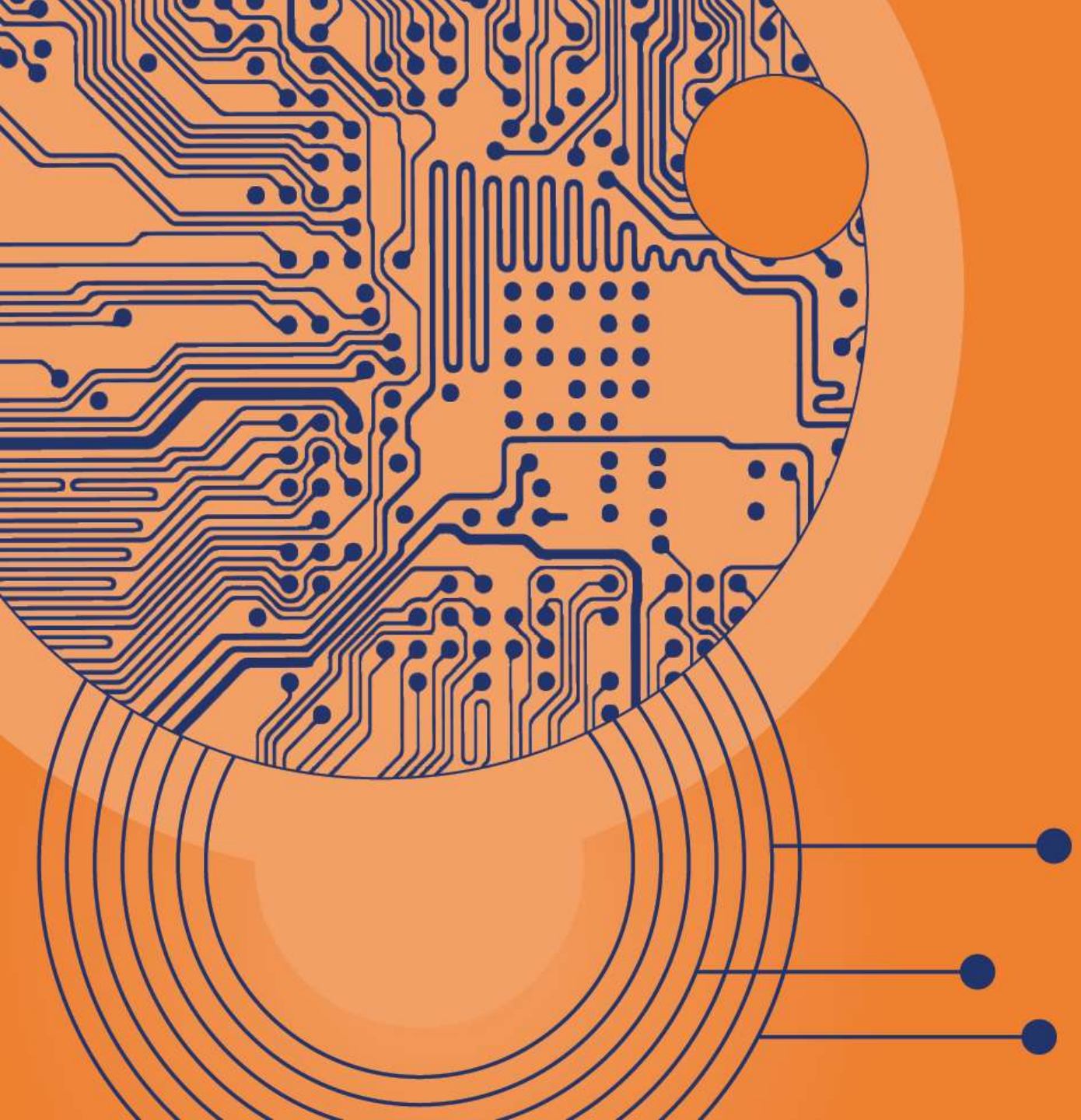
Guidance documents

Rules on Legal validation, LEAR appointment and financial capacity assessment
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/rules-lev-lear-fca_en.pdf

How to register in the Participant Register
https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/funding-tenders-opportunities/display/OM/Online+Manual

Online Manual, IT How to, RES Helpdesk, specific FAQs on the Tenders Portal
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/support

Legal notice on the Funding and Tenders Portal
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/legalnotice



Submitting a good proposal / experience from a running Cap2b project

Erik Hengmith
EISMEA I.01.2, Project Adviser
Maja Ferlinc
EISMEA I.01.2, Project Adviser

Basics – Is my organisation/proposal eligible?

- **Number + type** of entities (quadruple helix)
- Number of **countries/regions**
- Development status of regions
- **Status** of coordinator (e.g. no profit, public),
- **Existing** smart specialisation strategy for the topic (upload also the support letters per region),
- No environmentally **harmful** proposals,
- **No** double funding.

Get familiar with the main steps

Structure of the Proposal

The proposal contains two parts:

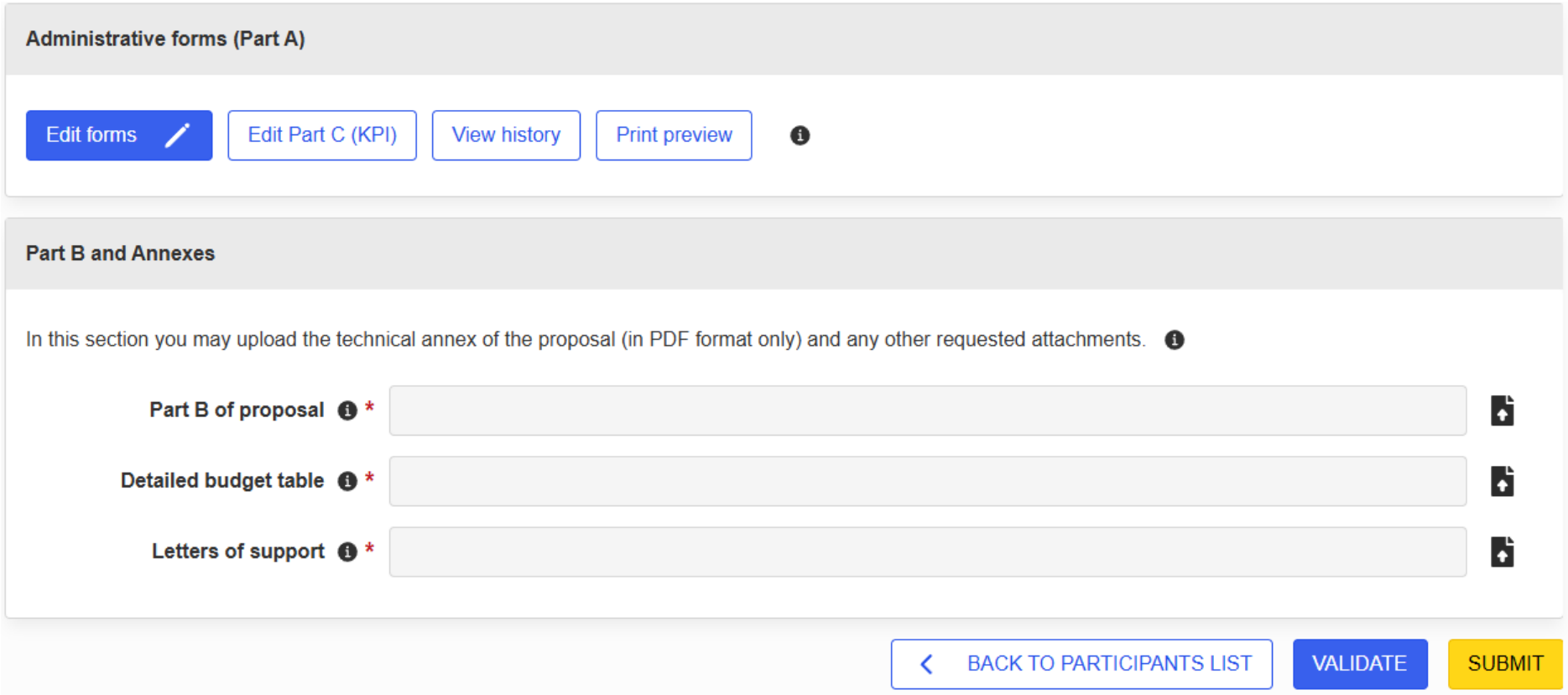
- **Part A** of the proposal **is generated by the IT system. It is based on the information entered by the participants through the submission system in the Funding & Tenders Portal.** The participants can update the information in the submission system at any time before final submission.

- **Part B** of the proposal is the narrative part that includes three sections that each correspond to an evaluation criterion. Part B needs to be uploaded as a PDF document following the templates downloaded by the applicants in the submission system for the specific call or topic. The templates for a specific call may slightly differ from the example provided in this document.

The electronic submission system is an online wizard that guides you step-by-step through the preparation of your proposal. The submission process consists of 6 steps:

- Step 1: Logging in the Portal
- Step 2: Select the call, topic and type of action in the Portal
- Step 3: Create a draft proposal: Title, acronym, summary, main organisation and contact details
- Step 4: Manage your parties and contact details: add your partner organisations and contact details.
- Step 5: Edit and complete web forms for proposal part A and upload proposal part B
- Step 6: Submit the proposal

Get familiar with the main steps 2



Part C: e.g. NUTS participants data, KPIs.

Be prepared

- **Not enough to pass the minimum** (2.5/5 or 5/10) + (17.5/25). You have only one shot (**One stage**)
- EU calls highly competitive → Strive for **perfectionism** → Go for Gold!
- Ask **experienced** former applicants from previous or similar calls (e.g. Strand 1/2a).
- Don't repeat the WP/call text. → Your proposal's **specific contribution and impact on involved regions!**
  - Objectives, activity scopes and expected impacts/KPIs
  - Focus on less developed regions
  - Increase capacity to participate in I3 projects (Strand 1/2a)
  - Core actions (at least one!): Ecosystem building, validation of investment ideas
  - Support actions: Mapping/benchmarking, networking/staff Exchange

- Look for the **right partners in the consortium** (early stage of proposal process):

F&T Portal partner search database, Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), or I3SF website (coming son).

Only add partners if they agree!

- **Ask/consult call specific questions**. Answers posted a few days later (max 3 days before call deadline). Topic call related Q&As document

Consult the call document / call page in detail

- Read and re-read the EU Funding and tenders call page:

  I3-2026-CAP2B - CAPACITY BUILDING (I3-2026-CAP2B)

- The Call document is the main reference
- Check out the I3 model grant agreement (MGA) and annotated MGA
  Inforegio - Thematic Smart Specialisation Platforms
- Policy/regulatory background docs (Call doc, chapter 1+2) →
  I3, Smart Specialisation, European Regional Development Fund
- Proposal template → Use sub questions/criteria as red thread (part B).
- 4 Award criteria:
  - **Relevance**
  - **Quality**
  - **Cost effectiveness**
  - **Impact** having double weight (Call doc, chapter 9).

Criterion 1: Relevance (5 points)

- **Aligning to priorities** of the call topic priorities
- Contribution to EU strategic context
- Soundness of **needs/gaps** analysis
- **Addressing needs** from identified target groups
- **European and interregional** dimension

Criterion 2: Quality (5 points)

- What makes your proposal “more excellent” than others? Your specific **value proposition**.
- **Methodology** and match with objectives
- Team quality and expertise/ sound **distribution of resources** in consortium
- Each beneficiary's **contribution**
- **Consortium** management, quality assurance and monitoring strategy
- **Project management** and monitoring (of methods and KPIs) + risk management/mitigation

Criterion 3: Cost effectiveness (5 points)

- **Measures** to reaching objectives/results efficiently
- Efficiency of the **financial management**
- No overly detailed WP cost description but **why budget table is considered** as effective
- Take your **budget planning** seriously: Detailed budget table to fill in. It takes time to go through all budget categories, work packages and participants – especially the staff costs! Often the source of financial errors. Check out the guidance for staff costs/daily rates calculation (in the annotated grant agreement, Article 6)
- A **consortium agreement** is highly recommended. Can also be signed at a later stage during grant agreement preparation

Criterion 4: Impact (10 points)

- Reduction of innovation divide
- Contribution to economic, social, and territorial cohesion
- **Ambition** and expected long-term impact on target groups, regional stakeholders, and integration into European value chains
- **Sustainability** of the project results (follow-up, business plans, synergies)
- Generation of **implementable policy recommendations**
- Updated S3 roadmaps or related policy support measures
- **Potential for replication** in other less developed or outermost regions
- Dissemination and communication strategy

Think about the evaluators…

- Put yourself **in their shoes**. Be to the point. More WPs/deliverables/text is not necessarily better.
- **Max 70 pages, min Arial 9, min 15 mm margin, A4 (Part B).**
  - Don’t delete parts of template/any instructions to win space
  - Don’t change the format to win space
  - Don’t include web links to additional information (e.g., videos)
  - Excess pages watermarked/disregarded by evaluators
- Write **reader friendly:** No endless sentences + Limit abbreviations + Use a glossary.
- Be complete. Do not forget **any document** (Part A+B+C, detailed budget table, support letters).
- Budget entered twice (Part A + uploaded detailed table). Numbers must match. Uploading a given document twice = overwriting the older version!
- Use (Gantt) **charts and images** if they make things more readable.

Final Tips

- Experts / EU take and evaluate the proposal as it is. In principle no detailed negotiation (do not assume the EU will improve your proposal..). **Write as if no improvements should be made** in the grant preparation; even if for awarded proposals adaptions can be made during grant preparation
- **Do not overshoot**: be ambitious but stay realistic about what you can achieve with your project
- **Consult** the

  Call page

  Online Manual, How to section

  IT questions: EC-FUNDING-TENDER-SERVICE-DESK@ec.europa.eu / +32 229 92222

  Non-IT questions: eismea-i3-instrument-calls@ec.europa.eu

  I3 Instrument website

  Smart Specialisation Platform

I3 Cap2b thematic areas of focus

1. Strengthening **regional innovation ecosystems**

2. Increasing **investment readiness**

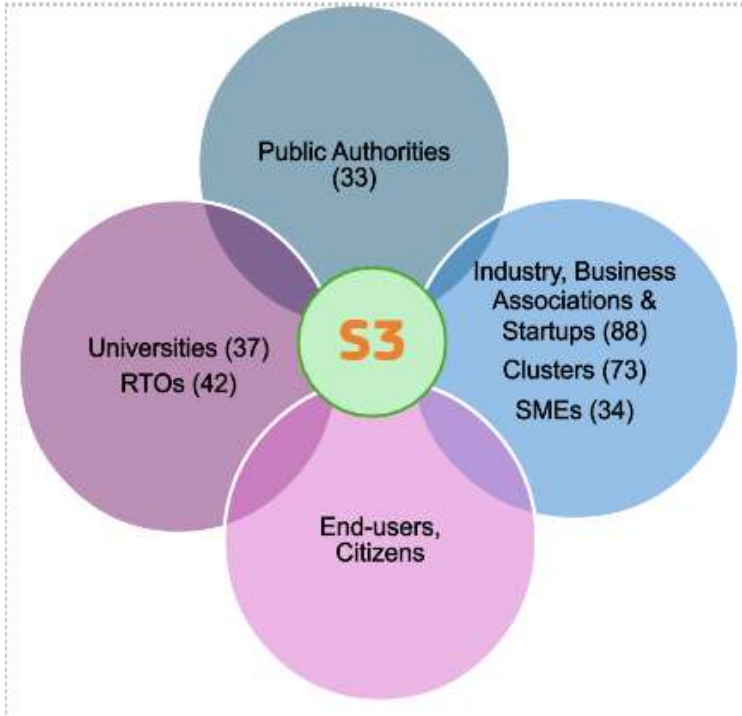
3. Facilitating **knowledge and talent mobilisation**

4. Enhancing **value chain integration**

Strengthening regional innovation ecosystems

AIIon_I3:

- 5 **S3-based regional roadmaps** and an **Action plan** with concrete policy measures
- strengthening the ability of Quadruple Helix (Q-helix) stakeholders to identify, set up, and secure financing for interregional innovation projects



Greet CE (circular bio-economy)

Establishment **of National Bioeconomy Hubs** in 10 countries with active involvement of innovation intermediaries

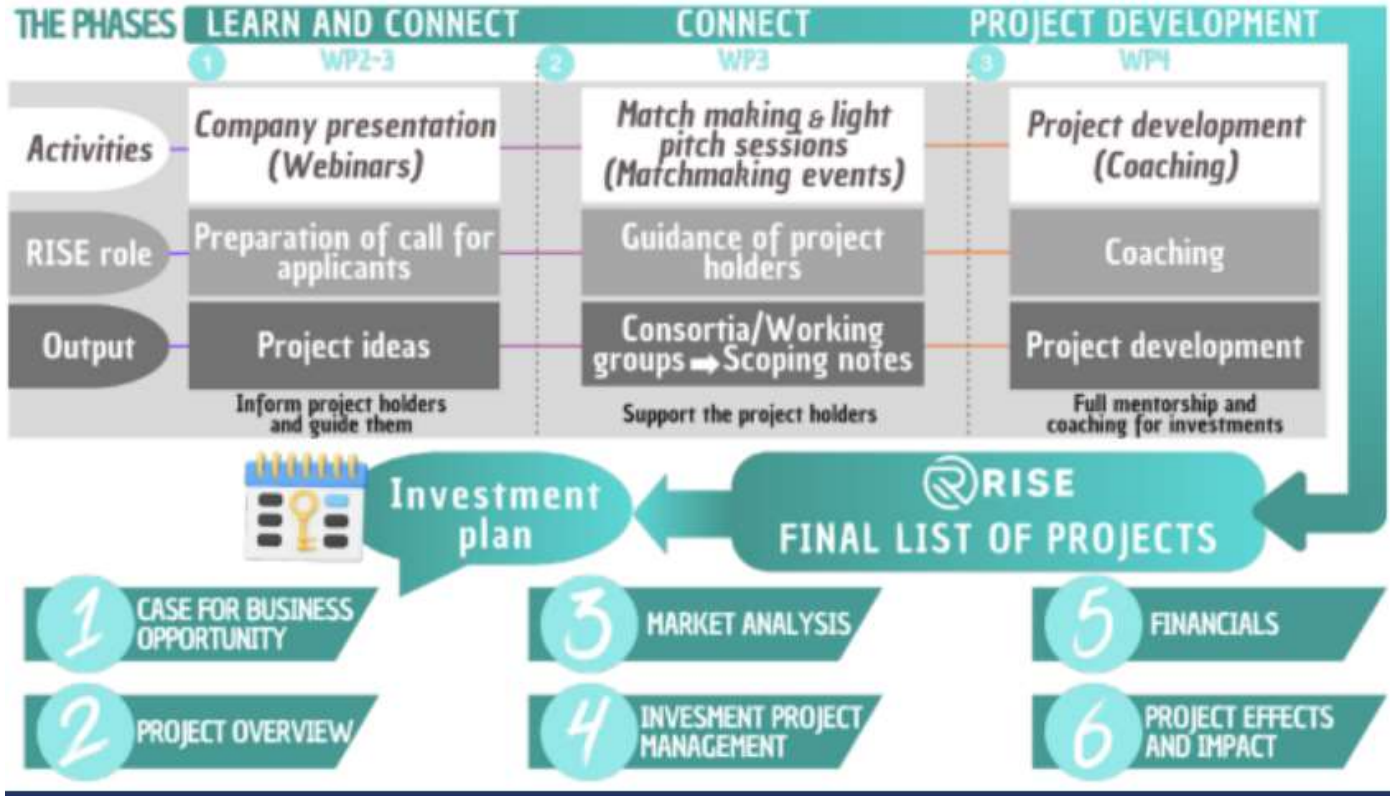
RISE (raw materials, circular economy)

Policy recommendations to improve future interregional innovation investment programmes — including longer funding durations, stronger SME support mechanisms, and dedicated seed funds for interregional collaboration.

Increasing investment readiness

RISE (raw materials, circular economy)

- **structured innovation funding methodology**, helping SMEs transform early ideas into mature, investment-ready cases



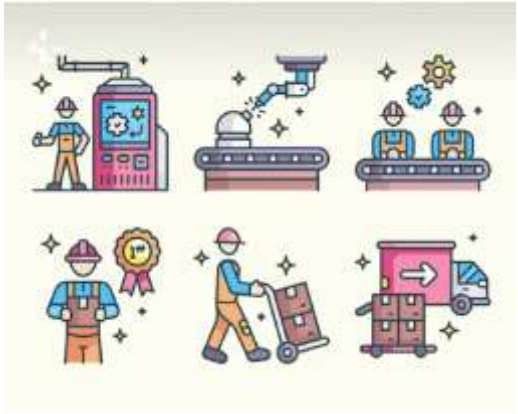
- **SustainX (Digital Sustainable Innovation)**
- One stop shop Investment Support Model
- Innovation project diagnosis & innovation pre-assessment
- Market-readiness & bankability support
- Guidance for accessing I3 and EU investment instruments
- Matchmaking with interregional partners

Facilitating knowledge and talent mobilisation

Project GREENSTEP

- **Talent Attraction and Incentive Scheme Implementation**
- Identification of **tools,** activities and examples for attracting and retaining talents in regions
- Mapping the needs of companies and other entities, identifying demand
- On-line platform with information about regions, offers and opportunities in the regions
- **Training for employers** on how to reach out to talent.
- **Talent matchmaking Room**, matching potential employers with skilled employers
- **Policy Recommendations** for talent attraction and retention

Value chain integration



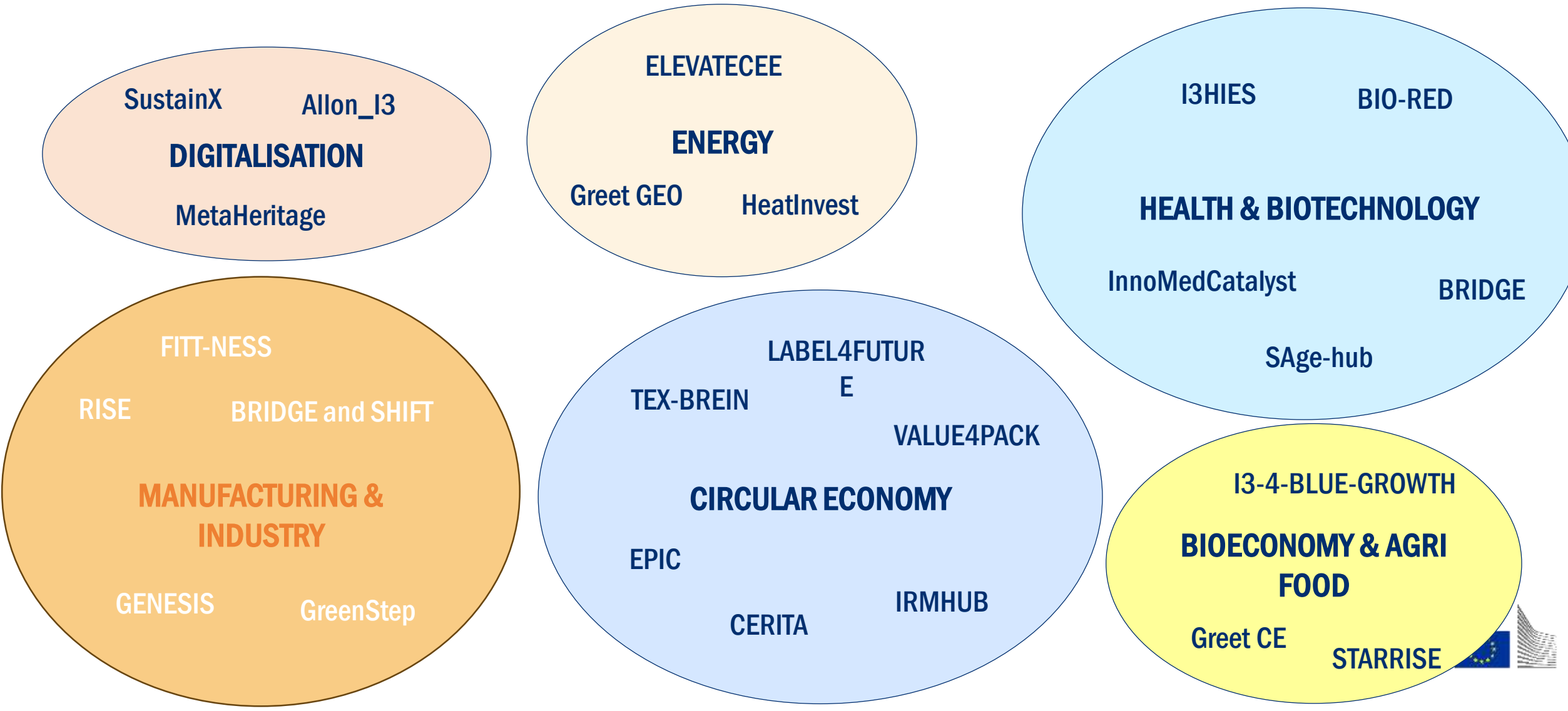
EPIC (packaging industry)

- Comprising representatives from all stages of the packaging value chain, including machinery and materials providers, manufacturers, and end user sectors
- Linking Packaging value chain stages for the matching of demand-side needs for innovations and supply-side capabilities
- Strengthening SMEs‘ potential to identify innovation gaps and challenges, and develop business cases through international collaborations and build capacity for further evolution in European calls

STARRISE (agriculture & logistics)

- 700+ stakeholders
- 80+ Regional project ideas
- 8 interregional value chains identified
- 3 S3 partnerships created
- 12 project applications presented, of which 3 applications to I3 Investment calls for proposals

Cap2b Projects by Topic



Cap2b activities to achieve I3 Cap2b objectives

B-Support actions:

1-Mapping, Benchmarking and Matchmaking

- **Mapping and benchmarking regional innovation performance**
  Use tools such as the Regional Innovation Scoreboard (RIS), European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) and Community Innovation Survey (CIS), to assess and compare the performance of local innovation actors.
- **Analysing interregional value chains and sub-value chain niches**
  Identify challenges, gaps, and opportunities for regional ecosystems to engage in emerging or strategic value chains.
- **Matching supply-side competencies with business opportunities**
  Map regional strengths and connect them with demand-driven investment opportunities across regions.
- **Mapping skills gaps and talent pipelines**
  Identify regional skills gaps and labour market needs relevant to targeted value chains, and map potential talent pipelines to support ecosystem development.

2-Networking and Staff Exchange

- **Strengthening participation in EU networks and platforms**
  Support integration into S3 Thematic Platforms, European Technology Platforms, the EU Cluster Collaboration Platform and other relevant networks.
- **Fostering staff exchange and talent development**
- **Identify skills gaps and talent needs** and implement staff exchange and peer learning to strengthen human capital and transfer know-how across ecosystems.
- **Enabling cluster and company missions across regions**
  Organise business or cluster visits to other regions or Member States, including visits to demonstration infrastructure.
- **Connecting regional ecosystems through twinning activities**
  Facilitate direct cooperation between innovation ecosystems, including business and research actors.
- **Building capacity of innovation managers and business developers**
  Equip key innovation actors with the skills and tools to engage in interregional investment processes

Final takeaways

- CAP2b opportunity for policy experimentation, effectively builds consortium capacities, **two years** to generate systemic ecosystem change
- **Focus on core activities** – building ecosystem that starts from clearly identifies investment projects
- Direct engagement with SMEs and **bottom-up validation** of value chains are essential for project relevance and sustainability.
- **Unique tools and contribution** to support SMEs and regional innovation stakeholders
- **Clear description** of the path towards the identification of the **investment projects** in selected value chains
- **Cross-sectoral collaboration** and **methodological exchange** (e.g. for investment case generation) with other projects

Upcoming virtual events

I3 Support Facility - Virtual event #14:

I3 Project Mandatory Deliverables

Date: 3 December 2025

Time: 14:00-15:30 CET

More information and registration:

*After registration, the confirmation page will provide links to add the event to your **Google** and **Outlook** calendars.*

Check the I3 Support facility website I3 Instrument Support Facility | I3 Instrument Support Facility

Upcoming virtual events

I3 Support Facility - Virtual event #15:

Find your regional match: online speed networking for stakeholders

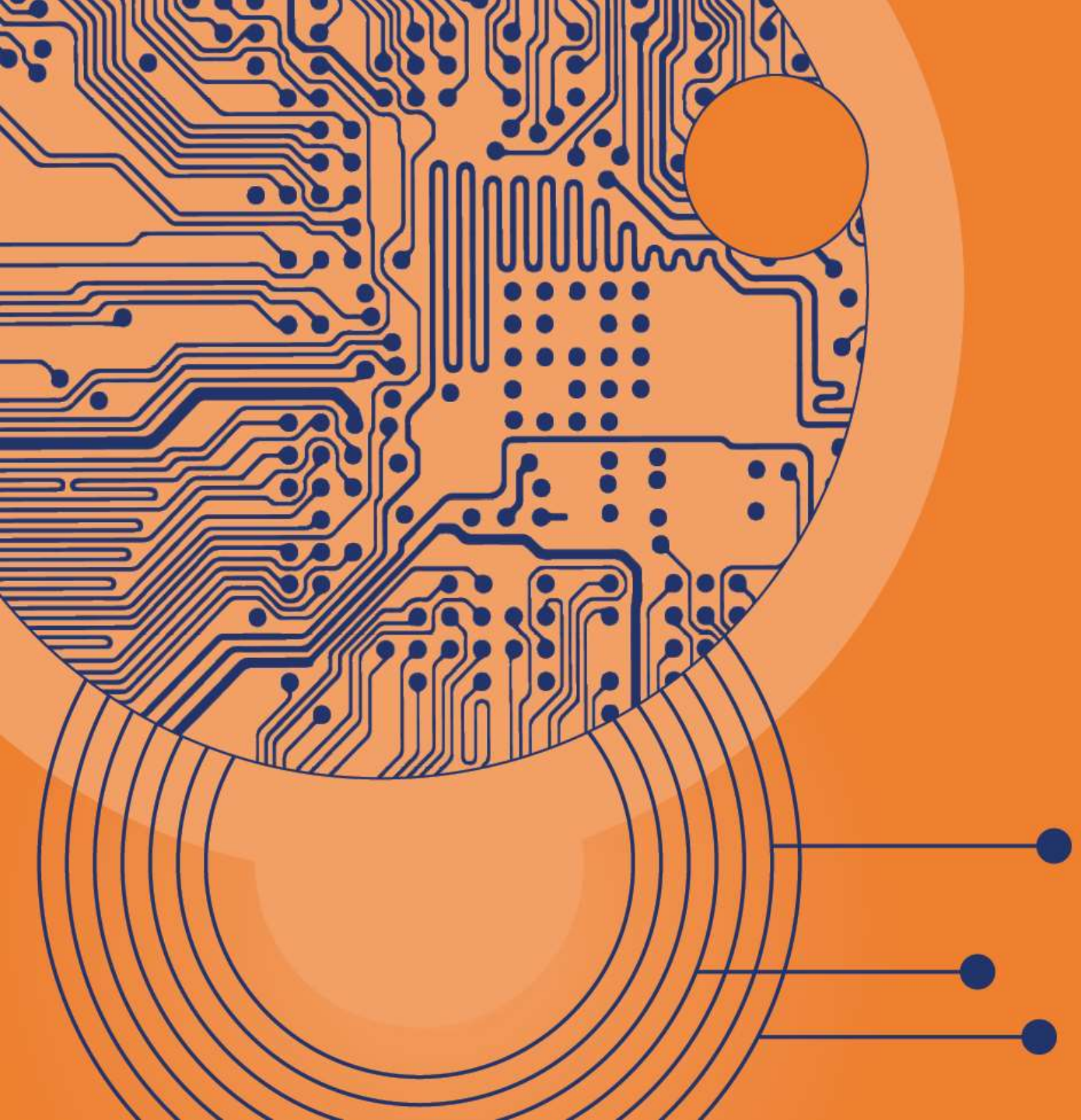
Date: 10 December 2025

Time: 14:00-15:30 CET

More information and registration:

*After registration, the confirmation page will provide links to add the event to your **Google** and **Outlook** calendars.*

Check the I3 Support facility website I3 Instrument Support Facility | I3 Instrument Support Facility



Closing remarks

Erick Koch
EISMEA I.01, Head of Sector

Thank you!

https://eismea.ec.europa.eu
https://eismea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/interregional-innovation-investments-i3-instrument_en

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