Council of the European Union
General Secretariat

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Interinstitutional files:
2025/0102 (COD)

Brussels, 15 July 2025

WK 9798/2025 INIT

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MEETING DOCUMENT

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Working Party on Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices (Attachés) Working Party on Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices (Critical Medicines Act)
Subject:	Meeting of the Working Party on Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices - Presentation by the Commission

Delegations will find attached the presentation given by the Commission on Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP) at the meeting of the Working Party on Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices on 15 July 2025.

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Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP)

Boosting investment for innovation

STEP Task Force – July 2025

https://strategic-technologies.europa.eu

STEP
Challenges for EU industry and economy

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What is at stake

- **Competitiveness** and **resilience**
- **Global race** for critical technologies
- **Investment needs** for twin transitions
- **Private capital** not at scale
- Constraints on **EU budget**
- Need for a **European response**

→ Takeaways of **Letta's and Draghi's reports**

Industry feedback

- Fragmented/complex **offer of EU funding**
- Lack of **advisory** and **support services, mentorship programmes**
- Need for **user-friendly** portal
- **Regulatory** and **structural** issues
- **Gaps** in funding across the **innovation cycle**
- Need for **skills** in specific critical technologies

Very positive momentum for STEP

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In a nutshell

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- **Not a new fund:** pooling funding from 11 EU existing programmes, with a top-up of €1.5bn for defence
- **Efficient:** use of existing networks/processes
- **Articulation** direct/indirect/shared managed funds
- **STEP Seals** awarded to high-quality projects
- **Connecting with implementing partners** (EIB, EIF, NPBIs)
- **A service-oriented team** to support STEP sectors
- **User-centric portal**
- **A pilot for a new Competitiveness Fund** as announced by Commission President
- **Regulation** entered into force on 1 March 2024

STEP Scope*

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STEP OBJECTIVES

Supporting the **development or manufacturing** of critical technologies or safeguarding and strengthening their respective **value chains**

Addressing shortages of **labour and skills**

STEP CONDITIONS

Bring an **innovative**, cutting-edge element with significant economic potential to the Single Market

OR

Contribute to **reduce or prevent strategic dependencies** of the Union

STEP SECTORS

(indicative & non-exhaustive) EXAMPLES

CRMA

Digital and deep tech innovation → Artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, advanced connectivity

NZIA

Clean and resource efficient tech → Carbon capture and storage technologies, heat pumps

CMA

Bio tech → Molecular biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, crop biotechnology

NZIA: Net-Zero industry Act
CRMA: Critical Raw Materials Act
CMA: Critical Medicines Act *(proposal)*

***STEP Guidance note published on 13 May 2024**

STEP
Tools

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Pooling
of EU funding across 11 EU programmes and dedicated calls for STEP sectors.



STEP Seal
Label for high-quality STEP projects supporting them to access funding.



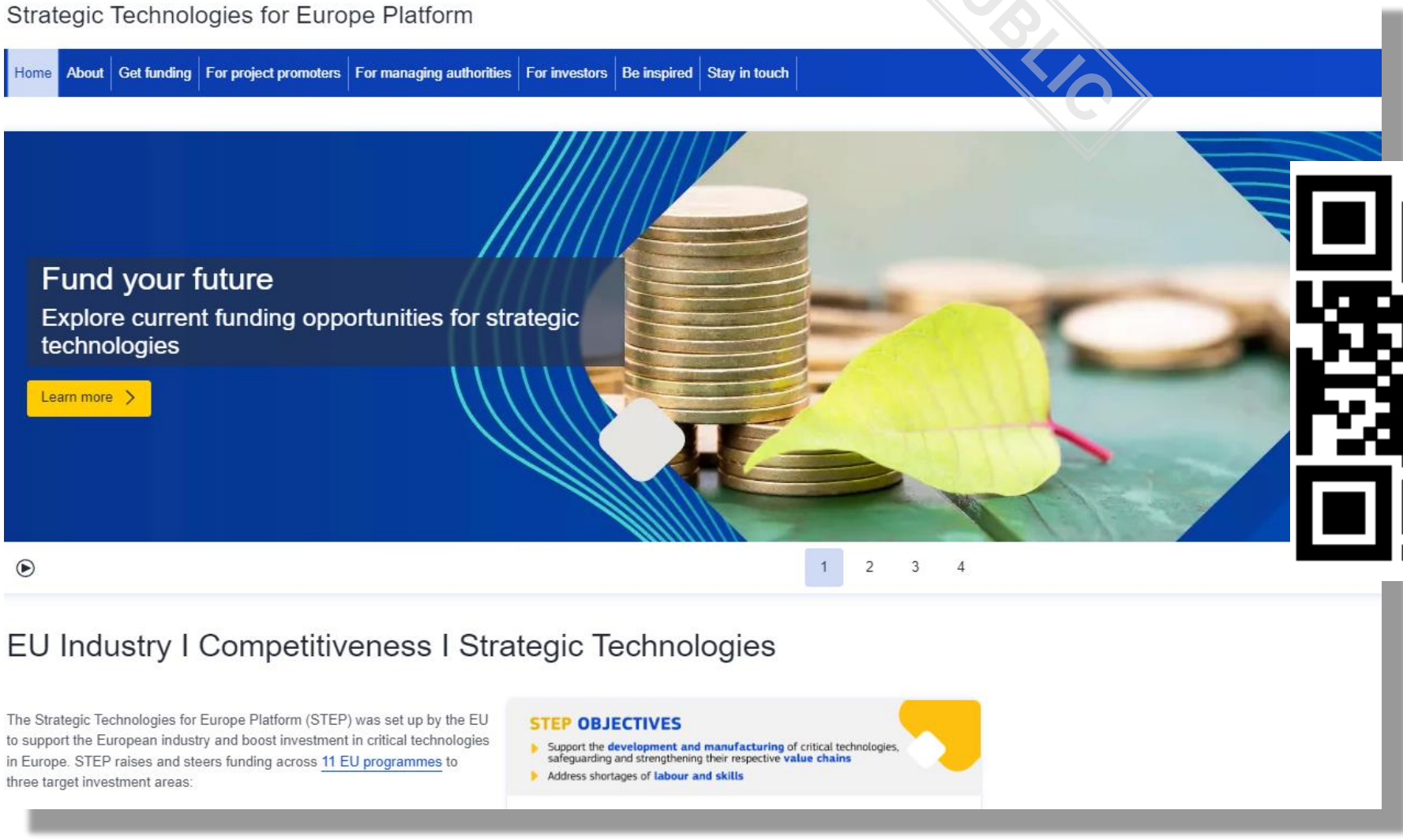
STEP Portal
that consolidates all funding opportunities for STEP sectors financed by the EU budget.



One-Stop Shop
Entry point for any question to the STEP Taskforce and support from NCPs.

STEP
Portal : Central access point for users

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Portal : Central access point for users

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Sector	Topic	Programme	Type of funding	Location	Opening Date	Deadline Date	Budget Millions	Apply	Status
BIOTECH	STEP - Biotechnologies - investment projects concerning the strategic independence of the EU	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) 2021-2027 - Poland Programme	GRANTS	PL	22/07/2025	09/09/2025	150		Forthcoming
BIOTECH	STEP Lazio – Support for the development and	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) 2021-2027 - Lazio Programme	GRANTS	IT	17/07/2025	05/03/2026	€ 70.00		Forthcoming
	ment and	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) 2021-2027 - Lazio Programme	GRANTS	IT	17/07/2025	05/03/2026	€ 70.00		Forthcoming
	ment and	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) 2021-2027 - Lazio Programme	GRANTS	IT	17/07/2025	05/03/2026	€ 70.00		Forthcoming
		European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) 2021-2027 - Schleswig-Holstein Programme	GRANTS	DE	30/04/2025	11/07/2025	€ 19.00	Apply	Open
	al technologies	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) 2021-2027 - Campania Programme	GRANTS	IT	16/06/2025	21/07/2025	€ 50.00	Apply	Open
	al technologies	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) 2021-2027 - Campania Programme	GRANTS	IT	16/06/2025	21/07/2025	€ 50.00	Apply	Open
DIGITAL	Development or manufacturing of critical technologies	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) 2021-2027 - Campania Programme	GRANTS	IT	16/06/2025	21/07/2025	€ 50.00	Apply	Open
CLEANTECH	Development or manufacturing of critical technologies - Clean aviation	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) 2021-2027 - Campania Programme	GRANTS	IT	24/06/2025	29/07/2025	€ 10.00	Apply	Open

- Open calls in direct management (July 25): **€1.25 bn in 40 calls**
- Open calls in MS (July 25): **€1.04bn mn in 10 calls**

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STEP
11 EU programmes supporting STI

Funded by the EU

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5 EU PROGRAMMES

Funding and STEP Seal awarded by the Commission

Horizon Europe	EU4 Health
Innovation Fund	European Defence Fund
Digital Europe Programme	

Award of STEP Seal

PROJECTS' FAST TRACK TO OTHER FUNDING

6 EU PROGRAMMES

Funding allocated by Member States and financial institutions (e.g., EIB)

European Regional Development Fund	Cohesion Fund
European Social Fund +	Just Transition Fund
Recovery & Resilience Facility[1]	InvestEU[2]

[1] Performance based programme managed by the European Commission and implemented by the Member States
[2] Implemented through the EIB group & other implementing partners – not awarding the Seal

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Mobilisation of funding across EU programmes

Overview, July 2025

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EU programmes	All STEP-aligned published calls[1]		Examples
Innovation Fund 2023[2]	**€4,000M**	*~75 calls* **€9.8bn**	• **Quantum space gravimetry** technology maturation • Development of **novel antivirals** to reduce strategic dependencies • Secured and adaptive **underwater communications** for uncrewed underwater systems • **Cleantech manufacturing**
Innovation Fund 2024[2]	**€3,400M**		
EU4Health	**€367M**		
Horizon-EIC/Clean Hydrogen JU[3]	**€972.3M**		
Digital Europe	**€318M**		
European Defence Fund	**€761M**		
Cohesion funds	~ 97 programme amendments submitted totalling **€13.3bn across 19 MS**[4]		• **Jutland (DK)**: Power to X (electricity conversion from surplus renewable energy), electrolysis and hydrogen solutions
RRF **InvestEU**[5]	Interest expressed by some Member States		

[1] These are the amounts that were announced – not the final ones
[2] The entire scope of the IF is considered as aligned with STEP
[3] This does not include upcoming calls on Horizon Pillar II, since they will be published by mid-2025
[4] Amounts to be confirmed only after assessment of alignment with STEP
[5] STEP incentive to channel up to 6% of RRF envelope to the MS compartment in InvestEU for STEP investments – thus mobilising funds beyond the RRF deadline

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The STEP Seal (1/2)

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PROGRAMMES CONCERNED

- **Digital Europe Programme**
- **European Defence Fund**
- **EU4Health**
- **Horizon Europe**
- **Innovation Fund**

CONDITIONS FOR ATTRIBUTION

Project complying with the minimum quality requirements

+

Contributing to STEP objectives

=

PUBLICATION ON STEP PORTAL

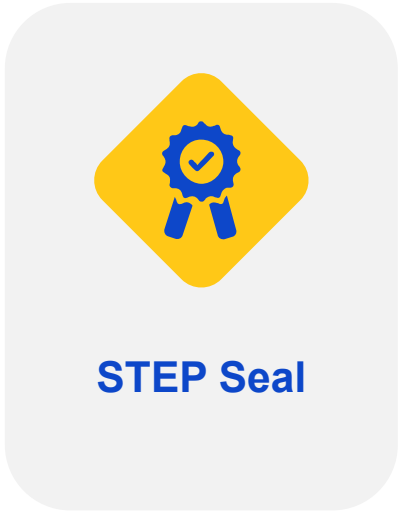


Award of STEP Seal

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STEP
The STEP Seal (2/2)

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BENEFITS PER PROGRAMME

Cohesion policy funds (ERDF, CF, ESF+, JTF)	Possibility for Managing Authority to fast-track project (ERDF, ESF+) and grant combined support
Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)	Project to be considered as a priority for funding under national Recovery and Resilience Plans
Modernisation Fund	Project may be considered as a priority for funding
InvestEU	To be taken into account by Commission in its 'policy check', and project to be examined by implementing partners
Other Union funds or programmes	Project could be granted (combined) support

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Projects' dashboard - STEP Portal

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194 STEP Seal projects available now in all Member States

No selections applied

Sector | Programme | Proposal Title | Country | Region | Values | Download data

	Proposal Budget (in EUR million)	EU Funding (in EUR million)
Biotech	€213.16	€128.66
Cleantech	€9,486.32	€4,798.52
InnovFund	€9,486.32	€4,798.52
A First-Of-Its-Kind 1gw Battolyser® Factory To Manufacture A Next-Generation 100% Flexible Electrolyser And Battery That Produces The Lowest-Cost Green Hydrogen	€54.58	€54.58
Accsion - Aalborg Portland Carbon Capture And Storage Using Infrastructure Onshore In North Jutland	€220.12	€220.12
Achieving Carbon-Negative Emissions In Grey Cement Clinker Production Through Emissions Reduction And Ccs	€209.62	€0.00
Advent Rhyno - Renewable Hydrogen Innovative Technologies Project	€34.53	€34.53
Agrovoltaic Technology Demonstration Plant On Orellana Canal	€2.07	€2.07
Ambassador: Closed-Loop Installation For Sustainable Production Of Biomethane, Bioco2 And Biofertilizers A New Standard For Zero Waste Economy	€7.96	€7.96
An Integrated 100 To 800 Mw(El) Green H2 Hub In The Ruhr Area For Industry And H2 Mobility Applications	€21.50	€0.00
Antoing Heidelberg Materials Emissions Integrated Solution	€170.00	€0.00
Arcadia Efuels: Decarbonizing Aviation	€185.00	€0.00

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STEP funding coming in your region under Cohesion Policy (July 2025)

Denmark – *EUR 52m*

1 national JTF programme

Netherlands – *EUR 20m*

1 regional ERDF and 1 national JTF* programme

Germany – *EUR 1.3 bn*

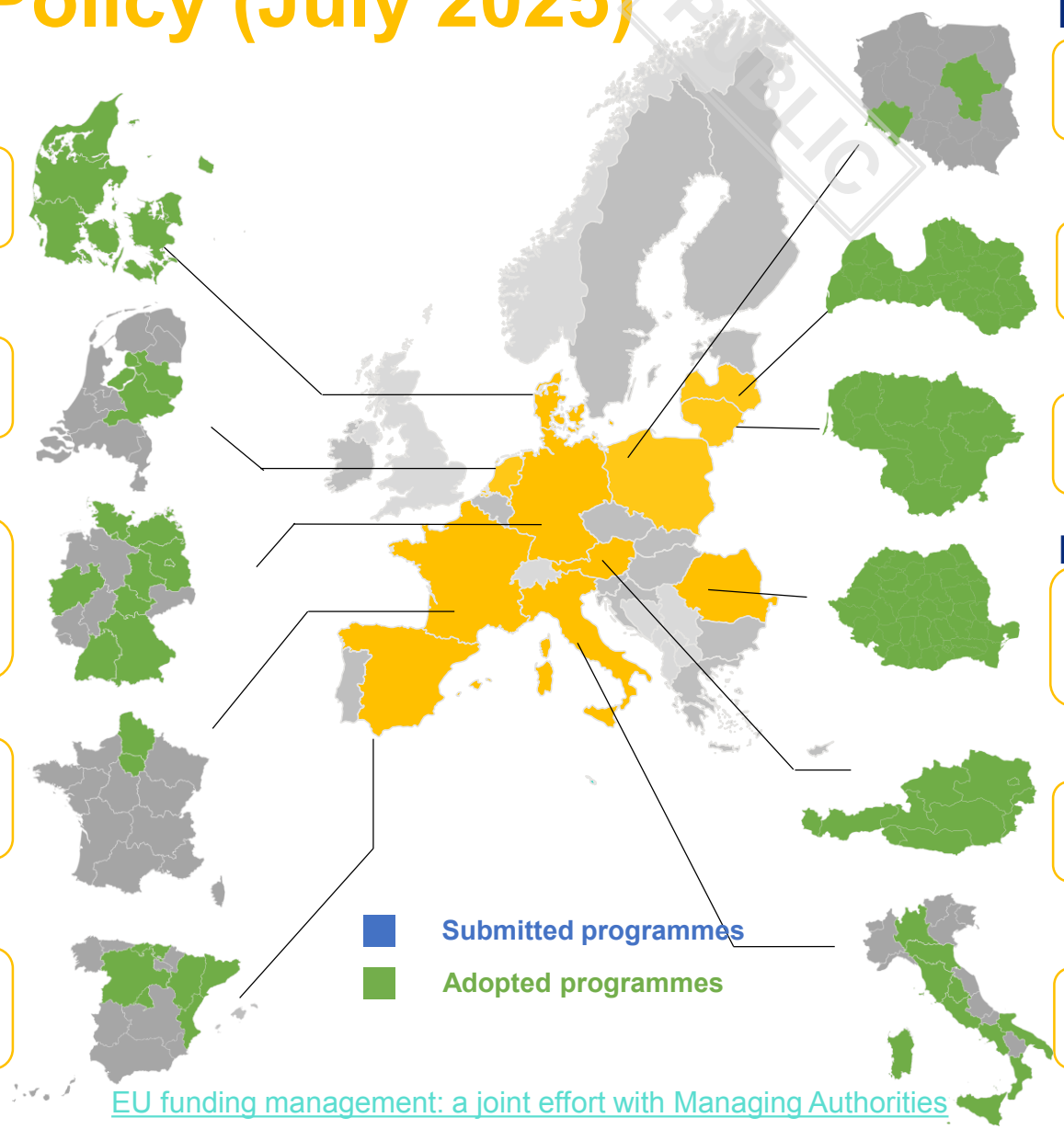
7 regional ERDF, 1 regional JTF and **1 regional ESF+** programmes

France – *EUR 101m*

2 regional ERDF and ESF+ programmes

Spain – *EUR 618m*

1 national JTF, 7 regional and 1 national ERDF, 2 regional ESF+ programmes



Poland – *EUR 956m*

1 national and 2 regional ERDF programmes

Latvia – *EUR 57m*

1 national ERDF programme

Lithuania – *EUR 59m*

1 national ERDF programme

Romania – *EUR 1.6bn*

1 national ESF+, 2 national ERDF and 1 national JTF programmes

Austria – *EUR 18m*

1 national JTF programme*

Italy – *EUR 3.1bn*

10 regional and 1 national ERDF programme

Funding opportunities with STEP in the Cohesion Policy

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- **ERDF/CF/JTF/ESF+** 30% pre-financing (for Programme Amendments prior to 31st of March 2025) & 100% EU co-financing
- STEP opens up possibilities for large enterprises (not in all Member States and regions)
- Period of eligibility and geographical location of cohesion programmes
- Examples of indicative actions:
    - Training for medical staff in the fields of innovative medical technologies and practicies: genomics, vaccines, cancer treatment
    - Deep tech health innovation: AI use for personalised treatment and diagnostics incl. for drug discovery

Thank you

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Contact us at EC-STEP-INFO@ec.europa.eu

More info on STEP: strategic-technologies.europa.eu

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