



# Navigating EU Funding Opportunities for SMEs

By  
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International Energy Research  
Research and Technology  
SEAI

# Introduction

- The International Energy Research (IER) programme contributes to the delivery of SEAI's Strategy by:
  - **Identifying and supporting Ireland's participation in international research excellence**
    - e.g. International Energy Agency (IEA)
  - **Developing research partnerships and collaborations at EU and international level**
    - e.g. Horizon Europe Cluster 5 Programme Committee member and National Contact Point for Energy

# Overview

**EU funding Landscape**



**Ireland's success rate with EU funding**



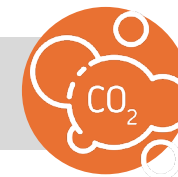
**SME performance**



**Irish success stories**



**Funding opportunities and open calls relevant for SMEs**



**National contact points and support information**



# Are you a Small to Medium Enterprise (SME) eligible for EU support?

- SMEs make up the majority of all businesses in the EU.
- The definition of an SME is important for accessing finance and EU support programmes targeted specifically at these enterprises.
- The main factors determining whether an enterprise is an SME are:
  - Staff headcount
  - either turnover or balance sheet total

[SME Self-assessment tool](#)

Company category	Staff headcount	Turnover	o r	Balance sheet total
Medium-sized	< 250	≤ € 50 m		≤ € 43 m
Small	< 50	≤ € 10 m		≤ € 10 m
Micro	< 10	≤ € 2 m		≤ € 2 m

## What help is available for SMEs?

- **Eligibility for support** - research funding, competitiveness and innovation funding, similar national support programmes
- **fewer requirements or reduced fees** for EU administrative compliance

20–21 March 2024

**Have you applied for/benefited from EU  
funding?**

Yes, applied for EU funding

Yes, received EU funding

No



**If yes, specify the funding programme**

**Join at [menti.com](https://www.menti.com) | use code  
8656 9984**

# EU Funding Landscape

A Brief Overview

**€95 billion**

Budget (2021 – 2027)

## Horizon Europe

EU's Flagship funding programmes for **research and innovation**

**€5.4 billion**

Budget (2021 – 2027)

## LIFE Programme

EU's funding instrument for the **environment and climate action.**

**€4.2 billion**

Budget (2021 – 2027)

## Single Market Programme

Funding programme to **strengthen the governance** of the EU single market.

**€33.7 billion**

Budget (2021 – 2027)

## Connecting Europe Facility

EU funding instrument to **promote growth, jobs and competitiveness** through targeted **infrastructure investment** at European level.

**€40 billion**

Budget (2020 – 2030)

## Innovation Fund

EU fund for climate policy, with a focus on **energy and industry.**

20–21 March 2024

Select the EU funding initiatives that you are most familiar with (Choose all that apply):

Horizon Europe

LIFE Programme

Single Market Programme

Innovation Fund

Connecting Europe Facility



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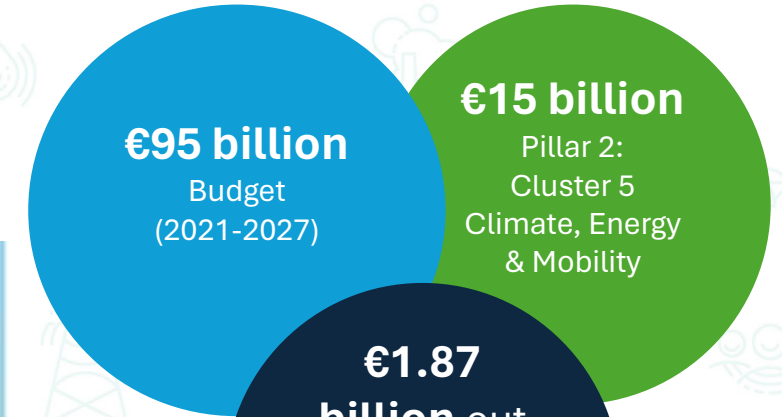
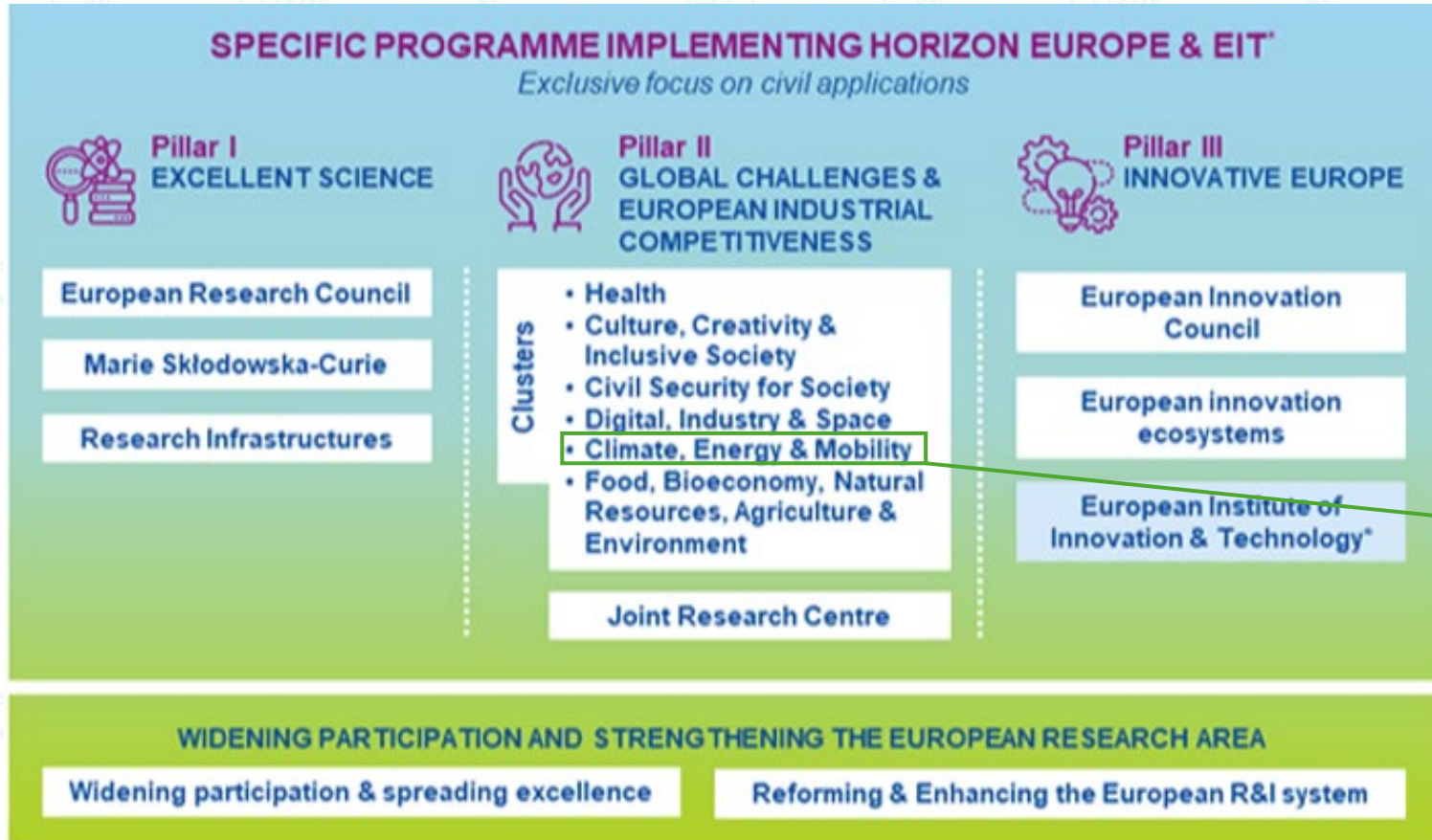
# Horizon Europe

- Overview
- Nature of projects & energy topics that are likely to receive funding
- Ireland's success rate
- SME performance
- Irish Success Story



# Horizon Europe

Focus: Research & Innovation

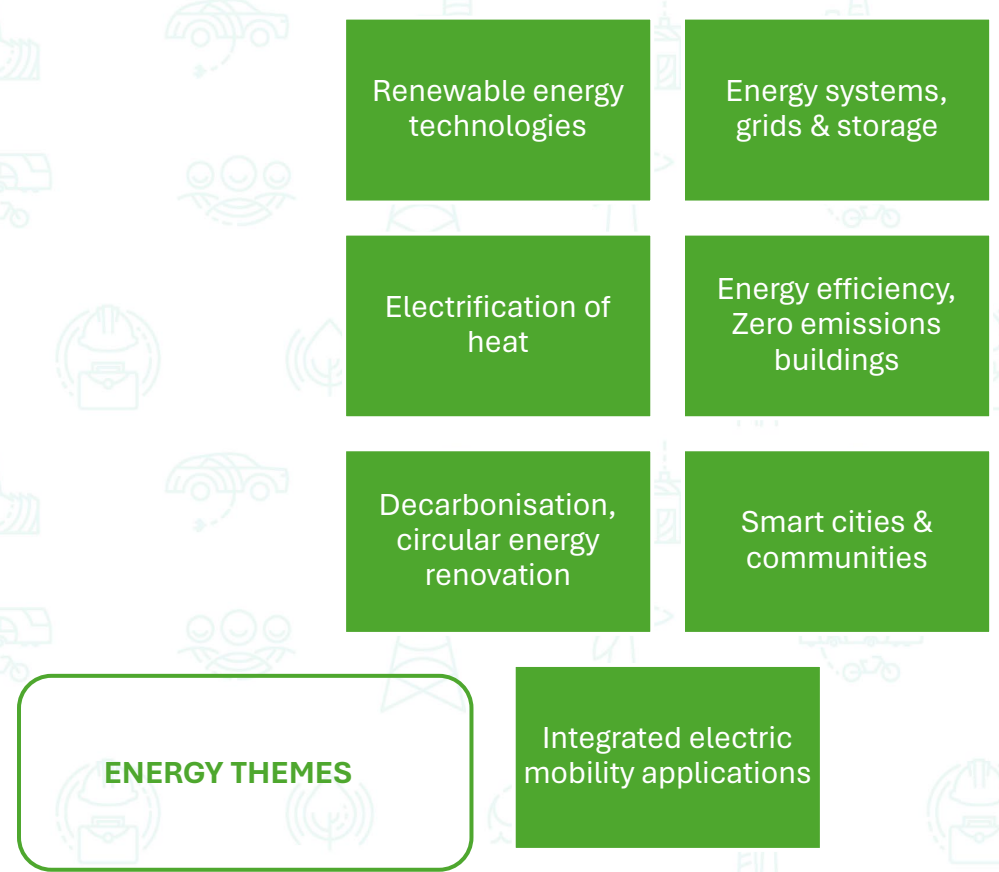
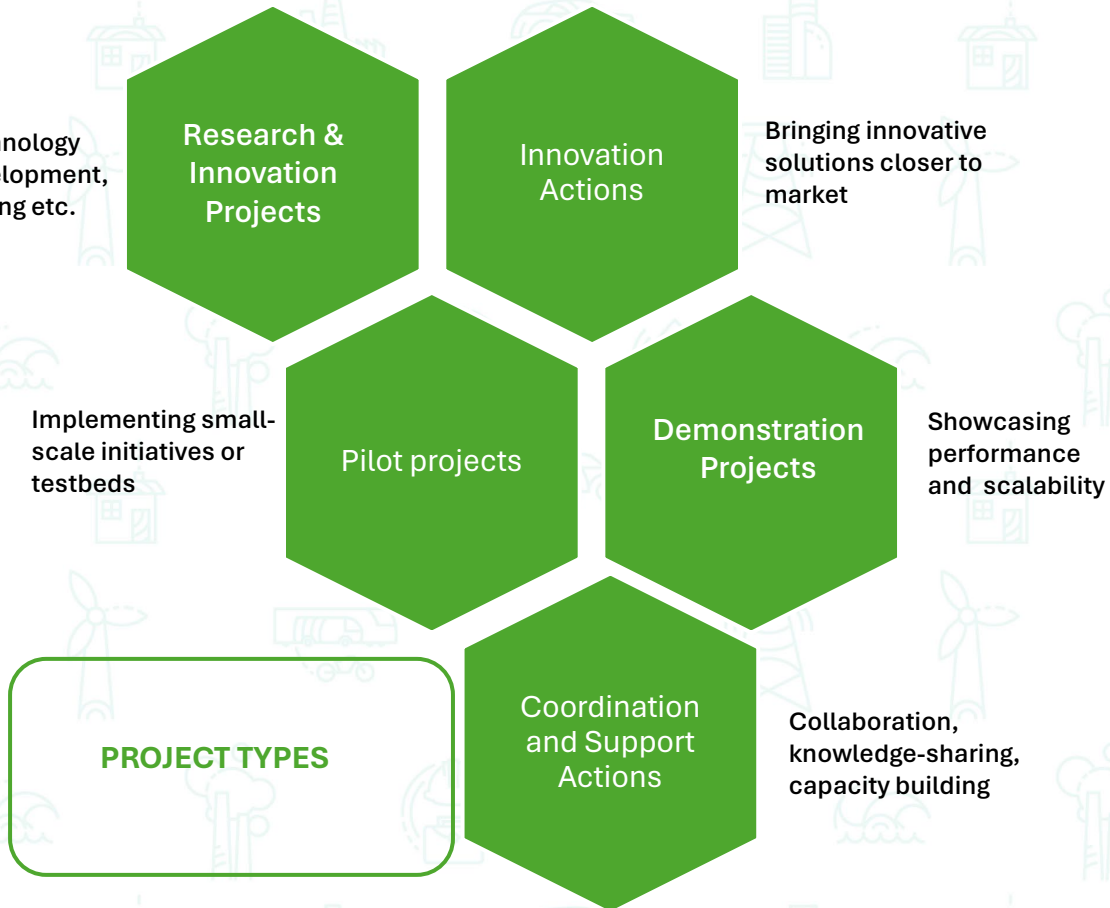


Destination 3: Sustainable, secure and competitive energy supply

Destination 4: Efficient Sustainable and inclusive energy use

# Energy Funding in Cluster 5: Climate, Energy and Mobility

What is likely to receive funding (examples)?

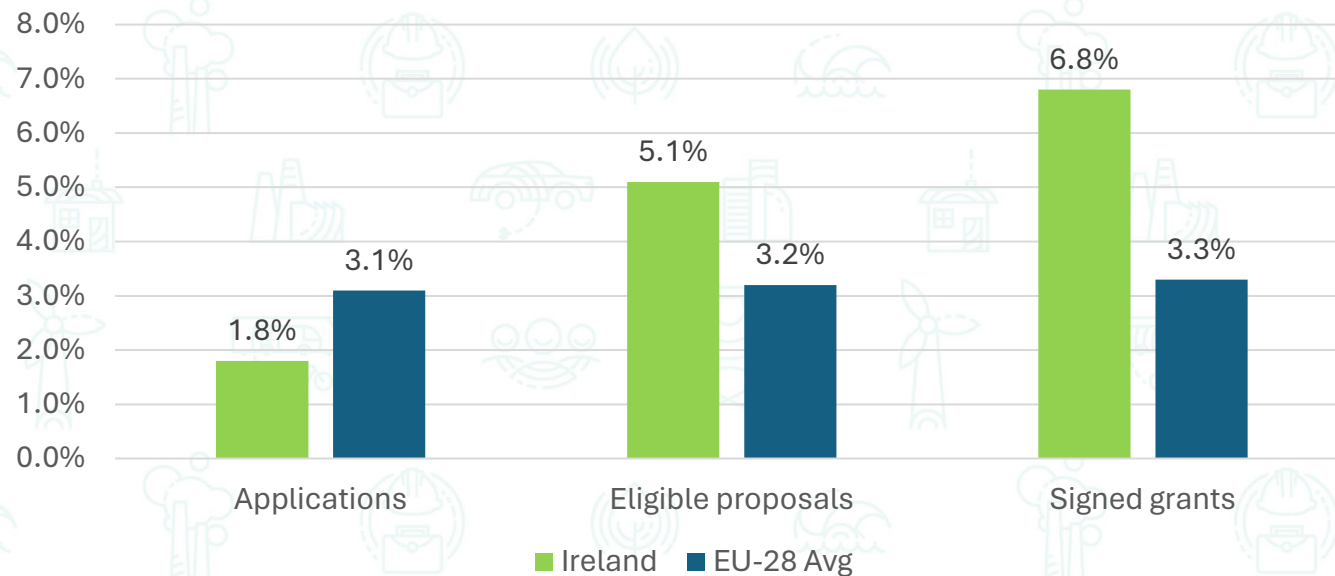


# Ireland's Success in Horizon Funding

Innovation performance of Ireland: **Strong Innovator** (European innovation Scoreboard 2023)

20–21 March 2024

	Ireland	EU-Average	Total
<b>Funding</b>	€1.87 Billion	€3.2 Billion	€98.8 Billion



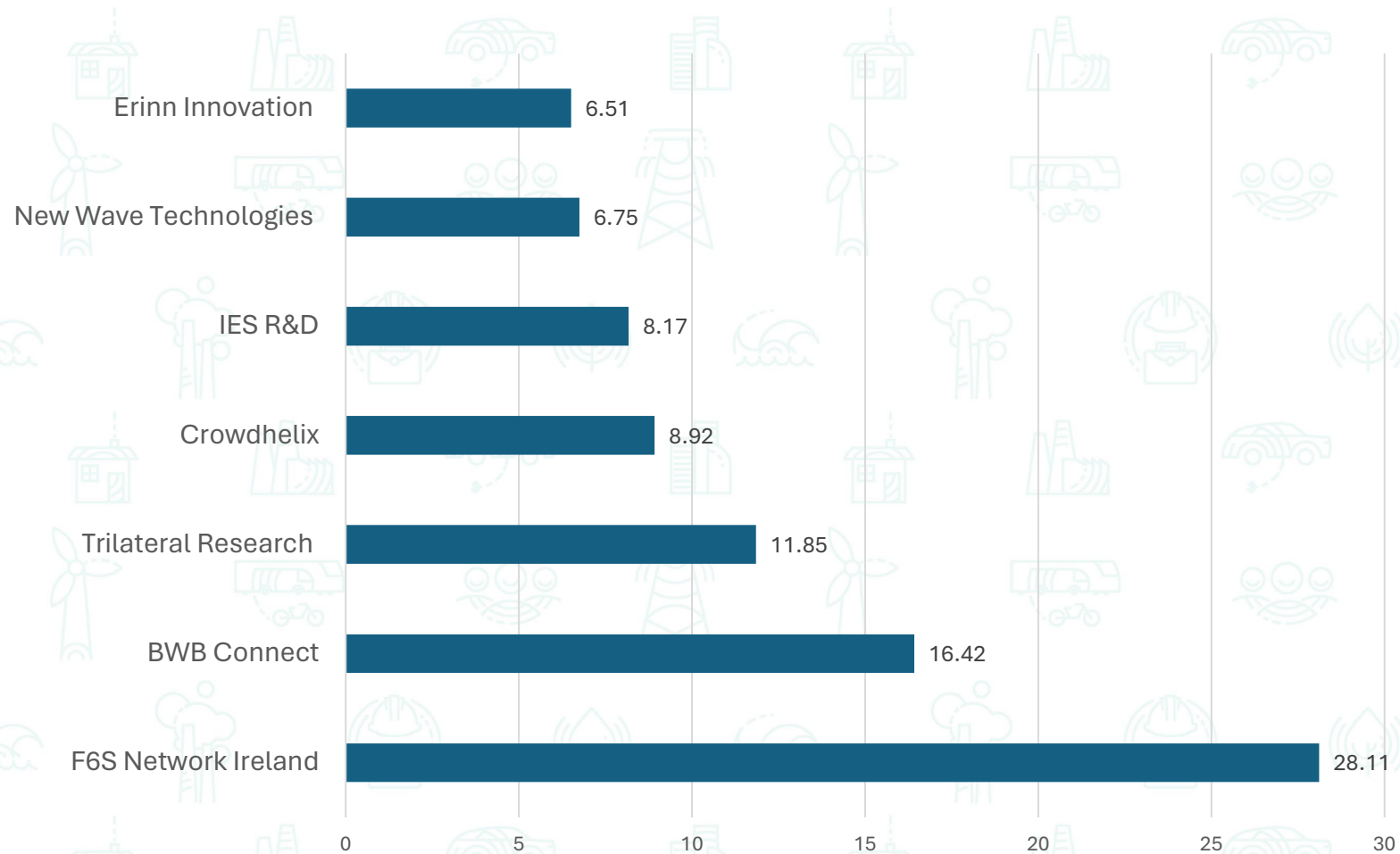
Success rate  
**16.45%**  
 approx. 2%  
 greater than the EU-average

Ireland ranked  
**13th**  
 in EU out of 28 based on  
 funding received

# Horizon Europe – SME performance

Top 7 SMEs based on Net EU Contribution (Million EUR) received for Horizon Europe – Cluster 5

20–21 March 2024



**349.4 million**  
 SME Net EU contribution  
 Ireland: **16.88%**

**361**  
 Unique SME Participation  
 Ireland: **22.66%**

**784**  
 SME applications  
 Ireland: **3.26%**

Source: Horizon Europe Dashboard - R&I Country Profile - SME Performance - Ireland | Sheet - Qlik Sense (europa.eu)

# Irish SME Success Stories – Horizon Cluster 5



## Wave Energy Demonstration at Utility Scale to Enable Arrays (2022 – 2026)

Project coordinator: New Wave Technologies

EU funding received **€6.75 million**

WEDUSEA will demonstrate a grid connected 1MW OE35 **floating wave energy converter** (known as the OE Buoy) at the European Marine Energy Test Site (EMEC) in Orkney, Scotland.



## Sun coupled innovative Heat pumps (2018 – 2023)

Project participant: IES R&D

EU funding received **€309k**

Demonstrates **innovative and reliable Heat Pump solutions** coupled and managed with **advanced solar panels** to provide heating and cooling for buildings.



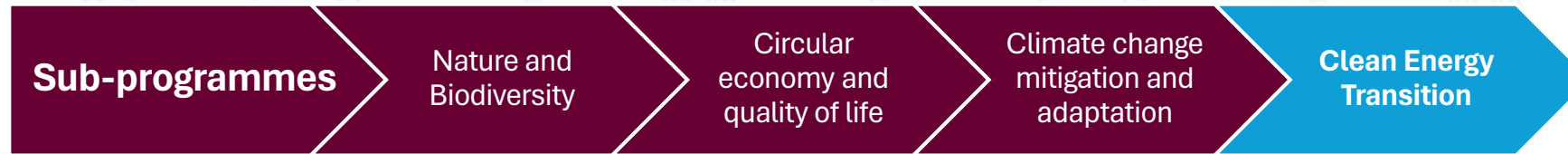
# LIFE Programme

- Overview
- Nature of projects & energy topics that are likely to receive funding
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# LIFE Programme - Overview

Focus: Environment & Climate Action

- To date, LIFE has co-financed **more than 5,000 projects**.



- The **Clean Energy Transition** sub-programme is a new component of the LIFE programme. It is of particular **relevance to hydrogen related projects**
- The programme is suited to:
  - demonstration projects
  - governance projects
  - A project that acts as a catalyst for large-scale deployments of technical and policy solutions.

**€5.4 billion**  
**Budget**  
(2021-2027)

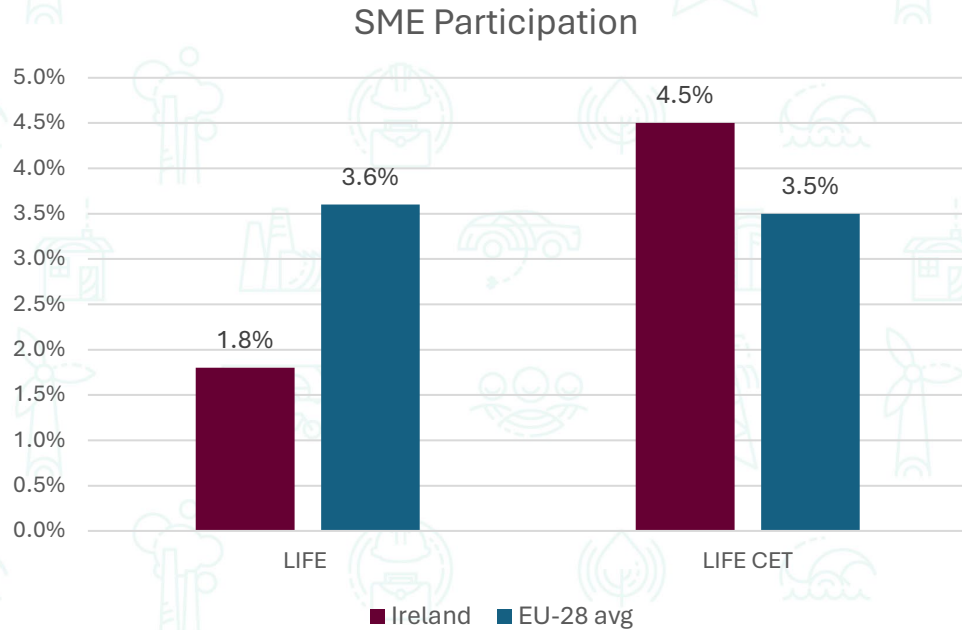
**€1 billion**  
Clean Energy  
Transition

**€103 million**  
out of €5.4 billion  
funding won by  
Ireland

# Ireland's Success in LIFE Funding

LIFE has supported 51 projects in Ireland out of which 22 were supported via LIFE CET

**Irish SME Participation in LIFE CET is higher than the EU-28 average**



	Ireland	EU-28 Average	Total
<b>LIFE CET Funding</b>	€8.52 Million	€8.23 Million	€231.9 Million

SMEs received **42%**

SMEs received **26%**

SMEs received **26%**

**€3.6 million**  
(42%)  
in EU funding from LIFE CET was received by Irish SMEs

Source: CINEA Dashboard - CINEA Project Portfolio - Overview | Sheet - Qlik Sense (europa.eu)



# Irish SME Success Stories – LIFE CET



## Local Energy Agencies for Peripheral Regions (2022 – 2026)

Project coordinator: Aran Islands Renewable Energy Ltd

EU funding received **€400k**

LEAP will create 3 Local Energy Agencies in the North and West of Ireland to support “**integrated home renovation services**” and in-turn create a continuous pipeline of neighbourhood-based projects.



## Transforming Renovation in the Southern Seaboard Region-Ireland (2023 – 2026)

Project participant: Vivid Edge Ltd

EU funding received **€390k**

The project will deliver facilitation support and drive collaboration, for **renovation of public buildings** across multiple local authority regions and public bodies in Ireland.

# LIFE: Close to market projects

- Close to market projects launch innovative, demonstrative solutions that offer **clear environmental and/or climate benefits**.
- Applicants for close-to-market projects can apply in the areas of:
  - **Climate change mitigation and adaptation**
  - Circular economy and quality of life
- These projects have a **high level of technical and business readiness** - i.e. solutions could be implemented in close-to-market conditions (at industrial or commercial scale) during the course of the project or shortly after its completion.

Over 40  
projects  
supported  
across 15  
countries

Through:

Business plan  
development advice

Business coaching,  
presentation guidance

Expert connections

External debt financing



# Single Market Programme

- Overview
- Nature of projects & energy topics that are likely to receive funding
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# Single Market Programme - Overview

Focus: Effective internal market & SMEs competitiveness

## Six Pillars

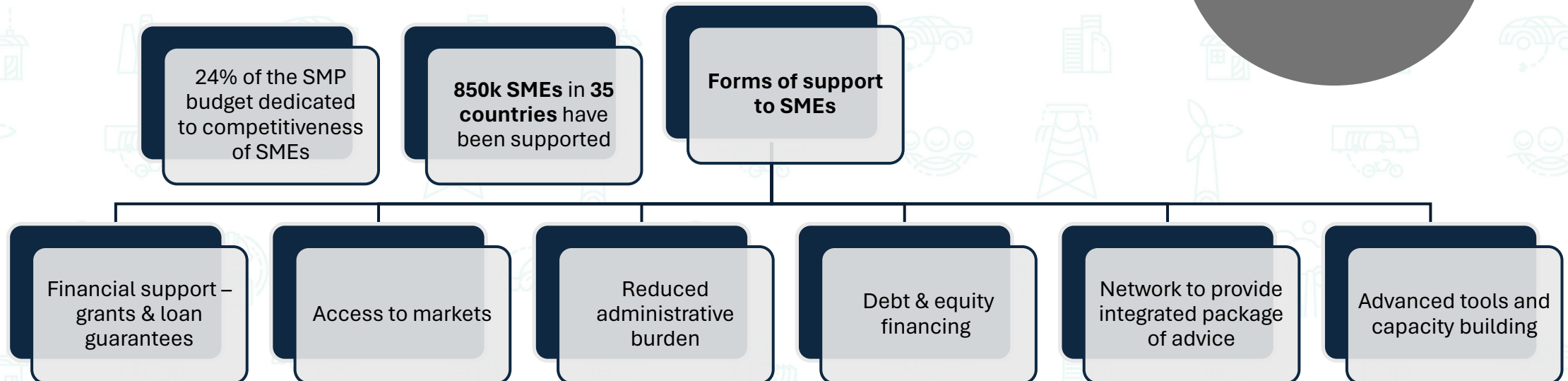


**€4.2 billion**  
**Budget**  
(2021-2027)

**€1 billion**  
SME Pillar

**€30 million**  
out of €4.2 billion  
funding won by  
Ireland

SME Pillar: Aims to boost the competitiveness of businesses, in particular **small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)**



# Ireland's success in Single Market Programme – SME Pillar

23 SMEs in Ireland supported via COSME | 30 projects funded worth of €30 million so far

**3**

Energy Projects

**€1.4 million**

Fund allocated

**11**

Capacity building/knowledge sharing initiatives for SMEs

**€7.6 million**

Fund allocated

Source: COSME data hub (eisma.eu)



## Success story: InnoBroker

Procurement Transformation Institute Ireland received nearly **€600k in EU contribution (2018 and 2020)**

InnoBroker aimed to establish the Innovation Procurement Broker (IPB) business model that will:

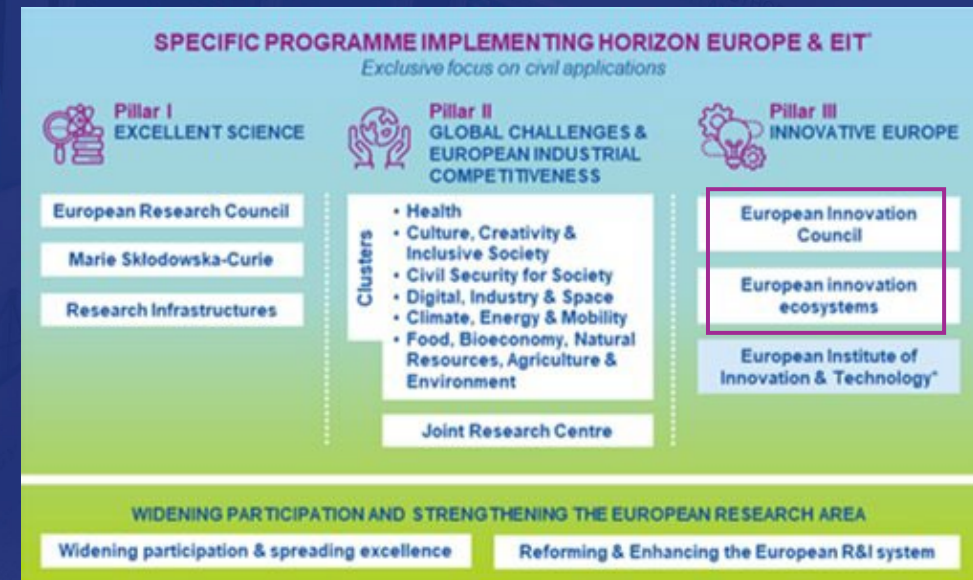
- bring together and facilitate the procurement of innovative goods and services between contracting authorities, suppliers of innovation
- with a special focus on SMEs and start-ups, investors, and researchers.

Source: IPP •• InnoBrokers (innovation-procurement.org)



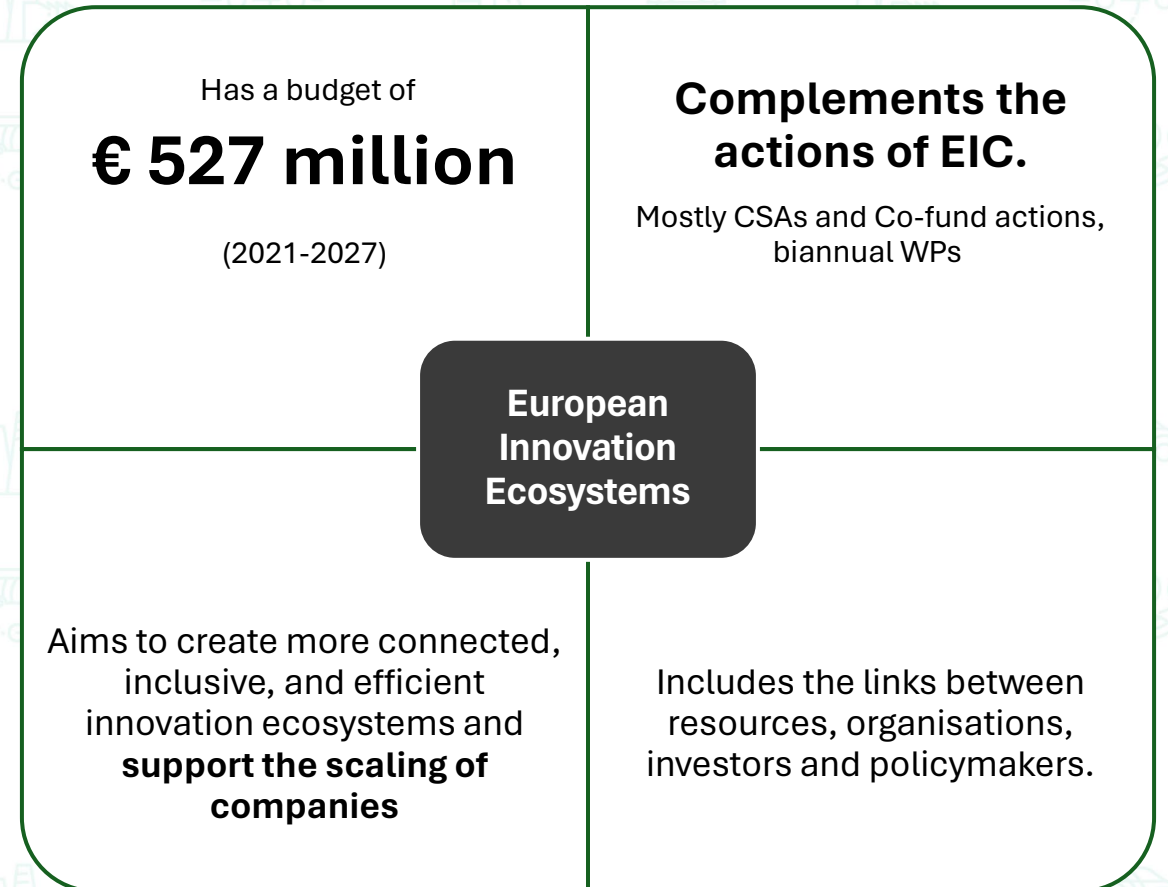
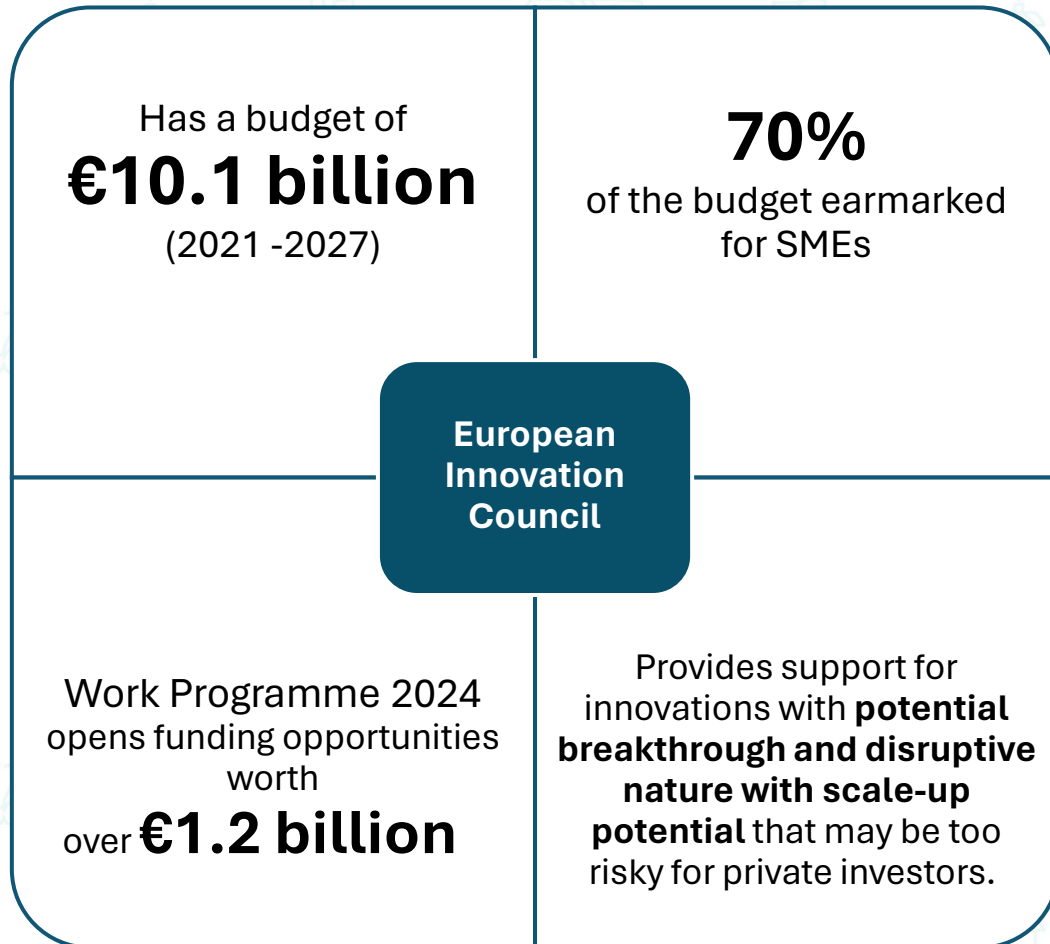
# Horizon Europe Pillar III

- European Innovation Council
- European Innovation Ecosystems



# Horizon Europe Pillar III Overview

European Innovation Council and the European Innovation Ecosystems



# European Innovation Council Funding

Pathfinder, Transition, Accelerator – Work Programme 2024

## Pathfinder

Early stage to proof of concept (TRL 1 – 4)

- Support to research or develop an **emerging breakthrough technology**
- **Open:** Collaborative research, no pre-defined themes
- **Challenge:** Potential cutting-edge project, contributing to pre-defined themes – e.g. Energy efficient smart edge devices

16 Oct  
2024

Total Budget  
€256  
million

## Transition

Validation and spin-out (TRL 3 or 4)

- Supporting maturation and validation of **novel ideas from lab to business**
- Novel promising technology with potential commercial applications

18 Sept  
2024

Total Budget  
€94  
million

## Accelerator

Innovation activities (TRL 5 – 9)

- Supporting SMEs to **develop and scale up** to new markets/disrupt existing ones
- **Open:** Grants & direct investment, no pre-defined themes
- **Challenge:** Breakthrough technologies, contributing to pre-defined themes – e.g. Renewable energy sources & their value chain

3 Oct  
2024

Total Budget  
€675  
million



# European Innovation Ecosystems

Two Destinations: Work Programme 2023 - 2024

## Expected Outcomes

CONNECT & INNOVSMEs (2024)

- Interconnected, inclusive and efficient innovation ecosystems across Europe
- Elevated scalability potential of business
- Innovative SMEs growth accessing markets & embedding in global value chains

Total Budget

**€51 million**



25 April  
2024

[CONNECT call](#)

Focuses on building interconnected & inclusive innovation ecosystems

**CONNECT**

**INNOVSMEs**

Helps innovative SMEs by funding international collaborative R&D and innovation projects



12 Sept  
2024

[INNOVSME call](#)

20–21 March 2024

## What is your preferred way to learn more about EU funding?

Interactive webinars

Detailed written guides

Online platforms with Q&A

Face-to-face expert sessions



Join at [menti.com](https://www.menti.com) | use code  
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# Conclusion and Next Steps

- EU funding can help SMEs to progress technologies/products and build networks.
- Follow the European Innovation Council and the SMEs Executive Agency ([EISMEA](#)) for the latest updates and announcements for SMEs.
- Other Tools for SMEs:
  - [Enterprise Europe Network](#) provides an integrated package of advice to SMEs on how to innovate and grow internationally.
  - [Joint cluster initiatives](#) - a new generation of actions involving industrial clusters - groups of specialised enterprises, often SMEs, and other related supporting actors in a location that cooperate closely.
- Access SEAI's 'How to Guide' to learn more about applying to relevant EU Funding Calls.

# For queries specific to Horizon Europe – Cluster 5



**Mark Sweeney**

National Contact Point (NCP) for Horizon Europe Cluster 5 - Climate, Cluster 6 - Environment and NCP for Climate Adaptation Mission



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**Philip Cheasty**

National Contact Point (NCP) for Horizon Europe Cluster 5 - Energy, NCP Nuclear Fission and Fusion Energy and NCP for Climate-neutral and Smart Cities Mission



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**Dr Bob Flynn**

National Delegate and National Contact Point (NCP) for Horizon Europe Cluster 5 - Mobility



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**Ann Marie Colbert**

National Contact Point (NCP) Horizon Europe Cluster 5 - Energy



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# For queries specific to Horizon Europe – EIC

EIC PATHFINDER

EIC TRANSITION

EIC ACCELERATOR

## THE TEAM



**Sean Burke**

National Delegate and National Contact Point (NCP) for Horizon Europe EIC (European Innovation Council) Accelerator, Pathfinder & EIE (European Innovation Ecosystem) in Horizon Europe

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**Dr James Walsh**

National Contact Point (NCP) for Horizon Europe EIC (European Innovation Council) Accelerator, Pathfinder & EIE (European Innovation Ecosystem) in Horizon Europe and EEN (Enterprise Europe Network) – Ireland, European IP Helpdesk Ambassador

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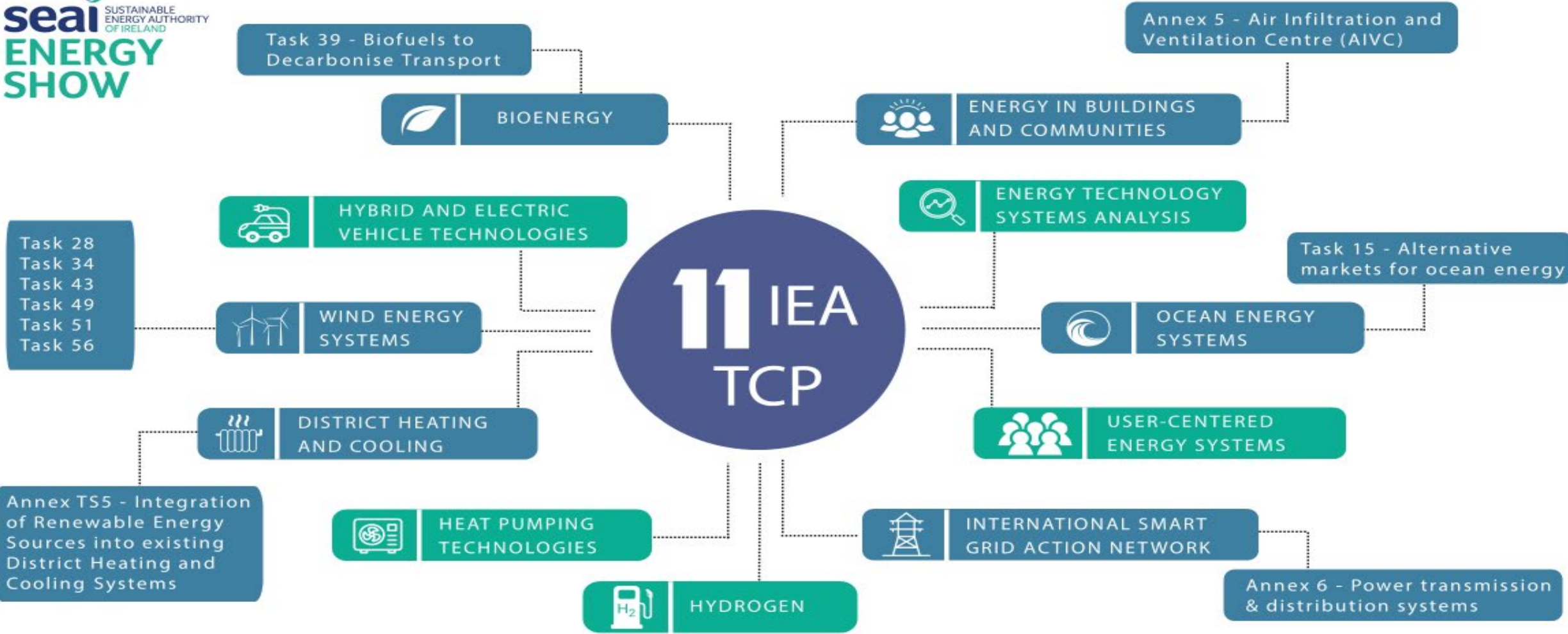
**David Flood**

National Project Coordinator of the EUREKA programme and COST National Coordinator. National Contact Point (NCP) for Horizon Europe EIC (European Innovation Council) Accelerator, Transition, and Pathfinder. NCP for Horizon Europe EIE (European Innovation Ecosystem). Organisation: Enterprise Ireland

✉ Email

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# International Energy Agency – Technology Collaboration Programmes (TCPs)



For more information on international funding opportunities or any queries, please get in touch with us:

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20–21 March 2024



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

Thank You!





# Clean Energy Transition Partnership

By  
**Irene Ward**

Research, Development and Demonstration  
SEAI

# Overview

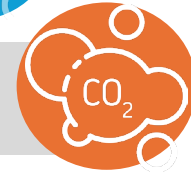
**Overview of Research, Development and Demonstration**



**Clean Energy Transition Partnership**



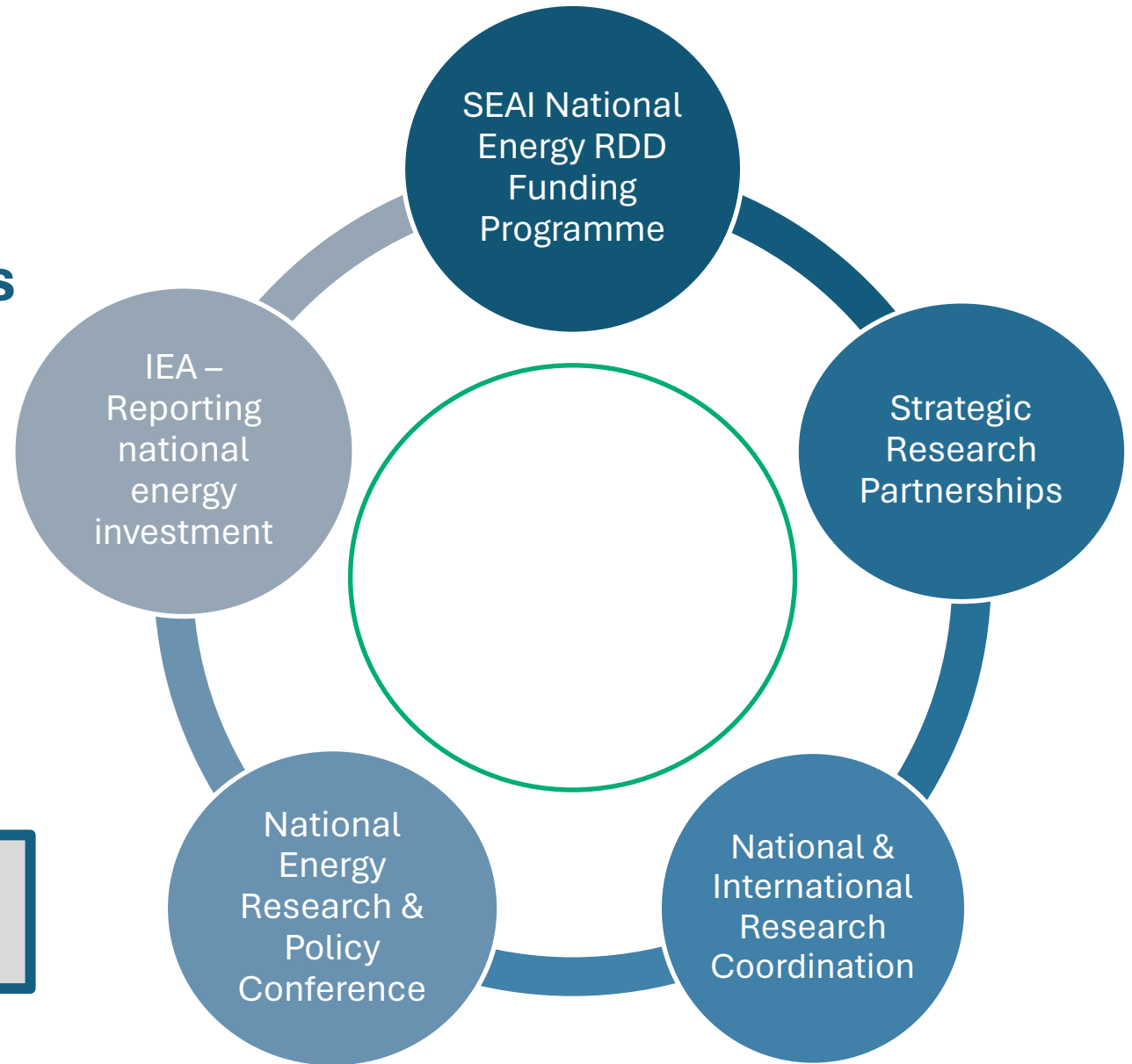
**National Energy RD&D Call launch**



## SEAI Research & Innovation Supports



**Lead & coordinate energy research supports in Ireland**





# Clean Energy Technology Partnership



EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP



Co-funded by  
the European Union

# CETPartnership

## The CETPartnership in a nutshell



The CETPartnership enables more than **50 national and regional** RTDI programme owners and managers from **30 countries** to align their priorities, pool national budgets of 210 Mill EUR for **two joint calls in 2022 and 2023**, as well as to implement annual joint calls from 2022 to 2027

### WHAT:

Aims to empower the **clean energy transition** and contribute to the EU's goal of becoming the first **climate-neutral continent by 2050**

### HOW:

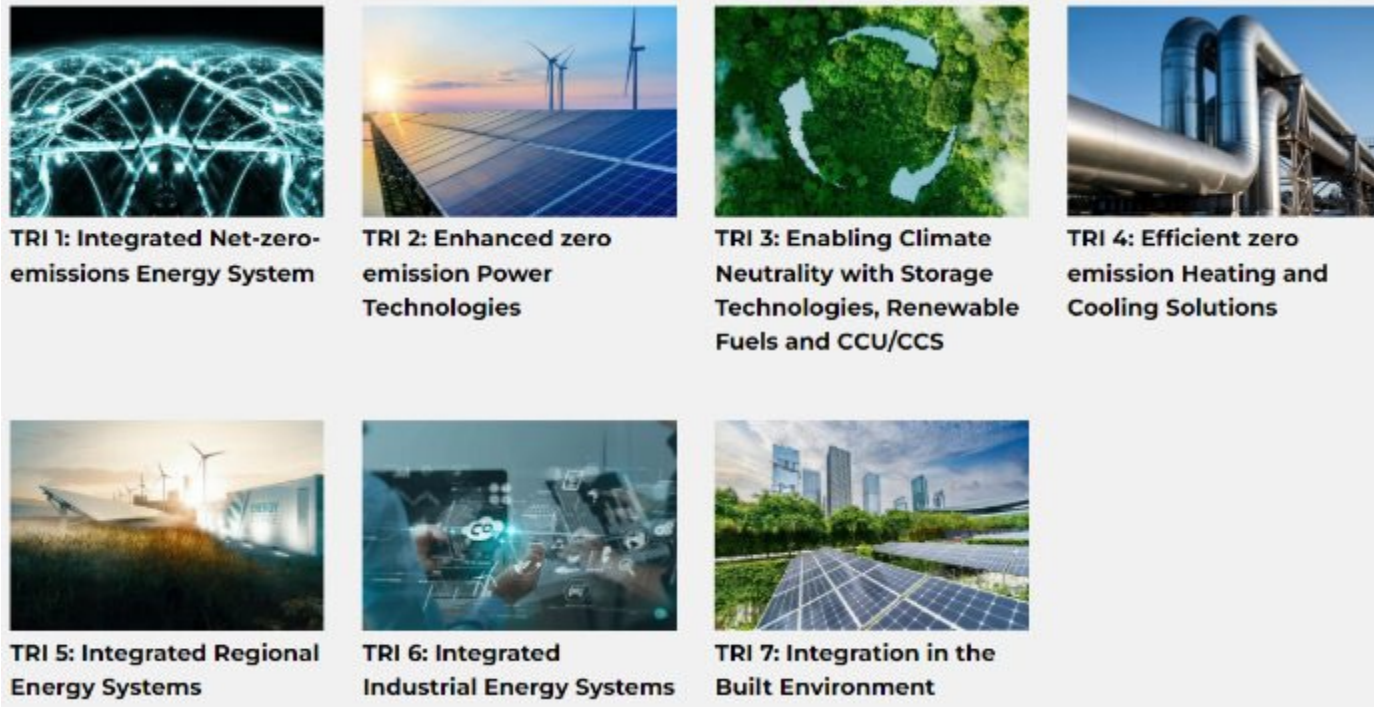
by pooling national and regional RDTI funding for a broad variety of technologies and system solutions required to make the transition

## Where does the CETPartnership come from?

- Builds on **15 years of transnational cooperation** in 9 energy relevant ERA-Nets
- Build up of **trust and established practices** in:
  - conducting joint calls,
  - monitoring progress,
  - sharing data, information and knowledge beyond the projects
  - deducing strategic knowledge,
  - maximising the impact of funded projects and their established European and international relationships



The Transition Initiatives (TRIs) are **thematic configurations** of CETPartnership funding partners in order to work together on a specific **Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA)** Challenge.



The CETPartnership has established the following **7 TRIs** which address the seven CETPartnership RTDI Challenges as described in the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA). Each of the TRIs is led by one of the CETPartnership partners, known as the TRI Lead.

- SEAI funded Irish partners in 4 international projects in 2022 call
- 2023 Call launched in September 2023
- Funding Decisions in June 2024

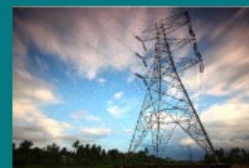
2024 call will launch in September 2024 (Tentative)

Visit <https://cetpartnership.eu/>

## Call Modules Joint Call 2023



CM2023-01: Direct current (DC) technologies for power networks



CM2023-02: Energy system flexibility: renewables production, storage and system integration



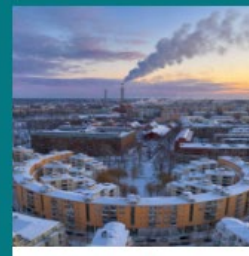
CM2023-03 (A/B): Advanced renewable energy (RE) technologies for power production



CM2023-04: Carbon capture, utilisation, and storage (CCUS)



CM2023-05: Hydrogen and renewable fuels



CM2023-06: Heating and cooling technologies



CM2023-07: Geothermal energy technologies



CM2023-08: Integrated regional energy systems



CM2023-09: Integrated industrial energy systems



CM2023-10 (A/B): Clean energy integration in the built environment



# SEAI awarded €0.5m to Irish companies contributing to international renewable energy research projects

*"I am delighted that we can facilitate Irish participation in trans-national research projects by providing funding and support. International projects such as these establish new alliances, and address challenges encountered in the move to clean energy."*

The four projects funded by SEAI are:

[WECHULL+](#) which focuses on sustainable concrete material for improved substructures in offshore renewable technologies with CETO Wave Energy Ireland.

[SEASNAKE+](#) is a project focussing on surface protection and condition monitoring for medium voltage undersea cables. The Irish funded partner is Ocean Wave Venture Ltd.

[SMART-LEM](#) is a project that aims to develop a business model-oriented platform with applications for developing local electricity markets. The Irish partner is Open Sky Data Systems Ltd.

[WAMTEC](#) is examining cost effective high-efficiency silicon technologies for solar PV. The Irish funded partner is Ultra High Vacuum Solutions Ltd.

# CET Partnership

## A few hints to prepare for the applications

- **Consortia requirements** (number of countries/regions involved, type of partners etc.)
- **Eligibility/in-eligibility issues**
- **Carefully read the call text** and the **national/regional requirement annexes** from countries/regions involved in your project
- **Due date for submission:** date/time
- **Contact the Call Management** or the **national/regional contact points**. For SEAI contact [energyresearch@seai.ie](mailto:energyresearch@seai.ie)



# National Energy Research, Development and Demonstration Call

Due to launch at the end of March 2024

<https://www.seai.ie/grants/research-funding/research-development-and-demonstration-fund/>

## SEAI National Energy RD&D Programme - Overarching goals



Accelerate  
**development & deployment** of  
competitive energy  
products,  
processes &  
systems



Enable barriers to  
**market uptake** to  
be overcome



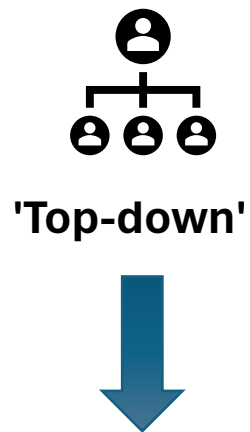
Grow Ireland's  
**capacity** to access,  
develop & apply  
**international class**  
energy RD&D



Provide energy  
**policy guidance & support**

# SEAI National Energy Research, Development & Demonstration (RD&D) Programme

Open to companies, research organisations, public sector and semi-state bodies  
The SEAI RD&D Funding Programme provides the opportunity for applicants to submit proposals to either the **Topic Strand** or **Open strand**:



## Topic Strand

applicants submit proposals that address specific topics

## Open Strand

applicants propose projects within SEAI's remit, which directly address the aims and objectives of the SEAI RD&D Funding Programme



For more information visit our website or for any queries, please get in touch with us:

<https://www.seai.ie/grants/research-funding/>  
[energyresearch@seai.ie](mailto:energyresearch@seai.ie)

20–21 March 2024



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Thank You!