

LEGAL ALERT

EUROPEAN COMMISSION AUTHORISES INCREASED PUBLIC FUNDING FOR STRATEGIC TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS FOR EUROPE

On 31 May 2024, the European Commission approved a surgical [amendment](#) to the [Guidelines on Regional Aid](#) (Guidelines) to reflect the objectives of the “Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform” (STEP).

The “Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform”, created by [Regulation \(EU\) 2024/795](#), aims to support critical and emerging strategic technologies and their value chains in the relevant sectors in the European Union (EU). The objective is to promote the development and production of technologies in the following sectors: *(i)* **digital technologies**; *(ii)* **clean and resource-efficient technologies**, including net-zero technologies within the meaning of the Net-Zero Industry Act; *(iii)* **biotechnologies**, including medicines on the EU list of critical medicines and their components; and *(iv)* addressing labor and key skills shortages in these sectors.

The amendment approved by the European Commission allows EU Member States to **increase the maximum level of public funding**, expressed as a percentage of the eligible costs, for investments falling under the scope of STEP in the so-called ‘A’ and ‘C’ regions of the Treaty. Pursuant to this amendment, the intensity of public funding can be increased by **10%** for projects in “**A**” regions and by **5%** for projects in “**C**” regions, through the revision and update of the relevant regional aid maps by Member States.

Should Portugal choose to make use of the new rules, the national regional aid map for the 2022-2027 period, as reflected in Decisions [SA.100752](#), [SA.106697](#) and [SA.109212](#), may be subject to the following STEP increases, as summarized in the table below, subject to prior notification and subsequent approval by the European Commission.

Region	Maximum aid intensity			STEP Increase
	Large enterprise*	Medium enterprise*	Small enterprise*	
“A”				
Norte (PT11), [excluding 1308 Matosinhos], Centro (PT16) [excluding PT16J Beiras and Serra da Estrela and PT16I Médio Tejo] and Alentejo (PT18) [excluding PT186 Alto Alentejo and PT181 Alentejo Litoral]	30%	40%	50%	
Norte (only 1308 Matosinhos) PT16J Beiras e Serra da Estrela and PT16I Médio Tejo [part of PT16 Centro], PT186 Alto Alentejo and PT 181 Alentejo Litoral	40%	50%	60%	+10%
Região Autónoma da Madeira (PT30)	50%	50%	60%	
Região Autónoma dos Açores (PT20)	50%	60%	70%	
“C”				
Algarve (PT150) partially : São Brás de Alportel, Alferce, Boliqueime, Cachopo, Ferreiras, Loulé (São Clemente), Loulé (São Sebastião), Mexilhoeira Grande, Monchique, Paderne, Pechão, Quelfes, São Bartolomeu de Messines, São Marcos da Serra, União das freguesias de Algoz e Tunes, União das freguesias de Conceição e Estoi, Vaqueiros	15%	25%	35%	
Área Metropolitana de Lisboa (PT170) partially : Alcochete, Gâmbia-Pontes-Alto da Guerra, Moita, Pinhal Novo, Quinta do Anjo, Sado, São Francisco, União das freguesias de Atalaia e Alto Estanqueiro-Jardia, União das freguesias de Gaio-Rosário e Sarilhos Pequenos, União das freguesias de Palhais e Coina, União das freguesias de Pegões, União das freguesias de Poceirão e Marateca)	15%	25%	35%	+5%
* As defined by Recommendation 2003/361/CE , concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Initial investments with eligible costs of up to EUR 50 million.				

Eduardo Maia Cadete
Luísa Amaro de Matos

This publication is purely informational and is not meant to be a source of legal advice, nor does it contain a comprehensive review of all aspects of the law and practice referred to. The information contained herein refers to the date of first publication, readers being warned to take legal advice before applying it to specific issues or transactions. The contents of this publication may not be copied, disclosed or distributed in whole or in part without prior consent. For more information please contact us at comunicacao@mlgts.pt.