

**Opinion of the Joint European Forum for Important Projects of Common European Interest
("JEF-IPCEI")¹**

Adopted by the high-level meeting of the Joint European Forum for IPCEI on 27 November 2024

The high-level formation of the JEF-IPCEI:

1. Acknowledges the importance of Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEI) as a State aid tool supporting important EU strategic objectives, including in the area of industrial policy, and notes the importance of using IPCEIs to contribute to reducing internal market fragmentation.
2. Welcomes the political support for IPCEIs expressed by the Member States in the Competitiveness Council Conclusions of May 2024 and by the President-Elect of the European Commission in her Political Guidelines 2024-2029 and takes note of the conclusions of the Letta and Draghi reports.
3. Emphasises the relevance of the objectives of the JEF-IPCEI in this context, to identify areas of strategic EU interest for potential future IPCEIs and to increase the effectiveness of the IPCEI process.
4. Thanks the Member States and the Commission for their involvement in the JEF-IPCEI and their active contributions to its activities. Since its establishment in October 2023, the JEF-IPCEI has contributed to strengthening the community of IPCEI experts across all Member States and to fostering transparency and open discussions on IPCEI identification, design, assessment and implementation.
5. Welcomes the concrete progress towards the objectives of the JEF-IPCEI and the quality of the deliverables prepared by the technical level of the JEF-IPCEI.
6. As regards the identification of new potential candidates for IPCEIs, the high-level formation of the JEF-IPCEI:
 - a. Welcomes the work conducted by the technical working groups, on clean technologies, led by Austria, on digital technologies, led by Germany and The Netherlands, and on nuclear technologies, led by France;

¹ The JEF-IPCEI is a Commission group gathering Member States and the Commission to identify areas of strategic EU interest for potential future IPCEIs and to increase the effectiveness of the designing, assessment and implementation of IPCEI. The JEF-IPCEI views do not engage the Commission.

- b. Endorses the proposal of participating Member States to start working on the design of the following four IPCEI candidates, as described in the adopted endorsement letters:
 - i. **Circular Advanced Materials for Clean Technologies:** this IPCEI will aim to enhance resource efficiency and circularity in critical materials across key EU industries, supporting the EU's strategic autonomy, environmental goals, and leadership in clean technologies;
 - ii. **Continuum of federated and distributed Artificial Intelligence services:** this IPCEI will aim to develop and deploy next generation AI technologies to create a first ever Artificial Intelligence (AI) ecosystem for Europe, facilitating the access of EU industry to federated computing resources and open, reusable and scalable AI foundation models;
 - iii. **Deploying large-scale federated Edge computing infrastructure and services:** this IPCEI will aim to deploy a sovereign next generation of federated edge-node compute infrastructure that will be the necessary technological foundation for the European digital Single Market;
 - iv. **Advanced Semiconductors Technologies:** This IPCEI will aim to create a novel European ecosystem of highly innovative semiconductor technology applications that addresses the most strategic requirements of the EU industrial sectors boosting the EU's competitiveness and resilience.
- c. Recalls that Member States commit to dedicating resources for the design phase of the IPCEI candidate(s) they have endorsed while not prejudging their decision to join the IPCEI with concrete projects and budget if and when it materialises;
- d. Calls for the Member States and the Commission to keep the JEF-IPCEI informed about the design phase of the endorsed IPCEI candidates to ensure a transparent process giving all Member States the opportunity to join the potential IPCEI if and when it materialises;
- e. Acknowledges that further technical work is required on the identification of a possible IPCEI candidate on nuclear technologies and expects the working group on nuclear technologies to either propose an IPCEI candidate by the next High-level meeting in 2025 or to terminate its activities.

7. As regards measures to make IPCEIs simpler and faster:

- a. Adopts the Recommendation on the roles of indirect and associated partners (IAP) in an IPCEI ecosystem, whose application will contribute to improving the process, speed, design and assessment of IPCEIs. The JEF-IPCEI encourages participation of IAPs in IPCEIs, recalls that Member States are in the driving seat to create opportunities for companies or organisations to become involved in an IPCEI as IAP, and encourages the application of the criteria, contributions and involvement of IAPs in an IPCEI ecosystem in line with the IAP Recommendation;
 - b. Acknowledges the work done to identify national best practices for the national decision-making process on whether to participate in an IPCEI; for the national calls for expression of interest; for the national IPCEI governance; as well as for the national pre-screening of projects prior to pre-notification;
 - c. Calls for the Member States and Commission to apply the Code of good practices for a transparent, inclusive, faster design and assessment of IPCEIs and the adopted recommendations of the JEF-IPCEI to streamline the IPCEI process.
8. Looking forward to 2025, calls for the technical formation of the JEF-IPCEI to finalise the work initiated in 2024 on:
 - a. National best practices, with the aim of setting up a collection of national best practices by mid-2025;
 - b. EU IPCEI co-financing, to map existing EU co-financing opportunities in the context of IPCEIs and identify obstacles and possible solutions to facilitate co-financing of IPCEI projects with relevant EU funding instruments;
 - c. Implementation, with the aim of monitoring more closely the implementation and progress of IPCEIs by Member States while limiting administrative burden especially for SMEs, notably through a common implementation dashboard, based on streamlined reporting procedures for IPCEI direct participants and Member States' authorities; the JEF-IPCEI notes it is essential to improve the oversight on IPCEI implementation on the ground.
9. Reiterates that it is essential to work on a continuous basis on the identification of potential new IPCEI candidates;
10. Calls for the technical formation of the JEF-IPCEI to, according to the discussion in the high-level JEF, start work on:
 - a. Identification of new potential candidates for IPCEI by creating new working groups in the fields of:

- i. Biotechnologies
- ii. Critical Raw Materials
- iii. Clean, connected and autonomous vehicles

b. New areas to improve the process, speed and design of IPCEIs based on the survey results:

- i. Facilitating participation of SMEs
- ii. Management of IPCEIs
- iii. Evaluation methodology

11. Agrees that the high-level formation of the JEF-IPCEI should reconvene in the first quarter of 2025.