



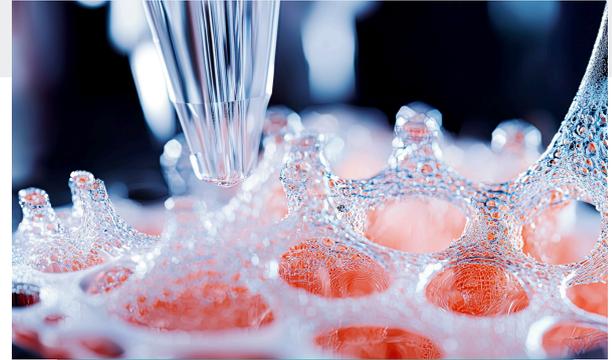
# NEWSLETTER #2

MARCH 2026

Boosting the use of New Approach Methodologies to replace Animal Testing

## ABOUT US

STEP4NAMs is a European project funded by Interreg North-West Europe that supports the uptake of **New Approach Methodologies (NAMs)** in the (Bio)Pharma and MedTech sectors. The project will deliver two sector-specific action plans, conduct four pilot studies to validate NAM technologies, and develop a comprehensive NAM Validation Manual. In addition, a training and support programme will provide opportunities for stakeholders to gain hands-on experience and practical guidance in the application of NAMs.



STAY WITH US AS WE BUILD THE TOOLS, EVIDENCE AND STRATEGIES NEEDED TO SUPPORT THE BROADER IMPLEMENTATION OF NAMs IN NORTH-WEST EUROPE.

LISTEN NOW

<https://step4nams.nweurope.eu/podcast>

3 Episodes

PODCAST EPISODE 1-3



## STEP4NAMs PODCAST LAUNCH - THREE EPISODES NOW AVAILABLE

The STEP4NAMs podcast series has officially launched and already features three episodes dedicated to advancing knowledge and discussion around NAMs.

- **Episode 1** introduces the STEP4NAMs project, its objectives and its contribution to replace animal testing in (Bio)Pharma and MedTech
- **Episode 2** presents the four pilot studies focusing on Organ-on-Chip, Organoids, Digital Twins and Bioprinting
- **Episode 3** provides insights from the STEP4NAMs workshop at BioFIT 2025 in Strasbourg, focusing on challenges and opportunities for accelerating the adoption of NAMs.

Available online via the project website: [step4nams.nweurope.eu/podcast](https://step4nams.nweurope.eu/podcast)



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RETHINKING HEALTH INNOVATION  
AT BIOFIT 2025 – STEP4NAMs  
WORKSHOP AND PARTNER MEETING  
IN STRASBOURG

OPEN CALL FOR PILOT STUDIES –  
8 COMPANIES SELECTED



At BioFIT 2025 in Strasbourg, STEP4NAMs hosted its first major public workshop.

Key highlights:

- Strategic alignment of partners on pilot studies and upcoming milestones
- Progress update on NAM validation activities
- Presentation of stakeholder interview findings across six countries
- Panel discussion addressing regulatory uncertainty, funding gaps and training needs
- Strengthening collaboration within the NAM ecosystem

The workshop marked the first major public engagement of STEP4NAMs at a European partnering event.

In the last quarter of 2025, STEP4NAMs launched an Open Call inviting companies to participate in the project's pilot studies.

- 24 applications were received
- 8 companies were selected
- The selection process for end-user test sites in Pilot Study 2 is still ongoing, where additional companies are expected to join

The following companies were selected for participation in the pilots:

**Pilot IA – Microfluidic Lung-on-Chip** (*University of Galway*)

- Microfluidics Innovation Center (France)
- ARTIC Technologies (Netherlands)

**Pilot IB – Digital Twin System** (*University of Galway*)

- In4Research (Netherlands)

**Pilot II – Multi-Site Functional Validation of Organ-on-Chip Models** (*3R-Center Tübingen*)

- AlveoliX (Switzerland)
- InSphero (Switzerland)

**Pilot III – Bench-top Simulation for Stroke Devices** (*Atlantic Technological University*)

- OWL Lifesciences (France)
- inSteps BV (Netherlands)

**Pilot IV – Parkinson's Disease Organoids for Predicting Drug Efficacy** (*University of Luxembourg*)

- Syngle Therapeutics (Netherlands)

Further information:

[step4nams.nweurope.eu/open-call](https://step4nams.nweurope.eu/open-call)

The pilot studies form a core element of validating and demonstrating NAM technologies in practical application settings



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On October 29, 2025, INSERM organized a call for expressions of interest reserved for INSERM teams to structure INSERM's response to the future 2026 European collaborative call for proposals from Horizon Europe's Health Cluster, "Integrating NAMs to advance biomedical research and regulatory testing."

The objective was to foster collaborations between INSERM teams with complementary expertise and invited European partners with the aim of developing one or more European projects involving INSERM teams. Among the external European contributors are:

- **Laure Geoffroy** (INERIS), coordinator of the NAMWISE project (NAMS WITHIN INTEGRATED SAFETY & EFFICACY EVALUATION OF CHEMICALS AND PHARMACEUTICALS)
- **John Colbourne** (THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM), coordinator of the PrecisionTox project (Toward Precision Toxicology: NAMs for Chemical Safety)
- **Kévin Plouchart** (MEDICEN PARIS REGION), member of the STEP4NAMs project.

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### STEP4NAMs AT THE ANNUAL INTERREG NWE EVENT IN LUXEMBOURG

In December STEP4NAMs participated in the Annual Interreg North-West Europe event in Luxembourg, contributing to the broader programme dialogue on innovation and resilience.

The event provided an opportunity to:

- Present the project's objectives within the Interreg NWE framework
- Exchange with other funded projects
- Strengthen visibility at programme level
- Connect with stakeholders from across the NWE region

This participation further reinforces STEP4NAMs' positioning within the Interreg NWE Priority "Innovation and resilience"





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## UPCOMING WEBINAR – INTRODUCTION TO THE STEP4NAMs TRAINING PROGRAMME

Ahead of the EDUCATE launch, a dedicated webinar will introduce the full Training and Support Programme:

**12.03.26 | 1:00 -2:00 PM (CET) | Online**

The webinar will present:

- Structure of EDUCATE, ENABLE and APPLY
- Participation requirements
- Access conditions for SMEs
- Timeline and certification details

Register here: [step4nams.nweurope.eu/webinar-for-training-and-support-programme](https://step4nams.nweurope.eu/webinar-for-training-and-support-programme)

## LAUNCH OF THE PROGRAMME IN MARCH 2026

The official launch of the EDUCATE online training programme will take place in March 2026. EDUCATE is the first pillar of the STEP4NAMs Training and Support Programme and provides structured online learning on NAM fundamentals and specialised modules covering Organ-on-Chip, Organoids, Digital Twins and Bench-Top Simulations

- Modular and self-paced online format
- Certificates for completed modules
- Open to stakeholders across the NAM value chain
- Mandatory module to access ENABLE and APPLY programmes

Further information: [step4nams.nweurope.eu/training](https://step4nams.nweurope.eu/training)

## FROM STRATEGY TO IMPLEMENTATION – STEP4NAMs GAINS MOMENTUM

Since its start in 2025, STEP4NAMs has moved from strategic planning to operational implementation.

Key achievements include:

- 8 companies selected through the STEP4NAMs Open Call to participate in the pilot studies
- Start of pilot collaboration in 2026, moving from preparation into active cooperations between pilot partners and participants
- Training programme ready for launch, structured around the three pillars EDUCATE – ENABLE – APPLY
- First public STEP4NAMs workshop successfully held at BioFIT 2025 in Strasbourg
- The uptake of NAMs in NWE -A Report About the Strengths and Challenges with insights from 45 stakeholder interviews conducted across all five partner countries

These milestones demonstrate tangible progress from strategy development to operational implementation, strengthening validation efforts and transnational cooperation in the (Bio)Pharma and MedTech sectors.



[www.linkedin.com/company/STEP4NAMs](https://www.linkedin.com/company/STEP4NAMs)



[step4nams.nweurope.eu](https://step4nams.nweurope.eu)



## GOT CURIOUS?

Head over to our website to discover everything about STEP4NAMs – or join us on LinkedIn, where we regularly share exciting insights and updates on NAMs.

STEP4NAMs is co-funded by the Interreg North-West Europe Programme under the priority "Innovation and Resilience". Led by BioRegio STERN Management GmbH (Germany), the project brings together 10 partners from six countries to strengthen the uptake of NAMs in the (Bio)Pharma and MedTech sectors. STEP4NAMs aims to develop two sector-specific action plans, implement four pilot studies to validate selected NAM technologies and deliver a comprehensive training and support programme for at least 186 stakeholders across North-West Europe.

The consortium includes:

3R-Center Tübingen (Germany), University of Luxembourg (Luxembourg), University of Galway and Atlantic Technological University (Ireland), InnovationQuarter and Brabant Development Agency (Netherlands), Medicen Paris Region and Eurasanté (France), and Biovia (Belgium).