Interreg North-West Europe

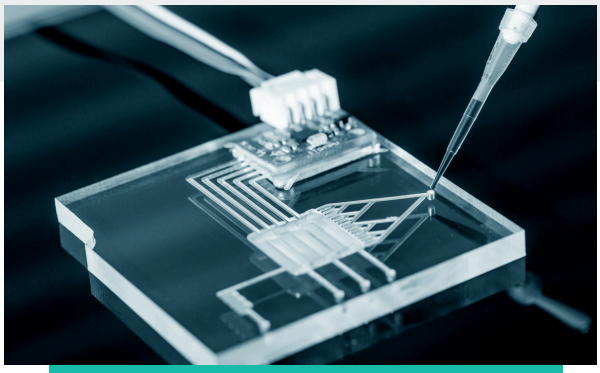
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STEP4NAMs

NEWSLETTER #3

NOVEMBER 2026

Boosting the use of New Approach Methodologies to reduce Animal Testing



Since the last newsletter, STEP4NAMs has continued to move from preparation towards practical implementation. The Training & Support Programme is now active across all three pillars, new ENABLE opportunities are available for SMEs and the first APPLY round has been launched together with Sanofi and Ipsen.

At the same time, the consortium has continued to connect its training, pilot and strategic activities through partner meetings in Tübingen and Galway, while STEP4NAMs has gained further visibility through European and national publications.

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



STEP4NAMS TRAINING & SUPPORT PROGRAMME IN ACTION

The programme supports SMEs from first NAM knowledge to practical implementation through three complementary pillars:

- EDUCATE: flexible online NAM training
- ENABLE: hands-on training and individual support
- APPLY: collaboration on real industry challenges

Further information:
https://step4nams.nweurope.eu/training

18 APPLICATIONS FOR THE FIRST APPLY ROUND

The first APPLY round was launched with Sanofi and Ipsen, offering 12 BioPharma challenges to SMEs and start-ups.

- 18 applications received
- Selection currently ongoing
- Selected SMEs will receive mentoring, training and direct access to the Challenge Providers

Further information: https://step4nams.nweurope.eu/apply-challenges

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PAST EVENTS

STEP4NAMs Partner Meeting in Tübingen

Partners met in Tübingen in March 2026 to discuss pilot progress, training activities and upcoming project milestones. The meeting was followed by the first in-person Strategic Advisory Board meeting.

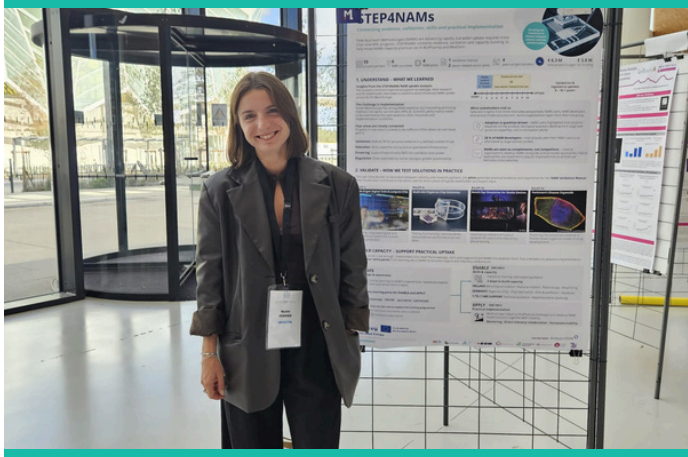


STEP4NAMs Partner Meeting in Galway

The fifth partner meeting brought the consortium together in Galway to review the progress across the pilots, the training programme and the strategic activities and to coordinate the next project phase.



STEP4NAMs at TOX26 in Paris-Saclay



MPR presented STEP4NAMs with a project poster at the TOX26 conference on 1–2 October 2026 at Université Paris-Saclay. The event brought together researchers, test developers, industry and regulatory stakeholders to discuss NAMs and Next Generation Risk Assessment (NGRA), with a focus on predictive tools, validation and regulatory acceptance for systemic toxicity assessment.

Two webinars introduce the Training & Support Programme

Two STEP4NAMs webinars were held in spring 2026:

- Introduction to the overall Training & Support Programme
- Dedicated webinar on ENABLE and APPLY for SMEs and start-ups

Recordings are available online.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

ENABLE Training at ATU – 26 November 2026
The next hands-on ENABLE training at ATU will focus on practical NAM applications for MedTech SMEs, including vascular models, benchtop simulation and imaging.

Organ-on-Chip Training in Tübingen – 25–27 January 2027
Uni Tuebingen will host a 2.5-day practical training on Organ-on-Chip technologies for SMEs and start-ups.

https://step4nams.nweurope.eu/enable-on-site-training

Science for Health 2026 – Immunology Reengineered

10 November 2026 | Brussels, Belgium
Science for Health 2026 will bring together researchers, industry leaders and innovators to explore how advances in immunology can be translated into next-generation therapies. This year's programme covers topics including cell and gene therapies, antibody engineering, immune modulation and emerging translational technologies.

Organised by STEP4NAMs partner Biovia, the event offers opportunities to connect with Belgium's wider BioPharma and health innovation ecosystem.

ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

Strategic Advisory Board strengthens STEP4NAMs with external expertise
The STEP4NAMs Strategic Advisory Board brings together external experts from science, regulation, industry and civil society to provide strategic guidance throughout the project.
At its first in-person meeting in Tübingen, the SAB discussed key barriers to NAM uptake, regulatory and policy challenges and priorities for the project's future strategy and outputs.

External participants included:

- **Milena Mennecozzi** – EURL ECVAM, European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC)
- **Lena Smirnova** – Johns Hopkins Center for Alternatives to Animal Testing (CAAT)
- **Francesca Pistollato** – Humane World for Animals Europe
- **Mario Beilmann** – Boehringer Ingelheim Pharma GmbH & Co. KG
- **Ronan MacLoughlin** – independent MedTech expert
- **Debby Weijers** – Stichting Proefdiervrij

Its recommendations will feed into the STEP4NAMs joint strategy, sector-specific action plans and further project activities.



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STEP4NAMS IN THE MEDIA

New publication from Luxembourg
Researchers from UL contributed to a new publication on the potential of brain organoids for Parkinson's disease drug development. The work is closely linked to the scientific focus of STEP4NAMs Pilot IV.
"Brain organoids in Parkinson's disease drug development: Human-specific models for translational discovery" Zagare, A., Jarazo, J. & Schwamborn, J., Drug Discovery Today, 2026

German Interreg NWE Newsletter
STEP4NAMs was featured in the German National Contact Point's NWE Info newsletter, presenting the project and its approach to supporting NAM uptake.



EU RESEARCH MAGAZINE
The Summer 2026 edition of EU Research featured STEP4NAMs in the article "Exploring alternatives to animal testing", highlighting the project's pilot approaches and its contribution to human-relevant testing.

Read article: https://issuu.com/euresearcher/docs/step4nams?fr=sN2ExNjkyNDA3NjQ

www.linkedin.com/company/STEP4NAMs

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).