



EN

Horizon Europe
Work Programme 2023-2025

*11. Widening participation and strengthening the European
Research Area*

(European Commission Decision C(2024) 2371 of 17 April 2024)



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Introduction

Overall description of common policy objectives and rationale based on the specific programme and strategic plan

This part of the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023–2025 addresses the key areas Widening participation and Strengthening the European Research Area (ERA) and elaborates on the 2021–2022 work programme. This work programme also includes some actions for 2025 in order to ensure continuity of certain recurrent actions. The Commission expects to roll out in early 2025 the full range of actions for 2025 in a separate work programme. The work programme includes two main components:

I: Widening participation and spreading excellence, and;

II: Strengthening the ERA by reforming and enhancing the European Research and Innovation system.

The European Commission adopted the communication on a new ERA for Research and Innovation¹ to improve the European research and innovation landscape, to accelerate the European Union's transition towards climate neutrality and digital leadership, to support the European Union's recovery from the coronavirus crisis, and to strengthen its resilience against future crises. It sets out strategic objectives, in close cooperation with Member States, to prioritise investments and reforms in R&I, to improve access to excellence for researchers across the EU, to enable research results to reach the market and the real economy and to strengthen the mobility of researchers and free flow of knowledge.

These strategic objectives show how critical it is to boost Europe's performance, with the aim to better interconnect innovation ecosystems, nudge peer learning and dialogue between policy-makers and stakeholders across Europe for the benefit of society and the economy. The Commission Communication on A new European Innovation Agenda² will be crucial to recover from the pandemic and master the twin green and digital transitions. The innovation strategy will secure strategic autonomy and will thus tackle the challenges acknowledged through long consultations and co-creation processes with stakeholders to enable to financial scale-up. It will address the need for regulation to foster innovation in rapidly evolving fields; bridge the innovation gap between regions and Member States; and harness the potential of all innovation ecosystems' players while developing and attracting talents. The European strategy for universities moreover stresses that excellent education, research and innovation environments are an enabler for developing high-level skills, creating breakthrough knowledge and translating it into practical applications.

Within this context, the ERA foresees a single, borderless market for research, innovation and technology across the EU, based on excellent, competitive, open and talent driven research

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0628&from=EN>.

²

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research_and_innovation/strategy_on_research_and_innovation/documents/com_2022_332_1_en_act.pdf.

and researchers. It helps Member States be more effective together by strongly aligning their research policies and programmes. The free circulation of researchers and knowledge enables better cross-border cooperation, building of critical mass and continent-wide competition. It promotes gender equality, ethics, mobility, skills and career development opportunities within the European Union, as well as better access to publicly funded peer-reviewed science.

The Pact for R&I, developed in line with the ERA governance strategy, sets out a list of common values and principles to guide research and innovation in the European Union and its collaboration with the rest of the world. The Pact demonstrates European countries' commitment to the ERA by defining areas for joint actions, setting out ambitions for investments and reforms and introducing simplified coordination and monitoring. The ERA Policy Agenda, annexed to the Council conclusions of 26 November 2021 on the future governance of the ERA³, sets out 20 concrete ERA actions for the period 2022-2024 to contribute to the priority areas defined in the Pact. The ERA Policy Agenda and the Pact for R&I will guide the actions in the Reforming and Enhancing the European Union R&I system part of the WIDERA work programme over the next few years.

Work programme topics continue to reflect the four strands of the ERA communication – improving access to excellence, attracting and mobilising best talents, reforming and enhancing the European Union R&I system and transforming research results into the economy. The topics now also reflect the actions of the ERA Policy Agenda.

Open science and a legislative and regulatory framework will benefit from actions on capacity building in intellectual property (IP) management and support to the development of policies on data reproducibility. Actions to support research assessment reforms in the ERA aid the creation of a coalition of EU research funders and performers.

Actions are included to promote attractive and sustainable research careers, on acceleration services in support of universities and on policy support for national/regional excellence initiatives to empower higher education institutions.

Gender equality, a core European Union value and gender mainstreaming, at core a European strategy, benefit from actions on these important topics. International cooperation is addressed with an action on networking independent knowledge on contemporary China at European level, while European Union R&I missions and partnerships become key contributors to the ERA, with programme level cooperation between national R&I policy-makers. Initiatives to bring science closer to the citizens, such as Eurobarometer surveys, the European city of science, the European Union Contest for Young Scientists (EUCYS) and the EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF) will be organised.

To improve the translation of R&I results into the economy, it is crucial to strengthen the innovation ecosystems for knowledge circulation and valorisation by establishing stronger interconnections between existing collaborative and supportive structures, engaging a diversity of stakeholders in multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral collaborations.

³ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14308-2021-INIT/en/pdf>.

The goal is to have a European Union, where knowledge and a highly skilled workforce circulate freely; where research outputs are shared rapidly and efficiently; where researchers benefit from attractive careers and where gender equality is ensured. Member States and Associated Countries develop common strategic research agendas, aligning national plans, defining and implementing joint programmes, and where the outcomes of R&I are understood and trusted by informed citizens and benefit society as a whole.

This part of the Horizon Europe Work Programme will contribute to achieving Horizon Europe's expected impacts along the four key strategic orientations set out in the strategic plan and support the implementation of key policy objectives of the European Commission notably the European Green Deal and the European Union's digital strategy. Through this programme, special attention ensures cooperation between universities, scientific communities and industry, including small and medium enterprises, and citizens and their representatives, in order to bridge gaps between territories, generations and regional cultures, especially caring for the needs of the young in shaping Europe's future. Synergies with national, regional and other European programmes, in particular under the cohesion policy, will increase the impact of actions implemented under this work programme.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates more than ever the importance of R&I cooperation to deliver solutions to society's most demanding problems and needs. Delivering the European Union's recovery, together with the green and digital twin transitions, is paramount. To match these challenges, a new level of ambition that better links R&I with the economy, as well as with education and training, and puts European scientific knowledge to work, is necessary. This new level of ambition is reflected in the ERA Policy Agenda that also calls for actions to deepen a truly functioning internal market for knowledge and increase access to R&I excellence across the European Union. Future editions of the ERA Policy Agenda will further complement these actions in the long term.

The dedicated widening component aims to tackle the innovation divide towards a more integrated and cohesive European research and innovation ecosystem in the European Union because Research and Innovation (R&I) policy can only ensure excellence at European level if every country and region progresses. The European Union's R&I system needs to promote a more inclusive approach in which all can participate and from which all can benefit. Existing disparities between R&I leading and lagging countries should be tackled by introducing structural policy reforms. Closer links between research and innovation and institutional cooperation to produce high-quality knowledge are key to help bridge these disparities. By building on their excellence pockets and connecting them to broader networks of excellence less R&I advanced countries will be able to upgrade their R&I systems, making them stronger and allowing the European Union as a whole to advance together. According to the Horizon Europe regulation in this programme component the less advanced countries eligible for hosting the co-ordinator of widening actions are Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and all Associated Countries with equivalent characteristics in terms of R&I performance (Albania, Armenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia,

Kosovo⁴, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, and once associated Morocco), as well as the Outermost Regions (defined in Art. 349 TFEU). Hereinafter, these countries including the Outermost Regions will be named 'Widening countries' in this document.

In the field of climate science as well as clean-tech and energy&transport technologies, disparities between R&I leading and lagging countries are quite wide. Widening countries often face larger challenges in terms of decarbonisation, while their R&I innovation systems are not sufficiently developed to tackle all the challenges or reap the opportunities, that the transition to a climate-neutral economy brings. This work programme component therefore helps to improve access to excellence and reform the innovation system in these domains.

This programme part is especially responding to the second policy priority of the ERA communication i.e., improving access to excellence: towards excellence and stronger R&I systems across the whole of the European Union where best practice is disseminated faster. It will support the Widening countries to increase the performance of their R&I systems towards excellence through building on dedicated Horizon Europe measures and complementarities with smart specialisation strategies under the Cohesion Policy and the Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy. Synergies with the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance⁵ and the Economic and Investment Plans for the Western Balkans, Eastern and Southern Neighbourhoods are encouraged at regional and partner economy's level.

The key objectives of this component of the work programme are the following:

1. Encourage institutional reforms and transformation processes of the R&I system at national and regional level in Widening countries in line with ERA principles;
2. Mobilise national investments in R&I capacity in Widening countries;
3. Raise the bar for excellence of R&I actors in Widening countries in partnership with outstanding European and international institutions ('win-win situation');
4. Increase number of participations and success rates of widening actors in research and innovation projects in other parts of Horizon Europe (notably in Pillars 2 and 3);
5. Promote the creation of new innovation ecosystems and scale up existing ones by a set of measures, which include place-based and international collaboration between academia and business in Widening countries;
6. Foster brain circulation, including inter-sectoral mobility for researchers and innovators and turn it into brain gain for Widening countries.

⁴ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

⁵ REGULATION (EU) 2021/1529 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 15 September 2021 establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III). Nevertheless, it is not exclusively for participants from Widening countries since it pursues a pan-European approach of collaboration and mutual knowledge sharing in the spirit of solidarity. COM(2020) 641, final on An Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans.

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These objectives will be achieved by combining revamped traditional widening actions with a number of novel elements.

Destination Improved access to Excellence

Introduction

The ERA Communication ⁶ established the need to improve access to excellence as one of the four main strategic goals. Striving towards excellence requires a stronger R&I system where best practice is disseminated faster across the European Union. The strategic plan for Horizon Europe aims to underpin geographical diversity, building the necessary capacity to allow successful participation in the R&I process and to promote networking and access to excellence thus optimising the impact of Pillar 2 and contributing to the objectives of the entire programme.

This destination will address “improving access to excellence” through a portfolio of complementary actions that aim to build up R&I capacities in Widening countries, as well as through national and regional R&I reforms and investments, to enable them to advance to the competitive edge at European and international level. It will contribute to the development of a pan European innovation ecosystem and thus to innovation. This portfolio also constitutes the widening dimension of a broader European Excellence Initiative that reaches out beyond this programme as it is implemented in conjunction with ERASMUS+.

Each of the seven proposed calls addresses a different target group of potential beneficiaries with a customised intervention logic. The use and appropriate design of partnerships with leading institutions abroad will be a key driver for accessing excellence. The intervention logic is designed to work points at a multitude of scales ranging from individual researcher through career development, focused networks, institutional development to a systemic impact on national R&I systems.

Capacity building will go beyond purely scientific scope as it encompasses the development of management and administrative competencies for the benefit of institutions (notably in Twinning and the European Excellence Initiative) eager to take over consortium leadership roles especially under Pillar 2. Teaming actions will create new or modernise existing centres of excellence by means of close and strategic partnerships with leading institutions abroad. The impact will be amplified by the conditionality of securing complementary investment (especially for infrastructure, building, hardware) from the structural funds or other sources. Once established the centres will function as lighthouses with far reaching impact and role models for attracting the best talents. Furthermore, they will demonstrate the success of modern governance and management, and thus stimulate generalised reforms in the national R&I landscape.

Two new actions will complement this portfolio as catalysts for better impact and sustainability of the widening actions. The dissemination and exploitation support facility will help beneficiaries of widening actions to improve the effectiveness of their dissemination and exploitation and unlock new sources of funding. The pathways to excellence scheme will

⁶ (COM(2020) 628 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0628&from=EN>)

unlock synergies of Horizon projects with funds under the cohesion policy in Widening countries.

In a complementary manner with a focus on the academic and higher education system, the university-related scheme will foster reforms in Widening countries embedded in dynamic university alliances in Europe. Scientific excellence in the more traditional sense is the aim of Twinning where focused networks with excellent partners will develop new promising R&I domains and test novel approaches in smaller joint research projects.

Innovation excellence is the focus of excellence hubs where innovation ecosystems in Widening countries and beyond will team up and strive to create better links between academia, business, government and society that will foster a real placed-based innovation culture in Widening countries based on a strategic agenda in line with regional or national smart specialisation strategies. In this context, synergies will be sought with the programme parts of the European Innovation Ecosystems and the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT).

In addition, particular attention will be paid to cross-cutting objectives set for Horizon Europe, such as gender equality and open science practices, through the different funded actions.

Expected impact

Proposals for topics under this Destination should set out a credible pathway to contribute to the following expected impacts:

- Increased science and innovation capacity for all actors in the R&I system in Widening countries;
- Structural changes leading to modernised and more competitive R&I systems in eligible countries;
- Reformed R&I systems and institutions leading to increased attractiveness and retention of research talents;
- Mobilisation of national and EU resources for strategic investments;
- Higher participation success in Horizon Europe and more consortium leadership roles;
- Stronger links between academia and business and improved career permeability;
- Strengthened role of the Higher Education sector in research and innovation;
- Greater involvement of regional actors in the R&I process;
- Improved outreach to international level for all actors.

The following call(s) in this work programme contribute to this destination:

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Call	Budgets (EUR million)			Deadline(s)
	2023	2024	2025	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-01	16.00	158.00		12 Apr 2023 (First Stage) 07 Mar 2024 (Second Stage)
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02	140.00			28 Sep 2023
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-03	54.00			12 Apr 2023
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-04	20.00			28 Sep 2023
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-05	5.00			28 Sep 2023
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-06	40.00	40.00		28 Sep 2023 26 Sep 2024
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-07	60.00			07 Mar 2024
HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-ACCESS-01			270.00	10 Apr 2025 (First Stage) 20 Jan 2026 (Second Stage)

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Overall indicative budget	335.00	198.00	270.00	
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Call - Teaming for Excellence

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-01

Conditions for the Call

Indicative budget(s)⁷

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)		Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ⁸	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2023	2024		
Opening: 10 Jan 2023 Deadline(s): 12 Apr 2023 (First Stage), 07 Mar 2024 (Second Stage)					
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-01-01-two-stage	CSA	16.00	158.00	8.00 to 15.00	18
Overall indicative budget		16.00	158.00		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.

⁷ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

⁸ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-01-01-two-stage: Teaming for Excellence

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 8.00 and 15.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 174.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>In order to achieve the expected outcomes, participation as coordinators to the call is limited to legal entities established in Widening countries, as defined in the Horizon Europe regulation.</p> <p>A Teaming project must involve at least two beneficiaries: a) the main applicant organisation (the coordinator) which will be a university or a research organisation, a national or regional authority or a research funding agency, established in a Widening country, and b) at least one leading university or research organisation established in another Member State or Associated Country as an advanced partner.</p> <p>The project must have a source of funding complementary to the Horizon Europe funding (e.g., national and/or regional funding, European funding, such as from Cohesion policy programmes, or private sources). Its total amount must at least equal the total requested Horizon Europe contribution.</p> <p>A clear description of the project part supported by complementary funding must be included in the proposal, where relevant including the eligible category of research and development, technical specifications of infrastructure, preliminary planning for building and installations, cost-</p>

	<p>benefit analysis, etc.</p> <p>In kind contributions are not considered complementary funding.</p>
<i>Procedure</i>	<p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following rules for dealing with ex-aequo applications apply: in the first place, ex-aequo proposals will be prioritised according to geographical diversity criteria, defined as proposals with coordinators established in a Widening Country, not otherwise represented as coordinator higher up the ranking list (and if equal in number, then by budget). The method described in Points 1), 2), 3) and 5) of General Annexes Part F (Procedure/Evaluation procedure and ranking) will then be applied to the remaining equally ranking proposals in the group. This rule establishing the priority order serves to better spread the impact of the action and to strengthen the efficiency of the ‘Widening participation and spreading excellence’ programme.</p> <p>Since funding for projects funded under this topic is coming from more than one source, this action is an EU Synergy grant and the following conditions will apply:</p> <p>The project proposal will undergo a joint evaluation of both project parts funded under Horizon Europe and under any chosen complementary source of funding, such as from Cohesion policy programmes. The operations supported by a complementary source of funding must comply with the scope of the supporting programme, and they must provide an effective contribution to the achievement of programme’s specific objectives. In addition, when Cohesion policy funding is mobilised, it must be consistent with the relevant smart specialisation strategy.</p> <p>Seals of Excellence will be awarded to applications exceeding all of the evaluation thresholds set out in this work programme, but cannot be funded due to lack of budget available to the call.</p>
<i>Other conditions</i>	<p>The grant awarded from the Horizon Europe budget should provide substantial support for the start-up and implementation phase of the future centre of excellence including the recruitment of the managerial, technical and scientific personnel. It should also cover expenses related to team members of the future centre of excellence (e.g., their salaries, recruitment costs⁹, management costs, travel and subsistence costs).</p> <p>All recruitments have to follow a transparent, merit based and open recruitment procedures.</p> <p>This action is open for participation of the JRC that can contribute with</p>

⁹ This can be considered under the category of ‘other goods, works and services’

	specific expertise, where relevant, for the development of R&I strategies depending on the R&I domain chosen by the project, technology transfer and IPR management as well as linking up to regional smart specialisation strategy.
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Expected Outcome: Disparities in R&I performance are due to, among other reasons, the insufficient critical mass of science and lack of centres of excellence having sufficient competence to engage countries and regions strategically in a path of innovative growth. Teaming is responding to this challenge establishing new centres of excellence or modernising existing ones with the help of leading EU or AC partnering institutions. This will help countries to increase their R&I intensity and to attain a competitive position in the European R&I system and globally, especially by becoming drivers of change.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Increased scientific capabilities of the coordinating institution and the host country enabling the coordinator and other potential entities from that country to successfully apply for competitive funding in the European Union and globally;
- Improved the R&I culture of the country hosting the co-ordinator (indicators such as research intensity, innovation performance, values towards R&I) through centres of excellence as lighthouses and role models;
- Stimulus for institutional and systemic reforms and R&I investments at national level taking into account the enabling conditions on governance of smart specialisation introduced under cohesion policy programmes as far as applicable;
- Strengthened and mutually benefitting collaboration with partners from leading scientific institutions from abroad;
- Development and promotion of new research strands in relevant domains;
- Developed and enhanced research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies;
- Contribution to the achievement of the specific objectives of the supporting national/regional/EU programme as complementary funding;
- Enhanced innovation and integration of planned processes, services and products of the centre;
- Enhanced co-operation and synergies with other European projects.

Scope: Teaming is one of the actions that stimulates the European Union to exploit its potential by maximising and spreading the benefits of research and innovation. It is vital for its competitiveness and its ability to address societal challenges.

The Teaming action is designed to support the creation of new centres of excellence or upgrading the existing ones in low R&I performing countries (except those centres of excellence that have already benefitted from previous Teaming calls). It is building on partnerships between leading scientific institutions in the European landscape and the main beneficiary institutions in low R&I performing countries that display the willingness to engage together for this purpose. This can help countries that are lagging behind in terms of research and innovation performance attaining a competitive position in the global value chains. Leading scientific institutions are advanced and established partners that have developed an outstanding reputation in research and innovation excellence in the chosen scientific domain. Institutions that are still in the process of development or modernisation, e.g., those that are still receiving support as coordinators from widening actions under Horizon 2020, are normally not considered leading institutions, unless a proper justification is provided in the proposal.

In order to maximise impact of research and innovation on society, environment and economy at large and to contribute in particular to the achievement of the European Union's objectives, funding must be coherent and work in synergy. This notion is highly relevant for Teaming action, where a complementary source of funding from a national (or regional or European or private source) is required. The implementation of Teaming action is expected to become an influential and meaningful bridge particularly between smart specialisation strategies and excellence in R&I with the aim of strengthening the European Research Area and contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Whatever the source of the required complementary source of funding, a Teaming project, as a notable flagship in its host country, exemplifies not only the achievements in R&I, capacity building or competitiveness, but also sets and facilitates synergies in practice.

The evaluation of the complementary source of funding part may use additional criteria required by, where relevant, the Cohesion Policy programmes and/or legislation. The managers of the complementary funding should apply to the operations the categories, maximum amounts and methods of calculation of eligible costs established under Horizon Europe. In addition, they should be able to apply Art.25 (d) of the revised General Block Exemption Regulation.

Proposals may be evaluated by an additional panel of experts with specific knowledge on complementary funding sources.

In the first stage of evaluation the R&I excellence and the conceptual approach for the centres of excellence will be evaluated. Applicants should present a strategic vision on how to develop R&I excellence beyond the state of the art in the chosen domain and on how the coordinator will benefit from the partnership with a leading institution from abroad. In addition, the conceptual approach should outline how the access to complementary funding from other sources will be ensured, in the respect of national, regional and/or European strategies or policy priorities (e.g., notably smart specialisation strategies, Green Deal, Digital transformation). Proposals also should sketch out briefly how the autonomy of the envisaged centre will be ensured and the necessary human resources recruited and retained.

Proposals invited to the second stage must include an investment plan for the full project including a binding commitment for the necessary complementary funding.

At a detailed level the full proposal should:

- Present a strategy for how the centre will develop excellence in the chosen relevant R&I domain that will put it at the competitive edge beyond the state of the art enabling future success in competitive calls;
- Demonstrate the growth potential and expected socio-economic outreach of the Centre of Excellence for the benefit of the host country or region;
- Demonstrate how the project will contribute to encouraging and supporting reforms of the R&I system at regional and or/national level;
- Elaborate on the structure of the consortium and how this will create a win-win situation;
- Demonstrate how the newly established/upgraded centre will have full autonomy in decision-making. In particular, the centre of excellence should have the maximum degree of autonomy in terms of taking its own decisions, being in legal, administrative, operational, personnel and academic matters. The Centre should be able to fix and pay competitive salaries for its personnel;
- Elaborate on the steps that will be taken to ensure long-term self-sustainability after the end of the Horizon Europe grant;
- Propose a robust human resource strategy that addresses gender equality (in line with the research institutions respective gender equality plans) and international component, ensuring appropriate management capacities for the effective and efficient running of the centre of excellence;
- In order to assure the autonomy of the centre of excellence, if relevant, the project might benefit of having the centre of excellence coordinating the project within the duration of the Grant;
- Present an investment plan including the letter(s) of commitment for complementary funding from the competent national/regional authorities or private sources to commit financial resources (e.g., resources coming from programmes co-financed by the ERDF (European regional development fund), IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) or other sources) for implementing the future centre, in particular regarding investment in infrastructure and equipment. The letter(s) of commitment for complementary funding of the project will be an integral part of the evaluation of the proposal;
- The grant awarded from the Horizon Europe budget should provide substantial support for the start-up and implementation phase of the future centre of excellence including the recruitment of the managerial, technical and scientific personnel. It should also cover

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expenses related to team members of the future centre of excellence (e.g., their salaries, recruitment costs¹⁰, management costs, travel and subsistence costs);

- A minor research component can be accepted not exceeding 10% of the total Horizon Europe grant that may include a preparatory research project. Such small research project embedded in the Teaming action should be aligned with the objectives of the project and e.g., serve the purpose of developing and testing new methodologies and instruments and/or the integration of new scientific personnel. If preparatory research activity is planned to be carried out, the outline of a respective work plan with an appropriate level of detail should be presented;
- The duration of the grant should be up to six years.

Proposals should illustrate quantitatively and qualitatively the expected potential impact of the project and its expected results in terms of new local and international research and innovation partnerships, institutional and/or R&I system changes (various levels), increased research intensity (i.e. new scientific publications directly linked to the project’s area, protected IPR). Proposals are encouraged to choose any additional relevant indicators that will be used for measuring the impacts achieved.

Specific attention should be paid to gender equality objectives, in line with the organisations’ commitments through their adopted gender equality plans, and in line with European Research Area objectives.

Call - Twinning

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02

Conditions for the Call

Indicative budget(s)¹¹

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ¹²	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2023		

¹⁰ This can be considered under the category of ‘other goods, works and services’

¹¹ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

¹² Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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Opening: 25 Apr 2023				
Deadline(s): 28 Sep 2023				
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01	CSA	113.00	0.80 to 1.50	80
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02	CSA	27.00	0.80 to 1.50	20
Overall indicative budget		140.00		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01: Twinning Bottom-Up

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 0.80 and 1.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 113.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following

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<i>conditions</i>	<p>exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <p>In order to achieve the expected outcomes, participation as coordinators to the call is limited to legal entities established in Widening countries, as defined in the Horizon Europe regulation.</p> <p>A research / innovation component not exceeding 30% of the total Horizon Europe grant may include a research / innovation project. At least 50% of the budget for the research / innovation component must be allocated to the coordinator.</p> <p>The presence of a gender equality plan is an eligibility criterion.</p>
<i>Procedure</i>	<p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following rules for dealing with ex-aequo applications apply: in the first place, ex-aequo proposals will be prioritised according to geographical diversity criteria, defined as proposals with coordinators established in a Widening Country, not otherwise represented as coordinator higher up the ranking list (and if equal in number, then by budget). The method described in Points 1), 2), 3) and 5) of General Annexes Part F (Procedure/Evaluation procedure and ranking) will then be applied to the remaining equally ranking proposals in the group. This rule establishing the priority order serves to better spread the impact of the action and to strengthen the efficiency of the ‘Widening participation and spreading excellence’ programme.</p>
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025).¹³.</p>
<i>Other conditions</i>	<p>This action is open for participation of the JRC that can contribute specific expertise, where relevant, for the development of R&I strategies depending on the R&I domain chosen by the project, technology transfer and IPR management as well as linking up to regional smart</p>

¹³ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

	specialisation strategy.
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Expected Outcome: For the first time this Twinning call adopts a partially directional approach allowing proposals in line with the European Green Deal objectives to have a specific budget. Hence, applicants will have the choice to submit their proposals under either:

Topic A: The (usual) Twinning Bottom-Up (HORIZON-WIDERA 2023-ACCESS 02-01) or,

Topic B: The Twinning Green Deal (HORIZON-WIDERA 2023-ACCESS 02-02).

Applicants should choose the topic (Topic A: Bottom-up or Topic B: Green Deal) to which they are submitting their proposal and cannot submit to both topics. Both topics will retain the same objectives, scope and expected impact.

Topic A: The (usual) Twinning Bottom-Up

To prevent further disparities, maximise investment in Research and Development and enhance economic growth, Horizon Europe is taking relevant actions under Widening participation and spreading excellence objective. Twinning actions are one of the main instruments of this objective.

Twinning aims to enhance networking activities between the research institutions of the Widening countries acting as co-ordinators and top-class leading counterparts at European Union level by linking it with at least two research institutions from two different Member States or Associated Countries. Therefore, building on the huge potential of networking for excellence through knowledge transfer and exchange of best practice between research institutions and partners. Twinning actions intend to help raise the research profile of the institution from the Widening country as well as the research profile of its staff including a special focus on strengthening the research management and administrative skills of the coordination institution from the Widening country.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Improved excellence capacity and resources in Widening countries enabling to close the still apparent research and innovation gap within the European Union;
- Enhanced strategic networking activities between the research institutions of the Widening countries and at least two internationally-leading counterparts at European Union level;
- Raised reputation, research profile and attractiveness of the coordinating institution from the Widening country and the research profile of its staff;
- Strengthened research management capacities and administrative skills of the staff working in institutions from the Widening country;

- Improved creativity supported by development of new approaches in Research and Innovation collaboration, increased mobility (inwards and outwards) of qualified scientists.

Scope: Twinning proposals should have to clearly outline the scientific strategy for stepping up and stimulating scientific excellence and innovation capacity in a defined area of research and innovation as well as the scientific quality of the partners involved in the twinning exercise. This scientific strategy should include arrangements for formulating new (or ongoing) joint research / innovation project(s) in the scientific area of choice and describe how Twinning will take this research to a new stage, by enlarging its scope and/or the research / innovation partnerships.

Such a strategy should include a comprehensive set of activities to be supported. These should include at least a number of the following: short-term staff exchanges; expert visits and short term on-site or virtual training; workshops; conference attendance; organisation of joint summer school type activities; dissemination and outreach activities. As far as appropriate these activities should take into account the gender equality plans of the participants.

Proposals should also focus on strengthening the research management and administration skills of the coordinating institution from the Widening country. This should take the form of a dedicated work package or task, placing emphasis to specific activities, in view of helping the staff of the coordinating institution to improve their proposal preparation and project management/administration skills. If not yet in place, setting up/upgrading a research management/administration unit within the coordinating institution would be beneficial. This will be achieved by fully utilising the experience and best practices of the internationally leading partners and is expected to be a concrete deliverable of the Twinning exercise.

A research / innovation component not exceeding 30% of the total Horizon Europe grant may include a research / innovation project. At least 50% of the budget for the research / innovation component must be allocated to the coordinator. This will open opportunities for integrating smaller research / innovation activities and by this strengthening the commitment and the engagement of the twinning partners. The research part of the project should be presented through a dedicated work package and plan including the scientific objectives, tasks and roles of the partners.

The Twinning proposals should illustrate quantitatively and qualitatively the expected potential impact of the twinning exercise within the coordinating institution (and possibly at regional/national level) based on indicators such as expected future publications in peer reviewed journals, collaboration agreements with businesses, intellectual property, new innovative products or services, number of international students, number of women scientists and their roles in the research institutions.

It should be explained how the leading scientific institutions in the partnership will contribute in terms of provision of access to new research avenues, creativity and the development of new approaches, as well as acting as a source for increased mobility (inwards and outwards) of qualified scientists and young researchers including doctoral candidates. The benefits for

the leading scientific institutions and the way they would materialise through the partnership should be substantiated.

Specific attention should be paid to gender equality objectives, in line with the organisations' commitments through their adopted gender equality plans, and in line with European Research Area (ERA) objectives, as far as appropriate. The presence of a gender equality plan is an eligibility criterion.

The duration of the Twinning project should be up to 3 years.

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02: Twinning Green Deal

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 0.80 and 1.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 27.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <p>In order to achieve the expected outcomes, participation as coordinators to the call is limited to legal entities established in Widening countries, as defined in the Horizon Europe regulation.</p> <p>A research / innovation component not exceeding 30% of the total Horizon Europe grant may include a research / innovation project. At least 50% of the budget for the research / innovation component must be allocated to the coordinator.</p> <p>The presence of a gender equality plan is an eligibility criterion.</p>
<i>Procedure</i>	<p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following rules for dealing with ex-aequo applications apply: in the first place, ex-aequo proposals will be prioritised according to geographical diversity criteria, defined as proposals with coordinators established in a Widening Country, not otherwise represented as coordinator higher up the ranking list (and if equal in number, then by budget). The method described in Points 1), 2), 3) and 5) of General Annexes Part F (Procedure/Evaluation procedure and ranking) will then</p>

	be applied to the remaining equally ranking proposals in the group. This rule establishing the priority order serves to better spread the impact of the action and to strengthen the efficiency of the ‘Widening participation and spreading excellence’ programme.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025). ¹⁴ .
<i>Other conditions</i>	This action is open for participation of the JRC that can contribute specific expertise, where relevant, for the development of R&I strategies depending on the R&I domain chosen by the project, technology transfer and IPR management as well as linking up to regional smart specialisation strategy.

Expected Outcome: For the first time this Twinning call adopts a partially directional approach allowing proposals in line with the European Green Deal objectives to have a specific budget. Hence, applicants will have the choice to submit their proposals under either:

Topic A: The (usual) Twinning Bottom-Up (HORIZON-WIDERA 2023-ACCESS 02-01) or,

Topic B: The Twinning Green Deal (HORIZON-WIDERA 2023-ACCESS 02-02).

Applicants should choose the topic (Topic A: Bottom-up or Topic B: Green Deal) to which they are submitting their proposal and cannot submit to both topics. Both topics will retain the same objectives, scope and expected impact.

Topic B: The Twinning Green Deal

As regards the Twinning Green Deal, climate change is the biggest challenge and the European Green Deal considers it is an opportunity to build a new economic model. The European Green Deal set the blueprint for this transformational change. All 27 EU Member States committed to turning the EU into the first climate neutral continent by 2050. To get there, they pledged to reduce emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. This will create new opportunities for innovation and investment and jobs. It includes research and innovation actions related among others, to transport, industry, energy, buildings’ ecological efficiency, nature and health protection, boosting global climate action.

¹⁴ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

The Twinning Green Deal will therefore focus on a defined area of research / innovation directly linked to at least one of the actions listed in the European Green Deal strategy, notably:

- Climate research;
- Green technologies;
- Renewable energy;
- Sustainable mobility;
- Biodiversity research;
- Sustainable use of natural resources (land, water, air).

To prevent further disparities, maximize investment in Research and Development and enhance economic growth, Horizon Europe is taking relevant actions under Widening participation and spreading excellence objective. Twinning actions are one of the main instruments of this objective.

Twinning aims to enhance networking activities between the research institutions of the Widening countries acting as co-ordinators and top-class leading counterparts at European Union level by linking it with at least two research institutions from two different Member States or Associated Countries. Therefore, building on the huge potential of networking for excellence through knowledge transfer and exchange of best practice between research institutions and partners. Twinning actions intend to help raise the research profile of the institution from the Widening country as well as the research profile of its staff including a special focus on strengthening the research management and administrative skills of the coordination institution from the Widening country.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Improved excellence capacity and resources in Widening countries enabling to close the still apparent research and innovation gap within the European Union;
- Enhanced strategic networking activities between the research institutions of the Widening countries and at least two internationally leading counterparts at European Union level;
- Raised reputation, research profile and attractiveness of the coordinating institution from the Widening country and the research profile of its staff;
- Strengthened research management capacities and administrative skills of the staff working in institutions from the Widening country.

Improved creativity supported by development of new approaches in Research and Innovation collaboration, increased mobility (inwards and outwards) of qualified scientists.

Scope: Twinning proposals should clearly outline the scientific strategy for stepping up and stimulating scientific excellence and innovation capacity in a defined area of research and innovation as well as the scientific quality of the partners involved in the twinning exercise. This scientific strategy should include arrangements for formulating new (or ongoing) joint research / innovation project(s) in the scientific area of choice and describe how Twinning will take this research to a new stage, by enlarging its scope and/or the research / innovation partnerships.

Such a strategy should include a comprehensive set of activities to be supported. These should include at least a number of the following: short-term staff exchanges; expert visits and short term on-site or virtual training; workshops; conference attendance; organisation of joint summer school type activities; dissemination and outreach activities. As far as appropriate these activities should take into account the gender equality plans of the participants.

Proposals should also focus on strengthening the research management and administration skills of the coordinating institution from the Widening country. This should take the form of a dedicated work package or task, placing emphasis to specific activities, in view of helping the staff of the coordinating institution to improve their proposal preparation and project management/administration skills. If not yet in place, setting up/upgrading a research management/administration unit within the coordinating institution would be beneficial. This will be achieved by fully utilising the experience and best practices of the internationally leading partners and is expected to be a concrete deliverable of the Twinning exercise.

A research / innovation component not exceeding 30% of the total Horizon Europe grant may include a research / innovation project. At least 50% of the budget for the research / innovation component must be allocated to the coordinator. This will open opportunities for integrating smaller research / innovation activities and by this strengthening the commitment and the engagement of the twinning partners. The research part of the project should be presented through a dedicated work package and plan including the scientific objectives, tasks and roles of the partners.

The Twinning proposals should illustrate quantitatively and qualitatively the expected potential impact of the twinning exercise within the coordinating institution (and possibly at regional/national level) based on indicators such as expected future publications in peer reviewed journals, collaboration agreements with businesses, intellectual property, new innovative products or services, number of international students, number of women scientists and their roles in the research institutions.

It should be explained how the leading scientific institutions in the partnership will contribute in terms of provision of access to new research avenues, creativity and the development of new approaches, as well as acting as a source for increased mobility (inwards and outwards) of qualified scientists and young researchers including doctoral candidates. The benefits for the leading scientific institutions and the way they would materialise through the partnership should be substantiated.

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Specific attention should be paid to gender equality objectives, in line with the organisations' commitments through their adopted gender equality plans, and in line with European Research Area objectives, as far as appropriate. The presence of a gender equality plan is an eligibility criterion.

The duration of the Twinning project should be up to 3 years.

Call - European Excellence Initiative (EEI)

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-03

Conditions for the Call

Indicative budget(s)¹⁵

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ¹⁶	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2023		
Opening: 10 Jan 2023 Deadline(s): 12 Apr 2023				
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-03-01	CSA	54.00	2.00 to 5.00	20
Overall indicative budget		54.00		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.

¹⁵ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

¹⁶ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-03-01: European Excellence Initiative

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 54.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>In order to achieve the expected outcomes, participation as coordinators to the call is limited to legal entities established in Widening countries, as defined in the Horizon Europe regulation.</p> <p>Applications must be submitted by a consortium including at least three independent legal entities in three different EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Countries, at least one of which established in a Widening Country.</p> <p>Expenditures for research and innovation activities (such as seed funding for collaborative research projects, activities linked to joint doctoral and postdoctoral research, knowledge valorisation activities, etc.) cannot exceed a maximum of 20% of the total budget.</p>
<i>Procedure</i>	<p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following rules for dealing with ex-aequo applications apply: in the first place, ex-aequo proposals will be prioritised according to</p>

	<p>geographical diversity criteria, defined as proposals with coordinators established in a Widening Country, not otherwise represented as coordinator higher up the ranking list (and if equal in number, then by budget). The method described in Points 1), 2), 3) and 5) of General Annexes Part F (Procedure/Evaluation procedure and ranking) will then be applied to the remaining equally ranking proposals in the group. This rule establishing the priority order serves to better spread the impact of the action and to strengthen the efficiency of the ‘Widening participation and spreading excellence’ programme.</p>
<p><i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i></p>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025).¹⁷.</p>

Expected Outcome: This action follows Council Conclusions on the European strategy empowering higher education institutions for the future of Europe of 5 April 2022 and ERA action 13 of the ERA Policy Agenda (annexed to the Council Conclusions on the future governance of the ERA, 26 November 2021) on empowering higher education institutions to develop in line with the European Research Area, in synergy with the European Education Area. The action also contributes to implementation of the Council Conclusions on strengthening research careers (28 May 2021). The objectives of this action are to:

- Raise excellence in science and in value creation through deeper and geographically inclusive cooperation in alliances of higher education institutions, such as – but not limited to – European Universities alliances selected under Erasmus+, with a particular focus on Widening countries;
- Improve global competitiveness and visibility of Europe's higher education institutions, creating critical mass in key areas such as the green transition and Horizon Europe mission areas.

Projects are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

- Successful institutional reform and upgrade of higher education institutions in the R&I dimension (empowerment to be actors of change), through integrated collaboration between institutions and with other actors in local ecosystems;

¹⁷ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

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- Mainstreamed culture of excellence in science and value creation amongst higher education institutions, and particularly in less research-intensive institutions and countries, in particular Widening countries, through consolidation of geographically inclusive alliances of higher education institutions, achieving long-term collaboration;
- Contribution to accelerated institutional reform in R&I dimension and strengthened R&I capacities in higher education institutions, notably those located in Widening countries, in particular;
 - o Modernised research careers in higher education sector, interoperable with other sectors;
 - o Accelerated digital transition of the R&I dimension of the higher education sector across the entire ERA;
- Increased global competitiveness of research in higher education institutions by strongly increased critical mass in terms of upskilling, knowledge creation and knowledge circulation in the green transition and other key European policy areas such as European Missions;
- Contribution to implementation of the relevant ERA Policy Agenda actions in higher education sector.

Scope: The European Excellence Initiative in its widening dimension aims to raise excellence in science and in knowledge valorisation of Europe's universities through cooperation. The action will engage with universities and empower them further to be actors of change in R&I.

Through the geographically inclusive cooperation and practice exchange, universities from different capacities would benefit from institutional changes. This would increase attractiveness and accelerate access to excellence.

By developing closer cooperation with economic and industrial partners within local and regional innovation ecosystems, academic researchers and support staff will be provided the opportunity to be trained in knowledge valorisation, entrepreneurship, access to finance, at any stage of their careers, and to take into account the variety of academics' activities in their career assessment.

Cooperation of universities will be supported to create critical R&I mass and pursue specific objectives that contribute to accelerating key R&I areas of own choice, for instance, one or more Mission areas. The European Excellence Initiative in its widening dimension is open to any network or alliance of higher education institutions, such as – but not limited to – European Universities alliances selected under Erasmus+, and allows for variable geometries (where for instances universities participating in alliances for specific themes may team up with other partners to pursue other specific themes or objectives). Under this call the centre of gravity of the action must be in Widening countries. Applicants have to convincingly demonstrate this geographical focus, for instance, by a budget allocation of at least 70% to participants from Widening countries.

Projects should contribute to the implementation of ERA Policy Agenda priorities at the participating higher education institutions, notably the strengthening of research careers in academia and beyond. Projects should pursue the following objectives:

- Achieving more balanced circulation of talents;
- Reinforcing the role of higher education institutions in innovation ecosystems;
- Mainstreaming practices and tools for open sharing of knowledge and data;
- Advancements towards reform of the assessment system for research, including career assessment;
- Improved links between science and business;
- Promoted gender equality, diversity and fostering inclusiveness through e.g., inclusive gender equality plans and policies;
- The acceleration of society's green and digital transition to support ERA Policy Agenda action 11;
- Integrated international cooperation with entities established in third countries to support ERA Policy Agenda action 9.

Applicants are encouraged to implement the aforementioned European Research Area policy objectives and to consolidate institutional changes by means of a coherent package of activities which could include the following:

- Sharing R&I capacities including infrastructures;
- Developing joint interdisciplinary R&I agendas;
- Outreach to and inspiring local/regional innovation ecosystems;
- Strengthening research careers and interdisciplinary upskilling;
- Reforming research assessment;
- Digitisation of institutions and partners;
- Engaging with citizens, cities, regions and other non-academic actors;
- Training and capacity building for research and innovation management including IPR;
- Exchange of academic and non-academic staff for sharing good practices;
- Global outreach and internationalisation;
- Consolidation of cooperation with partners outside EU Member States and Associated Countries.

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Expenditures for research and innovation activities (such as seed funding for collaborative research projects, activities linked to joint doctoral and postdoctoral research, knowledge valorisation activities, etc.) cannot exceed a maximum of 20% of the total budget.

The actions should envisage a duration appropriate to the ambition and complexity of the alliance of higher education institutions. The duration should not exceed 5 years.

Call - Pathways to Synergies

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-04

Conditions for the Call

Indicative budget(s)¹⁸

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ¹⁹	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2023		
Opening: 28 Mar 2023 Deadline(s): 28 Sep 2023				
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-04-01	CSA	20.00	0.50 to 1.20	20
Overall indicative budget		20.00		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.

¹⁸ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

¹⁹ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-04-01: Pathways to Synergies

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 0.50 and 1.20 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 20.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>In order to achieve the expected outcomes, participation as coordinators to the call is limited to legal entities established in Widening countries, as defined in the Horizon Europe regulation.</p> <p>This action is open for participation of the JRC that can contribute, where relevant, specific expertise for the development of R&I strategies depending on the R&I domain chosen by the project, technology transfer and IPR management as well as linking up to regional smart specialisation strategy.</p>
<i>Procedure</i>	<p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following rules for dealing with ex-aequo applications apply: in the first place, ex-aequo proposals will be prioritised according to geographical diversity criteria, defined as proposals with coordinators established in a Widening Country, not otherwise represented as coordinator higher up the ranking list (and if equal in number, then by</p>

	budget). The method described in Points 1), 2), 3) and 5) of General Annexes Part F (Procedure/Evaluation procedure and ranking) will then be applied to the remaining equally ranking proposals in the group. This rule establishing the priority order serves to better spread the impact of the action and to strengthen the efficiency of the ‘Widening participation and spreading excellence’ programme.
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Expected Outcome: Synergies between Horizon Europe and the cohesion policy programmes, mainly the European Fund for Regional Development (ERDF) but also INTERREG and the Resilience and Recovery Fund (RRF), are instrumental for widening countries to catch up in their R&I performance and to reduce the innovation divide in Europe. Although such synergies are already addressed in the Teaming and Excellence Hubs actions under this work programme these instruments do not capture the full range of possible synergies and need to be complemented by a dedicated scheme. The Draft COMMISSION NOTICE Synergies between Horizon Europe and ERDF ²⁰ presents the new opportunities for achieving operational synergies between Horizon Europe and the ERDF, including for Seal of Excellence, transfer, cumulative funding, combined funding (Co-funded and Institutionalised Partnerships), Teaming, and upstream/downstream synergies. This pilot call offers opportunities to incentivise the concrete realisation of particularly promising sequential synergies in two different pathways either supporting the upstream synergy mode (a) or downstream synergy mode (b) where the former is focusing on human resources development and internationalisation and the latter on valorisation and upscaling of research results towards marketable solutions.

The following overall outcome is expected:

- Improved and more systematic synergies between Horizon Europe and Horizon 2020, and ERDF, IPA (instrument for pre-accession assistance), RRF, INTERREG or similar funding instruments through internationalisation, valorisation and technology uptake;
- Strengthened competitiveness of R&I actors in Widening countries;
- Accelerated knowledge transfer and innovation cycle for beneficiaries from ERDF and Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe;
- Strengthened innovation capacity and competitiveness of less R&I performing regions.

For actions opting for pathway a) on upstream synergies the following specific outcome is expected:

- Joint internationalisation strategy for R&I;
- Human resources development strategy;
- Improved access to excellent European R&I networks and communities;

²⁰ C(2022) 4747 final, Brussels, 5.7.2022

- Increased competitiveness and reputation in applications for European and international research funding;
- Overcoming locked-in effects for former mono-beneficiaries funded under ERDF;
- Acquisition of new transferable skills for R&I staff notably in the fields of knowledge transfer, R&I management and communication;
- Better use of R&I infrastructure funded under ERDF.

For actions opting for pathway b) on downstream synergies the following specific output is expected:

- Valorisation of results generated in Horizon Europe or Horizon 2020 projects in a regional context;
- Improved knowledge transfer and technology uptake in less R&I performing regions;
- Exploitation and diffusion of R&I results into the market in line with national/regional smart specialisation priorities;
- Preparation of pilots and demonstrators in the chosen R&I domain for funding under ERDF;
- Improved intellectual asset management and technology uptake.

Scope: The purpose of this action is to provide support for additional efforts required for setting up the interfaces between two different funding systems where major barriers still occur due to the mismatches of regional versus European approach, consortium vs single beneficiary funding and Horizon thematic priorities vs national/regional smart specialisation. Consortia should decide at proposal level which of the two aforementioned pathways is applicable for their needs. This will also influence the composition of the applicant consortium and the choice of funded activities.

More specifically, consortia applying for funding under pathway a) should be composed of a core group of at least three different public or private research entities established in at least two different Widening countries that were beneficiaries from ERDF, RRF or similar investments for R&I including infrastructure in the current or previous programming period. These applicants should provide evidence for (e.g., contract numbers) and a short description of the investment. In addition to this core group other participants also from non-Widening countries may join if their roles are duly explained and justified e.g., by providing training, coaching, strategic advice, knowledge transfer, hosting staff secondments etc. as long as the EU contribution to these participants does not exceed 30% of the total EU contribution.

The main goal of the pathway a) is to move formerly single beneficiaries of regional funding programmes out of isolation via cross-border collaboration and to prepare them for successful participation in Horizon Europe calls by strengthening their competitiveness by means of a customised bunch of activities. Therefore, proposals should present a coherent and

strategically convincing package of activities with a particular focus on internationalisation strategies and human resources development. The latter may include training and coaching on non-scientific skills such as management of international R&I projects, knowledge transfer and science communication. HR capacity building may be complemented by suitable study visits and short-term secondments to partners. Communication activities including social media should contribute to raising the reputation and visibility of the members of the core group. This may include advertising their technical infrastructure (funded under ERDF) to potential partners in future competitive calls. Early-stage co-operation with NCP organisations is strongly encouraged.

Consortia applying for funding under pathway b) on downstream synergies should be members of a consortium of one or two completed or ongoing projects (in the same domain) RIA(s) funded under Horizon Europe or Horizon 2020 that has already generated validated (e.g., evidenced by approved deliverables, final or periodic reports, peer reviewed publications) research results to be valorised by support from ERDF, IPA, RFF funds or EIC financial instruments. The Horizon consortium should not necessarily participate in its full extent and can be represented by a core group of participants benefitting from valorisation.

For both pathways, participants from non-Widening countries may join the consortium, e.g., for the purpose of knowledge transfer as long as the majority of participants are from Widening countries and EU contribution to widening participants is at least at the level of 70% of the total EU contribution. For the valorisation activities the consortium should identify at proposal stage up to three focus regions located in Widening countries where the implementation of downstream synergies actually should take place. Additional partners without contractual relationship especially from the focus regions may be associated, notably regional authorities in charge of managing the ERDF or similar funds and SMEs are especially encouraged and may serve as catalysts for the uptake of R&I results generated under Horizon. Activities, supported under this CSA may include identification and mapping of specific research results for valorisation generated in Horizon projects with a potential for valorisation, matchmaking between HE beneficiaries and ERDF project partners around regional/national S3 priorities, analysis on how existing Horizon project outputs and results can be exploited in line with the territorial needs described in the ERDF/RRF or similar programmes, workshops with management authorities and local business, specification of demonstrators and pilots, IPR management and technology uptake. Special attention should be paid to the preparation of applications to calls under regional programmes. Communication and dissemination activities should contribute to raising the reputation and visibility of EU funded activities in the focus regions. The funding is considered seed funding and no guarantee for the actual acquisition of synergetic funding needs to be given at the level of the proposal.

Call - Dissemination and Exploitation Support Facility

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-05

Conditions for the Call

Indicative budget(s)²¹

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ²²	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2023		
Opening: 26 Apr 2023 Deadline(s): 28 Sep 2023				
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-05-01	CSA	5.00	1.00 to 5.00	1
Overall indicative budget		5.00		

General conditions relating to this call

<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

²¹ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

²² Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

<i>Agreements</i>	
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Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-05-01: Dissemination and Exploitation Support Facility

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 1.00 and 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: In order to achieve the expected outcomes, participation as coordinators to the call is limited to legal entities established in Widening countries, as defined in the Horizon Europe regulation.

Expected Outcome: Improving knowledge diffusion, technology uptake and having spill-over effects is fundamental to ensure that researchers and their institutions build on and valorise the latest available knowledge. Moreover, the exploitation of research results and the creation of value for our economy and society, often depend on the skills and abilities of the beneficiaries as well as the intermediaries (i.e., technology/knowledge transfer officers) to present and connect to those stakeholders that can help them take the results into the next level. Especially in Widening countries, R&I actors lack sufficient support and information, skills or connections to the right stakeholders and these gaps can jeopardise their ability to maximise the potential value of their results.

Dissemination & Exploitation (D&E) policy of Horizon Europe can act as an enabler for the implementation of the political objectives of this programme component. Therefore, this action focuses on activities to strengthen or build D&E capacities in Widening countries. It will provide beneficiaries of the ongoing portfolio of projects funded mainly under the programmes: Spreading excellence and Widening Participation under Horizon 2020 and the widening component of Horizon Europe with further opportunities for scaling up their research results and improve the sustainability of their actions. This includes innovations that can translate into / contribute to new products and services that create economic or social value, more efficient production or distribution processes; and results that can feed into policymaking and help citizens and public authorities. The action is framed by a broader D&E policy and will support our beneficiaries towards the maximum dissemination and exploitation of their results in the context of Horizon Europe.

The following specific outcome is expected:

- Strengthened Dissemination and Exploitation capacities including through better understanding of the Commission's D&E Strategy and the opportunities it can offer to beneficiaries in need from widening actions;
- Support to beneficiaries in their dissemination and exploitation of results through a market-oriented approach;
- Improved skills and knowledge on D&E, knowledge transfer and IP management for researchers and management personnel of beneficiaries of widening actions to be able to fulfil their Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement obligations, including after the end of their project;
- Collected and shared best practices for uptake of R&I results and identify the blocking contextual elements that prevent beneficiaries from valorising further their R&I results; Address these blocking factors by proposing measures in the valorisation channels as identified in the EU valorisation policy;
- Increasing the maturity level of key exploitable results produced by widening beneficiaries;
- Greater recognition of beneficiaries based in Widening countries at national & regional policy level, as a result of enhanced visibility of D&E success stories;
- Enhanced synergies between beneficiaries of widening actions in view of networking opportunities and future competitive calls;
- Improved sustainability of ongoing widening actions;
- Identify downstream synergies with other EU programmes especially the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF).

Scope: This action should be implemented as a CSA awarded to consortia of at least three entities who should have a proven track record of success in D&E and related training, communication and networking. The consortium should establish a facility including training, upskilling, entrepreneurship, access to capital, best practice sharing, knowledge exchange and community of practice building for beneficiaries of the Widening countries with a first priority to beneficiaries of ongoing or completed widening projects funded under Horizon 2020 or Horizon Europe (this action could be extended to other H2020 and HE beneficiaries in Widening countries if budget cannot be exhausted by the widening portfolio). The scope of the services should include the valorisation of research results that were not immediately generated within a widening action but in a related domain under a different funded action. The consortium should ensure that the developed services address the full geographic scope of the Widening countries including Outermost Regions.

Specifically, the consortium should establish a tailor-made service package with training, coaching, mapping of results, experts and study visits, peer support, matchmaking events, innovation and IP management, knowledge transfer both in an individualised manner and collective workshops. The consortium is expected to closely collaborate with the ongoing NCP network WIDERAnet, other NCP projects and the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN).

It should help beneficiaries to better understand how to fulfil with D&E commitments under Horizon Europe and Horizon 2020 and to seek for opportunities by other community funding programmes especially under the cohesion policy (e.g., ERDF, ESF) as well as the RRF and Reform funds. It should also enhance beneficiaries' knowledge on tools to develop their D&E activities, including, e.g., the tools offered by the Commission for D&E support (e.g., Horizon Results Platform, Horizon Results Booster), effective use of social media and innovative communication channels, IPR (e.g., IP Helpdesk, IP scan, IP voucher, Health Research Board, etc.) & Open data. In addition, it should incentivise beneficiaries to initiate policy dialogues with national and regional institutions and stakeholders aiming at a favourable impact on the modernisation of the national and regional R&I system and creating an innovation friendly culture in Widening countries. Furthermore, the activities should support and motivate beneficiaries of completed and advanced ongoing projects to scale up and valorise their results towards further uptake and commercialisation (e.g., training, networking, start-ups, connection with the investors and the relevant industrial ecosystems, commercialisation support).

This will help to ensure sustainability of widening actions especially Teaming and Excellence Hubs after the end of the funding period.

This consortium should provide a plan detailing its priorities, the key targets, proposed actions, repartition of budget and regular monitoring on achievements and challenges.

Call - Hop-on facility

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-06

Conditions for the Call

Indicative budget(s)²³

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)		Expected EU contribution per project	Indicative number of projects
		2023	2024		

²³ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

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				(EUR million) ²⁴	expected to be funded
Opening: 10 Jan 2023 Deadline(s): 28 Sep 2023, 26 Sep 2024					
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-06-01	RIA	40.00	40.00	0.10 to 0.60	160
Overall indicative budget		40.00	40.00		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-06-01: Hop on Facility

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 0.10 and 0.60 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and

²⁴ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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	selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 80.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: Legal entities established in Widening countries may join already selected actions, subject to the agreement of the respective consortium and provided that legal entities from such countries are not yet participating in it.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The proposal will be evaluated by independent experts focusing on the added value of the new partner and the work-package(s) or task(s) assigned to this institution in the context of the ongoing project. The ongoing project as such is not subject of the evaluation. In case of proposals receiving equal score in the ranking procedure, a preference will be given to those proposals with a particular relevance to green or digital transitions of the economy.

Expected Outcome: The Hop On Facility allows for legal entities from low R&I performing countries to join already selected collaborative R&I actions, subject to the agreement of the respective consortium and provided that legal entities from such countries are not yet participating in it. The scheme aims to improve the inclusiveness of Horizon Europe by involving more research institutions from Widening countries under Horizon Europe Pillar 2 and EIC Pathfinder actions.

Main selection criteria are excellence and added value of the new partner performing a relevant additional task in the project. All consortium partners need to agree on the accession of the new partner whereas the R&I relevance and complementarity needs to be demonstrated. The accepted application will trigger a GA amendment with the service in charge of the related topic.

Project results are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- At system level, it mobilises excellence in the Widening countries, increases visibility of the participants from the Widening countries, improves knowledge circulation, and reduces lack of participation of the Widening countries in specific thematic domains;
- At organisation level, it opens up silos of established closed consortia, improves research excellence of the Widening country's institutions in specific fields, enlarges outreach of the participants' R&I actions and provides access to new talent pools;

- At the level of the beneficiary, new competencies and skills for working in transnational projects including research management and dissemination and exploitation are acquired.

Scope: The Hop On Facility integrates one additional participant from a Widening country to an ongoing project under Pillar 2 or the EIC pathfinder scheme while topping up a relevant task or work package and the cost incurred by the additional participant. This will happen on a voluntary basis without affecting the freedom of choice for the consortium and the principle of excellence. The Hop On Facility is open to all topics under Pillar 2 and the EIC pathfinder. Applications with activities that contribute to the policy objective of the transition towards a green and digital economy are especially encouraged.

The action will be part of an existing project with a valid Grant Agreement. Applications must demonstrate the R&I added value of the new partner and present a visible and distinct work package for the acceding partner. The proposal should include a detailed description of the profile of the new partner and its role in the existing project. The additional partner and task should be presented in a dedicated proposal template with the Description of the Action (DOA) of the ongoing action uploaded as an annex. Selected consortia will be invited to submit an amendment request for accession of a new partner, modification of the description of the action and upgrade of the budget.

The budget increase must be exclusively for the benefit of the new partner with the exception of a coordination fee of up to 10% of the increased budget to be allocated to the coordinator of the consortium. The coordinator may request the coordination fee and provide an explanation on the additional integration efforts for the new partner.

Call - Excellence Hubs

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-07

Conditions for the Call

Indicative budget(s)²⁵

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ²⁶	Indicative number of projects expected
		2023		

²⁵ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

²⁶ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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				to be funded
Opening: 28 Sep 2023 Deadline(s): 07 Mar 2024				
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-07-01	CSA	60.00	2.00 to 6.00	12
Overall indicative budget		60.00		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-07-01: Excellence Hubs

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 60.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

<p><i>Eligibility conditions</i></p>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>In order to achieve the expected outcomes, participation as coordinators to the call is limited to legal entities established in Widening countries as defined in the Horizon Europe regulation.</p> <p>Proposals must involve at least two R&I ecosystems from two different Widening countries.</p> <p>Each Widening country R&I ecosystem must comprise four different categories of actors i.e. a) academic institutions (universities and/or non-university research centres or labs), b) business entities, c) public authorities or authorised agencies operating at regional or local level and d) societal actors (e.g. civil society organisations, citizens, end users, media, cultural actors etc.).</p> <p>A proposal may demonstrate involvement of a Widening country R&I ecosystem by either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The participation, as a beneficiary, by one or more umbrella organisations, whose membership comprises the four different categories of Widening country R&I actors for the relevant Widening country; or ii. The participation, as beneficiaries, of individual legal entities representing each of the four categories of actors for the relevant Widening country. In the case of representative individual entities, at least one of the business entities per R&I ecosystem needs to be an established firm with turnover. More specifically, such business entities must at the time of the submission of the proposal be established for already at least two consecutive years.
<p><i>Procedure</i></p>	<p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following rules for dealing with ex-aequo applications apply: in the first place, ex-aequo proposals will be prioritised according to geographical diversity criteria, defined as proposals with coordinators established in a Widening Country, not otherwise represented as coordinator by a more highly ranked proposal (and if equal in number, then by budget). The method described in Points 1), 2), 3) and 5) of General Annexes Part F (Procedure/Evaluation procedure and ranking) will then be applied to the remaining equally ranking proposals in the group. This rule establishing the priority order serves to better spread the</p>

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	impact of the action and to strengthen the efficiency of the ‘Widening participation and spreading excellence’ programme.
<i>Total indicative budget</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. For proposals also including the optional mentoring scheme, the Commission estimates that an EU contribution of up to EUR 6.00 million would allow the outcome to be addressed appropriately.
<i>Grant Conditions</i>	Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000. The respective options of the Model Grant Agreement will be applied. Beneficiaries should refer to General Annex G of the Work Programme for further information and guidance.

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to the following outcomes:

- Excellent and sustainable place-based R&I ecosystems in Widening countries and beyond in relevant domains of cutting-edge science and innovation;
- Long term joint R&I strategies underpinned by concrete action plans of European relevance;
- Common investment plans for R&I including infrastructures leveraging national, regional and European funds as well as private capital in a synergetic manner;
- R&I pilot projects alongside a joint strategy and in line with regional and national strategies, notably regional innovation strategies for smart specialisation (RIS3) taking into account the new Innovation Agenda for Europe;
- New competencies and skills for researchers, entrepreneurs and professionals in R&I intensive domains;
- Strengthened linkages between science and business;
- Improved knowledge transfer and development of entrepreneurial skills;
- New business opportunities especially for SMEs, university spin-offs and start-ups, especially deep tech;
- Inclusion of emerging innovation ecosystems from rural areas, EU Outermost Regions, Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries including Ukraine by optional mentoring module.

Scope: Excellence hubs are part of the European Excellence Initiative and complement the science-oriented schemes Teaming, Twinning, ERA Chairs and the European Excellence Initiative for universities by a dedicated innovation component. Excellence hubs will focus on innovation by allowing innovation ecosystems in Widening countries and beyond, to team up and create better linkages between academia, business, government and society. This will foster a real place-based innovation culture in Widening countries based on a strategic agenda aligned with regional or national smart specialisation strategies. In this context, synergies will be sought with the programme parts on European Innovation Ecosystems, EIC pathfinder and the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) as well as the initiative ‘Partnerships for Regional Innovation’ run by the JRC. The excellence hubs will be the basis in Widening countries of the pan-European Innovation Ecosystem of the new Innovation Agenda for Europe. The proposal should also demonstrate the win-win effects of the partnership established by the consortium and the benefits for employment and post crisis recovery.

This action responds to the third priority in the ERA communication on translating R&I results into the economy and will especially support R&I policies aiming at boosting the resilience and competitiveness of our economies and societies. This means ensuring European competitive leadership in the global race for technology based on excellence while improving the environment for business R&I investment, deployment of new technologies and enhancing the take up and visibility of research results in the economy and society as a whole. This action addresses regions as R&I actors since they are the place where the innovation and industrial ecosystems breathe and develop, making the links between Europe and business including SMEs and start-ups, research centres, innovation stakeholders as well as citizens. Regionally developed innovation ecosystems connected across the Europe Union will be the driver of new European strategic value chains.

Unlike Teaming projects that are centred around a single beneficiary Excellence Hubs are networks of place-based innovation ecosystems in Widening countries involving larger communities of actors in a regional context based on the quadruple helix principle (see below). Individual participants and ecosystems from other EU Member States, Associated Countries and international co-operation partners may join in duly justified cases e.g., given by a specific expertise needed or the involvement in a relevant value adding chain. The call allows to provide financial support to third parties in the form of grants, especially for the support of start-ups and SMEs. This call is also encouraging emerging innovation ecosystems from less developed regions in rural areas, the Western Balkans or countries participating in the Eastern Partnership notably Ukraine.

Projects should be established around a coherent and well proportioned package of the following core components:

- Cross-border joint R&I strategy aligned with regional smart specialisation strategies and/or European policy priorities such as the green and digital transition;

- R&I project consolidating academia business linkages and providing evidence for strategy building and investment: The research component should be developed by joint pilot research projects in a domain covered by the joint strategy that should facilitate long-term cross border and inter-sectoral collaborative links between partners notably academia and business and advancement in science and technology development with market potential. In particular R&I projects should serve the purpose to close knowledge gaps and develop evidence to underpin the development of the strategy and the investment plans. The description of R&I content should include a long-term vision beyond the state of the art of the chosen R&I domain;
- Action and investment plans for the implementation of the strategy including the development of business models for innovative products, service and processes to ensure the sustainability of the action beyond the project's life time, leveraging national, regional and European funds as well as private (venture) capital. Investment plans may include pertinent R&I infrastructures as well as demonstrators and pilots;
- Conceptual design and pre-planning for pilots and demonstrators (if applicable) in line with the strategy and if applicable based on the outcome of the R&I component. However, the realisation of such pilots and demonstrators must be financed by other sources in particular programmes co-financed by the ERDF, INTERREG, IPA or similar. The approach how to access such co-funding at a later stage should be sketched out in the proposal;
- Accompanying measures are complementary activities that may promote knowledge and technology transfer, visibility, mutual learning and skills development especially in research and innovation management and entrepreneurship for creation of start-ups as well as citizen engagement. Mutual secondments and staff exchange within and between ecosystems should help to build trust and long-term collaborative links;
- Optional: Mentoring of an emerging place-based innovation ecosystem established in rural areas, EU Outermost Regions, Western Balkans or Eastern Partnership Countries including Ukraine. Legal entities from such countries and regions are encouraged to join the project as participants in order to benefit from mentoring, training, knowledge transfer even if their ecosystems are not yet developed to a full quadruple helix structure. This mentoring module does not count for the minimum condition of having at least two fully-fledged quadruple helix innovation ecosystems.

Proposals should convincingly demonstrate the relevance of the chosen scientific domain by its alignment with regional (in particular RIS3), national and/or European R&I strategies and policy priorities. Applicants may choose between a more regional orientation e.g., proven by a common denominator in their regional smart specialisation strategy and/or a more global orientation towards European policy priorities such as the green or digital transition.

Excellence hubs as a new action under the widening component are complementary but different to initiatives such as Digital hubs or the EIT regional innovation scheme (RIS)

because of their strategic orientation, broader scope and alignment with widening eligibility criteria.

Proposals should illustrate quantitatively and qualitatively the expected potential impact of the project and its expected results in terms of new local and international research and innovation partnerships including business, institutional and/or R&I system changes (various levels), increased research and innovation intensity (i.e., new scientific publications directly linked to the project’s area, protected intellectual assets, marketable products and solutions). Proposals are encouraged to choose any additional relevant indicators that will be used for measuring the impacts achieved.

The expected duration of the project is up to 4 years.

Call - Teaming for Excellence

HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-ACCESS-01

Conditions for the Call

Indicative budget(s)²⁷

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ²⁸	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2025		
Opening: 03 Dec 2024 Deadline(s): 10 Apr 2025 (First Stage), 20 Jan 2026 (Second Stage)				
HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-ACCESS-01-01- two-stage	CSA	270.00	8.00 to 15.00	18
Overall indicative budget		270.00		

General conditions relating to this call

²⁷ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

²⁸ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2023-2025
Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area

<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-ACCESS-01-01-two-stage: Teaming for Excellence

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 8.00 and 15.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 270.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>In order to achieve the expected outcomes, participation as coordinators to the call is limited to legal entities established in Widening countries, as defined in the Horizon Europe regulation.</p> <p>A Teaming project must involve at least two beneficiaries:</p> <p>a) the main applicant organisation (the coordinator) which will be a university or a research organisation or a for-profit organisation that carries out research and/or technological development as its main objective, a national or regional authority or a research funding agency,</p>

	<p>established in a Widening country, and</p> <p>b) at least one leading university or research organisation established in another Member State or Associated Country as an advanced partner.</p> <p>The project must have a source of funding complementary to the Horizon Europe funding (e.g., national and/or regional funding, European funding, such as from Cohesion policy programmes, or private sources). Its total amount must at least equal the total requested Horizon Europe contribution and be disbursed within the duration of the project.</p> <p>A clear description of the project part supported by complementary funding must be included in the proposal, where relevant including the eligible category of research and development, technical specifications of infrastructure, preliminary planning for building and installations, cost-benefit analysis, etc.</p> <p>In kind contributions are not considered complementary funding.</p> <p>The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.</p>
<p><i>Procedure</i></p>	<p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following rules for dealing with ex-aequo applications apply: in the first place, ex-aequo proposals will be prioritised according to geographical diversity criteria, defined as proposals with coordinators established in a Widening Country, not otherwise represented as coordinator higher up the ranking list. The method described in Points 1), 2), 3) and 5) of General Annexes Part F (Procedure/Evaluation procedure and ranking) will then be applied to the remaining equally ranking proposals in the group. This rule establishing the priority order serves to better spread the impact of the action and to strengthen the efficiency of the ‘Widening participation and spreading excellence’ programme.</p> <p>Since funding for projects funded under this topic is coming from more than one source, this action is an EU Synergy grant and the following conditions will apply:</p> <p>The project proposal will undergo a joint evaluation of both project parts funded under Horizon Europe and under any chosen complementary source of funding, such as from Cohesion policy programmes. The operations supported by a complementary source of funding must comply with the scope of the supporting programme, and they must provide an effective contribution to the achievement of programme’s specific objectives. In addition, when Cohesion policy funding is mobilised, it must</p>

	<p>be consistent with the relevant smart specialisation strategy.</p> <p>Seals of Excellence will be awarded to applications exceeding all of the evaluation thresholds set out in this work programme, but cannot be funded due to lack of budget available to the call.</p>
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Expected Outcome: Disparities in R&I performance are due to, among other reasons, the insufficient critical mass of science and lack of centres of excellence having sufficient competence to engage countries and regions strategically in a path of innovative growth. Teaming is responding to this challenge establishing new centres of excellence or modernising existing ones with the help of leading EU or AC partnering institutions. This will help countries to increase their R&I intensity and to attain a competitive position in the European R&I system and globally, especially by becoming drivers of change.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Increased scientific capabilities of the coordinating institution and the host country enabling the coordinator and other potential entities from that country to successfully apply for competitive funding in the European Union and globally;
- Improved the R&I culture of the country hosting the co-ordinator (indicators such as research intensity, innovation performance, values towards R&I) through centres of excellence as lighthouses and role models;
- Stimulus for institutional and systemic reforms and R&I investments at national level taking into account the enabling conditions on governance of smart specialisation introduced under cohesion policy programmes as far as applicable;
- Strengthened and mutually benefitting collaboration with partners from leading scientific institutions from abroad;
- Development and promotion of new research strands in relevant domains;
- Developed and enhanced research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies;
- Contribution to the achievement of the specific objectives of the supporting national/regional/EU programme as complementary funding;
- Enhanced innovation and integration of planned processes, services and products of the centre;
- Enhanced co-operation and synergies with other European projects.

Scope: Teaming is one of the actions that stimulates the European Union to exploit its potential by maximising and spreading the benefits of research and innovation. It is vital for its competitiveness and its ability to address societal challenges.

The Teaming action is designed to support the creation of new centres of excellence or modernising the existing ones in low R&I performing countries (except those centres of excellence that have already benefitted from previous Teaming calls). It is building on partnerships between leading scientific institutions in the European landscape and the main beneficiary institutions in low R&I performing countries that display the willingness to engage together for this purpose. This can help countries that are lagging behind in terms of research and innovation performance attaining a competitive position in the global value chains. Leading scientific institutions are established strategic partners that have developed an outstanding reputation in research and innovation excellence in the chosen scientific domain. Institutions that are still in the process of development or modernisation, e.g., those that are still receiving support as coordinators from widening actions under Horizon 2020 or Horizon Europe, are normally not considered leading institutions, unless a proper justification is provided in the proposal.

In order to maximise impact of research and innovation on society, environment and economy at large and to contribute in particular to the achievement of the European Union's objectives, funding must be coherent and work in synergy. This notion is highly relevant for the Teaming action, where a complementary source of funding from a national (or regional or European or private source) is required. The implementation of Teaming action is expected to become an influential and meaningful bridge particularly between smart specialisation strategies and excellence in R&I with the aim of strengthening the European Research Area and contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Whatever the source of the required complementary source of funding, a Teaming project, as a notable flagship in its host country, exemplifies not only the achievements in R&I, capacity building or competitiveness, but also sets and facilitates synergies in practice.

The evaluation of the complementary source of funding part may use additional criteria required by, where relevant, the Cohesion Policy programmes and/or legislation. The managers of the complementary funding should apply to the operations the categories, maximum amounts and methods of calculation of eligible costs established under Horizon Europe. In addition, they should be able to apply Art.25 (d) of the revised General Block Exemption Regulation.

Proposals may be evaluated by an additional panel of experts with specific knowledge on complementary funding sources.

In the first stage of evaluation the R&I excellence and the conceptual approach for the centres of excellence will be evaluated. Applicants should present a strategic vision on how to develop R&I excellence beyond the state of the art in the chosen domain and on how the coordinator will benefit from the partnership with a leading institution from abroad. In case of modernisation of an existing centre, the proposal should clearly indicate the development path from the initial baseline situation until the end of the project and its justification. In addition, the conceptual approach should outline how the access to complementary funding from other sources will be ensured, in the respect of national, regional and/or European strategies or policy priorities (e.g., notably smart specialisation strategies, Green Deal, Digital

transformation). Proposals also should sketch out briefly how the autonomy of the envisaged centre will be ensured and the necessary human resources recruited and retained.

Proposals invited to the second stage must include an investment plan for the full project including a binding commitment for the necessary complementary funding.

At a detailed level the full proposal should:

- Present a strategy for how the centre will develop excellence in the chosen relevant R&I domain that will put it at the competitive edge beyond the state of the art enabling future success in competitive calls;
- Demonstrate the growth potential and expected socio-economic outreach of the Centre of Excellence for the benefit of the host country or region;
- Demonstrate how the project will contribute to encouraging and supporting reforms of the R&I system at regional and or/national level;
- Elaborate on the structure of the consortium and how this will create a win-win situation;
- Demonstrate how the newly established/modernised centre will have full autonomy in decision-making. In particular, the centre of excellence should have the maximum degree of autonomy in terms of taking its own decisions, being in legal, administrative, operational, personnel and academic matters. The Centre should be able to fix and pay competitive salaries for its personnel;
- Elaborate on the steps that will be taken to ensure long-term self-sustainability after the end of the Horizon Europe grant;
- In case of modernisation of an existing centre, convincingly elaborate on the development path from the initial baseline situation until the end of the project;
- Propose a robust human resource strategy that addresses gender equality (in line with the research institutions respective gender equality plans) and international component, ensuring appropriate management capacities for the effective and efficient running of the centre of excellence;
- In order to assure the autonomy of the centre of excellence, if relevant, the project might benefit of having the centre of excellence coordinating the project within the duration of the Grant;
- Present an investment plan including the letter(s) of commitment for complementary funding from the competent national/regional authorities or private sources to commit financial resources (e.g., resources coming from programmes co-financed by the ERDF (European regional development fund), IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) or other sources) for implementing the future centre, in particular regarding investment in infrastructure and equipment. The letter(s) of commitment for complementary funding of the project will be an integral part of the evaluation of the proposal;

- The grant awarded from the Horizon Europe budget should provide substantial support for the start-up and implementation phase of the future centre of excellence including the recruitment of the managerial, technical and scientific personnel. It should also cover expenses related to team members of the future centre of excellence (e.g., their salaries, recruitment costs²⁹, management costs, travel and subsistence costs);
- All recruitments have to follow a transparent, merit based and open recruitment procedures;
- A minor research component can be accepted not exceeding 10% of the total Horizon Europe grant that may include a preparatory research project. Such small research project embedded in the Teaming action should be aligned with the objectives of the project and e.g., serve the purpose of developing and testing new methodologies and instruments and/or the integration of new scientific personnel. If preparatory research activity is planned to be carried out, the outline of a respective work plan with an appropriate level of detail should be presented;
- The duration of the project should be up to six years.

Proposals should illustrate quantitatively and qualitatively the expected potential impact of the project and its expected results in terms of new local and international research and innovation partnerships, institutional and/or R&I system changes (various levels), increased research intensity (i.e. new scientific publications directly linked to the project's area, protected IPR). Proposals are encouraged to choose any additional relevant indicators that will be used for measuring the impacts achieved.

The JRC, as non-funded member of the consortium selected for funding or as an associated partner, can contribute to the action with specific expertise, where relevant, for the development of R&I strategies depending on the R&I domain chosen by the project, technology transfer and IPR management as well as linking up to regional smart specialisation strategy.

Specific attention should be paid to gender equality objectives, in line with the organisations' commitments through their adopted gender equality plans, and in line with the European Research Area objectives.

²⁹ This can be considered under the category of 'other goods, works and services'

Destination Attracting and mobilising the best talents

Introduction:

In line with the strategic priority “Deepening the ERA” this part of the work programme will support further progress on the free circulation of knowledge in an upgraded, efficient and effective R&I system. The destination will be pursued both at the level of individual researchers e.g., helping to develop the skills that researchers need for excellent science and, connecting all actors across the European Union and at the level of institutions and smaller research teams around future ERA Chair holders.

ERA Chairs will support universities or research organisations from eligible countries to attract and maintain high-quality human resources under the direction of an outstanding researcher and research manager (the 'ERA Chair holder'), and to implement structural changes to achieve excellence on a sustainable basis.

The institutional dimension will be complemented by opportunities for brain circulation for research and innovation talents across the ERA and across sectors, aiming to revert the brain drain from Widening countries. It will focus support to early career and experienced talents to explore unknown personal territories for professional development and training, by being mobile in the European Research Area in other sectors and in less obvious knowledge hubs across the European Union, notably in Widening countries. It will put emphasis on intersectoral mobility for early career researchers and innovators and foster a better exploitation of existing (and possibly jointly managed) research infrastructures in the targeted countries through the mobility of researchers and innovators. This aims to reinforce and strengthen the interaction between education and research, such as through the research and innovation dimension of European Universities, training and mobility. Furthermore, specific attention will be paid to promoting gender balance among the supported talents.

Expected impact:

Proposals for topics under this Destination should set out a credible pathway to contributing to the following expected impacts:

- Effective institutional reforms in research institutions in Widening countries;
- Better use of existing research infrastructures;
- Excellent talents attracted in institutions and research infrastructures;
- Reverted brain drain;
- Improved linkages and increased mobility between academia and business, notably by overcoming sectoral barriers;
- Free circulation of knowledge and expertise in line with ERA priorities;

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- Improved gender balance and equal opportunities.

The following call(s) in this work programme contribute to this destination:

Call	Budgets (EUR million)			Deadline(s)
	2023	2024	2025	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-TALENTS-01	50.00	47.00		07 Mar 2024
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-TALENTS-02	8.00			13 Sep 2023
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-TALENTS-02		8.00		11 Sep 2024
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-TALENTS-03		40.00		26 Sep 2024
HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-TALENTS-01			8.00	10 Sep 2025
Overall indicative budget	58.00	95.00	8.00	

Call - ERA Chairs

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-TALENTS-01

Conditions for the Call

Indicative budget(s)³⁰

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)		Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ³¹	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2023	2024		
Opening: 28 Sep 2023 Deadline(s): 07 Mar 2024					
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-TALENTS-01-01	CSA	50.00	47.00	1.50 to 2.50	45
Overall indicative budget		50.00	47.00		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.

³⁰ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

³¹ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-TALENTS-01-01: ERA Chairs

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 1.50 and 2.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 97.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>In order to achieve the expected outcomes, participation as coordinators to the call is limited to legal entities established in Widening countries, as defined in the Horizon Europe regulation.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <p>To allow for the assessment of the commitment of the future ERA Chair holder and of the coordinator institution, proposals must include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) a letter signed by the prospective ERA Chair holder expressing his/her commitment to the proposal and willingness to take on the underlying tasks and obligations; 2) a letter from the head of the coordinator institution committing to the proposal and stating that the ERA Chair holder will receive adequate support to take on her/his tasks and duties including, for example, access to research facilities, supervision of researchers, teaching duties (if any) and capacity to apply freely to national and international funding. <p>The composition, levels of remuneration and timeline of implementation of the ERA Chair holder research team will be indicated and the appointment of team members must follow an open, transparent and</p>

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	merit-based recruitment process with no more than 50% of the team appointees having previous contractual links with the coordinator.
<i>Award criteria</i>	<p>The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The composition, levels of remuneration and timeline of implementation of the ERA Chair holder research team should be indicated and the appointment of team members must follow an open, transparent and merit-based recruitment process with no more than 50% of the team appointees having previous contractual links with the coordinator.</p>
<i>Procedure</i>	<p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following rules for dealing with ex-aequo applications apply: in the first place, ex-aequo proposals will be prioritised according to geographical diversity criteria, defined as proposals with coordinators established in a Widening country, not otherwise represented as coordinator higher up the ranking list (and if equal in number, then by budget). The method described in Points 1), 2), 3) and 5) of General Annexes Part F (Procedure/Evaluation procedure and ranking) will then be applied to the remaining equally ranking proposals in the group. This rule establishing the priority order serves to better spread the impact of the action and to strengthen the efficiency of the ‘Widening participation and spreading excellence’ programme.</p>
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025).³².</p>

Expected Outcome: Progress towards more and better links between research and innovation actors across the European Research Area and beyond is a requirement if Europe as a whole is to capitalise on excellence from across the continent. To foster brain circulation for researchers and innovators the intervention point of the ERA Chairs actions is attracting in a sustainable manner outstanding scientists and innovators to universities or research organisations in catching up countries and regions. This measure of “brain gain” and the

³² This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

creation of pockets of excellence has an impact on the culture and performance of host institutions.

The leadership of the ERA Chair holder and the creation of a permanent and excellent research group in the chosen scientific field will ensure excellence, visibility and better integration in the European Research Area, as well as fostering competitiveness in research funding and promoting institutional reforms aligned with ERA priorities.

Projects are expected to contribute to some of the following outcomes:

At system level:

- Increase in number of R&I talents moving to host organisations in Widening countries;
- Increase in international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility of researchers and innovators;
- Encouraging institutional reforms in research institutions and in the national R&I system in Widening countries;
- Strengthening of Widening countries' human capital base in R&I with more entrepreneurial and better trained researchers and innovators;
- Better communication of R&I results to society;
- Better quality and capacity of research and innovation contributing to Europe's competitiveness and growth;
- Improved excellence capacity and resources in Widening countries and close the still apparent research and innovation gap within Europe.

At organisation level:

- Research excellence of the institution in the specific fields covered by the ERA Chair holder;
- Increased attractiveness of the institution for internationally excellent and mobile researchers;
- Creation of a permanent and excellent research group in the chosen scientific field with a spill-over effect on the institution;
- Improved capability to succeed in competitive research funding in the EU and globally, at least, in the fields of choice;
- Greater contribution to the knowledge-based economy and society.

Scope: Research organisations located in Widening countries interested in establishing an ERA Chair should submit a proposal with the prospective ERA Chair holder who should be

an outstanding researcher and/or innovator in the chosen scientific domain. The scientific field can be any domain of research and innovation.

The research institution in the Widening country will be the coordinator and submit a proposal as a single applicant (monobeneficiary). ERA Chair holders can be citizens of any country in the world.

Proposals should include a Curriculum Vitae in Europass form³³ of the future ERA Chair holder and detail the scientific and technical support she/he will provide to the coordinator and how the proposed activities will upgrade from the current situation. The CV should be uploaded as an additional document to the proposal.

Proposals should also describe any relevant investments of the coordinator in research projects, facilities and infrastructures and how those will be achieved and/or a better use of the installed research capacity (in particular of EU co-funded research infrastructures & facilities). Existing or foreseen arrangements for compliance with ERA priorities³⁴ including the European Charter for Researchers & Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers³⁵ are to be outlined in the proposal.

ERA Chair holders should be excellent researchers and/or innovators in the chosen field of research³⁶. They should establish a research team fully integrated in the coordinator's institution to significantly improve its research performance in the scientific domain of choice and to be more successful in obtaining competitive funding. The selection of personnel to the research team is to be conducted by an international recruitment panel led by the ERA Chair and outlined in proposals. The ERA Chair holder should also have a position within the organisation/university, allowing her/him to make appropriate resource allocation decisions, supervise team members and freely apply for research funding. When this is compatible with the nature of the coordinator, he/she is expected to take on some teaching duties.

To allow for the assessment of the commitment of the future ERA Chair holder and of the coordinator institution, proposals must include: 1) a letter signed by the prospective ERA Chair holder expressing his/her commitment to the proposal and willingness to take on the underlying tasks and obligations; 2) a letter from the head of the coordinator institution committing to the proposal and stating that the ERA Chair holder will receive adequate support to take on her/his tasks and duties including, for example, access to research facilities, supervision of researchers, teaching duties (if any) and capacity to apply freely to national and international funding.

The ERA Chair holders might move on a temporary or permanent basis to the coordinator's premises. To this end, secondments or any other legal arrangements (e.g., leave without pay,

³³ <https://europa.eu/europass/en/create-europass-cv>.

³⁴ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2012:0392:FIN>

³⁵ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reco/2005/251/oj>

³⁶ Corresponding to profiles R3 or R4 of researchers careers as set out in the “European Framework for Research Careers” provided at https://cdn5.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/towards_a_european_framework_for_research_careers_final.pdf

sabbatical licences) are possible including part-time work and multiple stays. All contractual arrangements and the timeline of ERA Chairs stays at the coordinator should be indicated in the proposal as well as the salary, travel and daily allowances and/or other perks to be offered. If, at any stage, the preferred option is an employment contract, the future contractual arrangements with the coordinator should be detailed.

To ensure the sustainability of the action, the ERA Chair research team should have conditions to thrive after the end of the Horizon Europe funding. This should be clearly demonstrated in the proposal and include the appointment of the leader of the newly created research group on a permanent basis within the coordinator organisation (to which the ERA Chair holder might apply) during the initial 3 years of the duration of the grant. This is to be conducted through an open recruitment procedure to be monitored by the European Commission.

Grants have an expected duration of up to 5 years and cover expenses related to the ERA Chair holder and a number of team members (e.g., their salaries, recruitment costs³⁷, administrative costs, travel and subsistence costs) and research costs up to 10% of the EU contribution. The grant should also state the measures aimed at introducing structural changes in the institution of the Widening country (e.g., costs for trainings, meetings, publications and managing Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)).

Specific attention should be paid to gender equality objectives, in line with the organisations' commitments through their adopted gender equality plans, and in line with ERA objectives, as far as appropriate.

The ERA Chairs proposals should illustrate quantitatively and qualitatively the expected potential impact of the project. As such, the projects' expected results should be visible in terms of new local and international research and innovation partnerships, institutional and/or R&I system changes (various levels), increased research intensity (i.e., new scientific publications directly linked to the project's area, protected IPR) and best research management practices. Proposals are encouraged to choose any additional relevant indicators that will be used for measuring the impacts achieved.

Call - ERA Fellowships

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-TALENTS-02

Conditions for the Call

Indicative budget(s)³⁸

³⁷ That can be considered under the category of "other goods, works and services"

³⁸ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2023-2025
Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million)	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2023		
Opening: 12 Apr 2023 Deadline(s): 13 Sep 2023				
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-TALENTS-02-01	TMA Postdoctoral Fellowships - European Fellowships	8.00		50
Overall indicative budget		8.00		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-TALENTS-02-01: ERA Fellowships

Specific conditions

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2023-2025
Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area

<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	TMA Postdoctoral Fellowships - European Fellowships
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>To be eligible to this call the host organisation must be located in an eligible Widening country.</p> <p>The proposals submitted under the ERA Fellowships must fulfil all the admissibility and eligibility conditions of the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2023 and pass all the thresholds for that call.</p>
<i>Award criteria</i>	<p>The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>For application of the general award criteria, including weighting and thresholds, see the specific conditions at the end of the MSCA Work Programme part.</p> <p>For admissibility, eligibility criteria, procedure and legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreement see exceptions and specific conditions for MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships - European Fellowships in the MSCA Work Programme part.</p> <p>The expected EU contribution depends on the number of person-months requested. For the applicable unit contributions, see specific conditions for MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships - European Fellowships in the MSCA Work Programme part.</p>
<i>Other conditions</i>	The part of the MSCA Work Programme referring to synergies with the Euratom Research and Training Programme 2021-2025 does not apply to the ERA Fellowships.

Expected Outcome: This action builds on the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2023 action (HORIZON-MSCA-PF-2023). The target group are host organisations located in Widening Countries.

Project results are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

For supported ERA Fellows:

- Increased set of research and transferable skills and competences, leading to improved employability and career prospects of fellows within academia and beyond;

- New mind-sets and approaches to R&I work forged through international, inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary experience;
- Enhanced networking and communication capacities with scientific peers, as well as with the general public, that will increase and broaden the research and innovation impact.

For participating organisations in the Widening Countries:

- Increased alignment of working conditions for researchers in accordance with the principles set out in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers;
- Enhanced quality and sustainability of research training and supervision;
- Increased global attractiveness, visibility and reputation of the participating organisation(s);
- Stronger R&I capacity and output among participating organisations; better transfer of knowledge;
- Regular feedback of research results into teaching and education at participating organisations.

For Widening countries:

- Increased attractiveness for researchers to entities in Widening countries, by providing competitive grants and spreading attractive working and employment practices;
- More postdoctoral researchers attracted to Widening countries.

Scope: Fellowships should be provided to excellent researchers, undertaking cross-border mobility. Applications must be made jointly by the researcher together with a legal entity in the academic or non-academic sector located in a Widening Country.

ERA Fellowships should take place in a Widening Country. Fellowships are open to researchers of any nationality who wish to engage in R&I projects by either coming to the EU from any country in the world or moving within the EU to a Widening Country.

In order to apply for the ERA Fellowships call, applicants must submit their proposal to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowships 2023³⁹. To be eligible to this call the host organisation must be located in an eligible Widening country. The application to the (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowships 2023 will be automatically resubmitted to this call in case the proposal fails to reach an adequate place in the ranking to be funded. This simplified submission procedure to the ERA Fellowships call presents applicants moving

³⁹ specifically to Topic HORIZON-MSCA-2023-PF-01-01, TMA Postdoctoral Fellowships - European Fellowships

to Widening countries with an additional funding opportunity but there is the possibility to opt out during the application stage.

The proposals submitted under the ERA Fellowships must fulfil all the admissibility and eligibility conditions of the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2023 and pass all the thresholds for that call.

ERA Fellowships will be implemented applying the award criteria, scoring and threshold for Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions. The ranking order for the ERA Fellowships call will follow the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2023 call scores and evaluation procedure and proposals will also retain the scores and comments included in the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) of this call. The MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2023 model grant agreement will be used to the ERA Fellowships.

Secondments

Researchers receiving an ERA Fellowship may opt to include a secondment phase, within the overall duration of their fellowship in any country worldwide. The secondment phase can be a single period or be divided into shorter mobility periods. Secondments cannot exceed one third of the standard fellowship duration and should be in line with the project objectives, adding significant value and impact to the fellowship.

Placements in the non-academic sector

ERA Fellowships can provide an additional period of up to six months to support researchers opting for a placement at the end of the project to work on R&I projects in an organisation from the non-academic sector established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country. While this possibility is also available to fellows recruited in the non-academic sector, such a placement should be implemented at a different non-academic host organisation established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country. The request for such a non-academic placement should be an integral part of the proposal, explaining the added-value for the project and for the career development of the researcher, and will be subject to evaluation. This incentive aims at promoting career moves between sectors and organisations and thereby stimulate innovation and knowledge transfer while expanding career opportunities for researchers.

Training activities

The training activities implemented under the ERA Fellowships should include training for key transferable skills⁴⁰, foster innovation and entrepreneurship, (e.g., commercialisation of results, Intellectual Property Rights, communication, public engagement and citizen science), foster good scientific conduct such as research integrity and promote Open Science practices (open access to publications and to research and other outputs including data, FAIR data management, societal engagement and citizen science, etc.).

⁴⁰ As an illustration, Eurodoc published a list of such transferable skills at: <http://eurodoc.net/skills-report-2018.pdf>

Career Development Plan

In order to equip ERA Fellows with skills that enhance and expand their career opportunities inside and outside academia, a Career Development Plan should be established jointly by the supervisor(s) and the researcher. In addition to research objectives, this plan should comprise the researcher's training and career needs, including training on transferable skills, teaching, planning for publications and participation in conferences and events aiming at opening science and research to citizens. The Plan has to be submitted as a project deliverable at the beginning of the action and can be updated when needed.

Call - ERA Fellowships

HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-TALENTS-02

Conditions for the Call

Indicative budget(s)⁴¹

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million)	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2024		
Opening: 23 Apr 2024 Deadline(s): 11 Sep 2024				
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-TALENTS-02-01	TMA Postdoctoral Fellowships - European Fellowships	8.00		50
Overall indicative budget		8.00		

General conditions relating to this call

<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
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⁴¹ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
 The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
 All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.
 The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

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<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-TALENTS-02-01: ERA Fellowships

Specific conditions	
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	TMA Postdoctoral Fellowships - European Fellowships
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>To be eligible to this call the host organisation must be located in an eligible Widening country.</p> <p>The proposals submitted under the ERA Fellowships must fulfil all the admissibility and eligibility conditions of the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2024 and pass all the thresholds for that call.</p>
<i>Award criteria</i>	<p>The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>For application of the general award criteria, including weighting and thresholds, see the specific conditions at the end of the MSCA Work Programme part.</p> <p>For admissibility, eligibility criteria, procedure and legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreement see exceptions and specific conditions for MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships - European Fellowships in the MSCA Work</p>

	<p>Programme part.</p> <p>The expected EU contribution depends on the number of person-months requested. For the applicable unit contributions, see specific conditions for MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships - European Fellowships in the MSCA Work Programme part.</p> <p>The part of the MSCA Work Programme referring to synergies with the Euratom Research and Training Programme 2021-2025 does not apply to the ERA Fellowships.</p>
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Expected Outcome: This action builds on the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2024 action (HORIZON-MSCA-PF-2024). The target group are host organisations located in Widening Countries.

Project results are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

For supported ERA Fellows:

- Increased set of research and transferable skills and competences, leading to improved employability and career prospects of fellows within academia and beyond;
- New mind-sets and approaches to R&I work forged through international, inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary experience;
- Enhanced networking and communication capacities with scientific peers, as well as with the general public, that will increase and broaden the research and innovation impact;

For participating organisations in the Widening Countries:

- Increased alignment of working conditions for researchers in accordance with the principles set out in the European Charter for Researchers⁴²;
- Enhanced quality and sustainability of research training and supervision;
- Increased global attractiveness, visibility and reputation of the participating organisation(s);
- Stronger R&I capacity and output among participating organisations; better transfer of knowledge;
- Regular feedback of research results into teaching and education at participating organisations.

⁴² Charter for Researchers, annexed to the Council recommendation C/2023/1640 of 18 December 2023 on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe (OJ C, C/2023/1640, 29.12.2023), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:C_202301640.

For Widening countries:

- Increased attractiveness for researchers to entities in Widening countries, by providing competitive grants and spreading attractive working and employment practices;
- More postdoctoral researchers attracted to Widening countries.

Scope: Fellowships should be provided to excellent researchers, undertaking cross-border mobility. Applications must be made jointly by the researcher together with a legal entity in the academic or non-academic sector located in a Widening Country.

ERA Fellowships should take place in a Widening Country. Fellowships are open to researchers of any nationality who wish to engage in R&I projects by either coming to the EU from any country in the world or moving within the EU to a Widening Country.

In order to apply for the ERA Fellowships call, applicants must submit their proposal to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowships 2024⁴³. To be eligible to this call the host organisation must be located in an eligible Widening country. The application to the (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowships 2024 will be automatically resubmitted to this call in case the proposal fails to reach an adequate place in the ranking to be funded. This simplified submission procedure to the ERA Fellowships call presents applicants moving to Widening countries with an additional funding opportunity but there is the possibility to opt out during the application stage.

The proposals submitted under the ERA Fellowships must fulfil all the admissibility and eligibility conditions of the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2024 and pass all the thresholds for that call.

ERA Fellowships will be implemented applying the award criteria, scoring and threshold for Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions. The ranking order for the ERA Fellowships call will follow the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2024 call scores and evaluation procedure and proposals will also retain the scores and comments included in the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) of this call. The MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2024 model grant agreement will be used to the ERA Fellowships.

Secondments

Researchers receiving an ERA Fellowship may opt to include a secondment phase, within the overall duration of their fellowship in any country worldwide. The secondment phase can be a single period or be divided into shorter mobility periods. Secondments cannot exceed one third of the standard fellowship duration and should be in line with the project objectives, adding significant value and impact to the fellowship.

Placements in the non-academic sector

⁴³ specifically to Topic HORIZON-MSCA-2024-PF-01-01, TMA Postdoctoral Fellowships - European Fellowships

ERA Fellowships can provide an additional period of up to six months to support researchers opting for a placement at the end of the project to work on R&I projects in an organisation from the non-academic sector established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country. While this possibility is also available to fellows recruited in the non-academic sector, such a placement should be implemented at a different non-academic host organisation established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country. The request for such a non-academic placement should be an integral part of the proposal, explaining the added value for the project and for the career development of the researcher, and will be subject to evaluation. This incentive aims at promoting career moves between sectors and organisations and thereby stimulate innovation and knowledge transfer while expanding career opportunities for researchers.

Training activities

The training activities implemented under the ERA Fellowships should include training for key transferable skills⁴⁴, foster innovation and entrepreneurship, (e.g., commercialisation of results, Intellectual Property Rights, communication, public engagement and citizen science), foster good scientific conduct such as research integrity and promote Open Science practices (open access to publications and to other research outputs, including data, FAIR data management, societal engagement and citizen science, etc.).

Career Development Plan

In order to equip ERA Fellows with skills that enhance and expand their career opportunities inside and outside academia, a Career Development Plan should be established jointly by the supervisor(s) and the researcher. In addition to research objectives, this plan should comprise the researcher's training and career needs, including training on transferable skills, teaching, planning for publications and participation in conferences and events aiming at opening science and research to citizens. The Plan has to be submitted as a project deliverable at the beginning of the action and can be updated when needed.

Call - ERA Talents

HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-TALENTS-03

Conditions for the Call

Indicative budget(s)⁴⁵

Topics	Type	Budgets	Expected	Indicative
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⁴⁴ As an illustration, Eurodoc published a list of such transferable skills at: <http://eurodoc.net/skills-report-2018.pdf>

⁴⁵ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

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	of Action	(EUR million)	EU contribution per project (EUR million) ⁴⁶	number of projects expected to be funded
		2024		
Opening: 25 Apr 2024 Deadline(s): 26 Sep 2024				
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-TALENTS-03-01	CSA	40.00	1.00 to 3.00	20
Overall indicative budget		40.00		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-TALENTS-03-01: ERA Talents

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 1.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed

⁴⁶ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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<i>project</i>	appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 40.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Applications must be submitted by a consortium including at least three independent legal entities established in three different EU Member States or Associated Countries as beneficiaries, at least two of which are established in a different Widening Country. Participation as coordinators to the call is limited to legal entities established in Widening countries, as defined in the Horizon Europe regulation.</p> <p>Applicants must include participants from both academic⁴⁷ and non-academic sectors⁴⁸. Umbrella organisations or national/regional associations may participate in the action.</p>
<i>Procedure</i>	<p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following rules for dealing with ex-aequo applications apply: In the first place, ex-aequo proposals will be prioritised according to geographical diversity criteria, defined as proposals with coordinators established in a Widening Country, not otherwise represented as coordinators higher up the ranking list. The method described in Points 1), 2), 3) and 5) of General Annexes Part F (Procedure/Evaluation procedure and ranking) will then be applied to the remaining equally ranking proposals in the group. This rule establishing the priority order serves to better spread the impact of the action and to strengthen the efficiency of the ‘Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area’ programme.</p>

Expected Outcome: The ERA Talents action aims to boost interoperability of careers in the academic and non-academic sectors and improve employability of R&I talents across sectors. The action has a centre of gravity in Widening countries. It fits within the overall Union

⁴⁷ *Academic sector* means public or private higher education establishments awarding academic degrees, public or non-profit research organisations for whom one of the main objectives is to pursue research or technological development, and International European Research Organisations (IERO).

⁴⁸ *Non-academic sector* means any socio-economic actor not included in the academic sector and fulfilling the requirements of the Horizon Europe Rules for Participation. This includes all fields of future workplaces of researchers and research and innovation talents, e.g., industry, SMEs, independent research infrastructures (e.g., ERICs), government, non-academic public bodies, private research organisations, civil society organisations, international organisations, cultural institutions, hospitals, etc.

policy of promoting more attractive research careers, implemented through Action 4 of the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024, and responds to the Council Conclusions on “Deepening the European Research Area: Providing researchers with attractive and sustainable careers and working conditions and making brain circulation a reality”⁴⁹.

Projects are expected to contribute to several of the following outcomes:

- Strengthened R&I human capital base in Widening countries with more entrepreneurial and better-trained researchers, innovators, research managers and/or other R&I talents;
- Boosted R&I support capacity in academic and non-academic organisations;
- A more balanced geographical and cross-sectoral talent circulation;
- Increased access for private entities to public R&I institutions, including R&I infrastructures and their know-how across Europe and beyond;
- Increased excellence of the research performing organisation in Widening countries;
- A more structured and impactful collaboration between the academic and non-academic sectors;
- Increased research, entrepreneurial and other transferable skills for the R&I talents exchange in the action;
- Improved employability and sustainable career prospects for R&I talents within the academic and non-academic sectors.

Scope: ERA Talents scheme promotes inter-sectoral collaboration in R&I through cross-sectoral exchange of staff with a focus on Widening countries. With Action 4 of the ERA Policy Agenda (2022-2024), the European Commission aims, amongst other targets, to support and incentivise transformations towards a more geographically balanced talent circulation, increased interoperability of careers across different sectors, and improved employability of researchers and other R&I talent. Within this scope, ERA Talents seeks to support the training and mobility of researchers, innovators, and/or other R&I talents across sectors, focusing on Widening countries.

The proposals should address one or both of following aspects related to improving training and lifelong learning opportunities for researchers, innovators, and other research and innovation talents. In particular:

- training in skills and competences following specific demand from other sectors (notably the business sector), leading to improved employability of individuals, increased access to knowledge for the host organisation, and overall strengthened interoperability of careers between the sectors involved; skills can particularly include entrepreneurship,

⁴⁹ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8621-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

use of digital tools, knowledge valorisation, intellectual property rights, and the greening of society;

- training to build R&I support capacity in both the academic and non-academic sectors, such as administrative, managerial, and technical staff supporting R&I activities and capacities in their organisations (e.g., data stewards, research managers and administrators, research infrastructure operators, knowledge valorisation officers).

Proposals must involve organisations from the academic and non-academic sectors, exploit the complementary competences of the participating organisations and create synergies between them. It is expected that this action creates a win-win situation for all consortium partners by upskilling their human capital, thereby strengthening their future competitiveness and level of excellence.

Secondments:

- should be open to researchers, innovators, and other R&I talents (for example administrative, managerial, and technical staff supporting R&I activities and capacities in their organisations) at any career stage;
- should be between different sectors (from academic to non-academic or vice versa) or between non-academic participants; secondments can take place between academic participants only in the specific case of other R&I talents (for example, administrative, managerial, and technical staff supporting R&I activities and capacities in their organisations);
- should involve at least one participant from a Widening country;
- should in principle be cross-border, but in exceptional and justifiable cases, secondments can also take place within the same Widening country, e.g., to strengthen local innovation ecosystems;
- can only take place between independent legal entities;
- may be split into several stays with one or several participating organisations, but cannot exceed 24 months in total for the same staff member.

Budget & applicable contribution: At least 70% of EU requested contribution should be dedicated to the beneficiaries from the Widening countries.

The grant covers expenses related to the participating organisations and individual staff members hosted/seconded (e.g., administrative costs, training costs, travel and subsistence costs, salaries for seconded staff, and costs associated with dissemination, communication and knowledge valorisation).

Proposals are requested to estimate the number of secondees the mobility opportunity will be provided for. The proposals, if funded, are expected to establish a Personal Career Development Plan for seconded staff, including where relevant a return plan for the seconded

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staff, in particular if the sending organisation is located in a Widening country. The return plan should define the support package after the secondments are ended. Approaches promising improved and more sustainable career prospects for the secondees will be regarded positively during evaluation, thus maximising the impact of the action on employability, knowledge sharing and long-term collaboration.

Specific attention should be paid to gender equality objectives, in line with the organisations' commitments through their adopted gender equality plans and in line with the ERA objectives, as appropriate.

Grants should have an expected duration of up to 4 years.

Call - ERA Fellowships

HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-TALENTS-01

Conditions for the Call

Indicative budget(s)⁵⁰

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million)	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2025		
Opening: 09 Apr 2025 Deadline(s): 10 Sep 2025				
HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-TALENTS-01-01	TMA Postdoctoral Fellowships - European Fellowships	8.00		50
Overall indicative budget		8.00		

General conditions relating to this call

<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General
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⁵⁰ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

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	Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-TALENTS-01-01: ERA Fellowships

Specific conditions	
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	TMA Postdoctoral Fellowships - European Fellowships
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>To be eligible to this call the host organisation must be located in an eligible Widening country.</p> <p>The proposals submitted under the ERA Fellowships must fulfil all the admissibility and eligibility conditions of the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2025 and pass all the thresholds for that call.</p>
<i>Award criteria</i>	<p>The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>For application of the general award criteria, including weighting and thresholds, see the specific conditions at the end of the MSCA Work Programme part.</p> <p>For admissibility, eligibility criteria, procedure and legal and financial set-up</p>

	<p>of the Grant Agreement see exceptions and specific conditions for MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships - European Fellowships in the MSCA Work Programme part.</p> <p>The expected EU contribution depends on the number of person-months requested. For the applicable unit contributions, see specific conditions for MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships - European Fellowships in the MSCA Work Programme part.</p> <p>The part of the MSCA Work Programme referring to synergies with the Euratom Research and Training Programme 2021-2025 does not apply to the ERA Fellowships.</p>
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Expected Outcome: This action builds on the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2025 action (HORIZON-MSCA-PF-2025). The target group are host organisations located in Widening Countries.

Project results are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

For supported ERA Fellows:

- Increased set of research and transferable skills and competences, leading to improved employability and career prospects of fellows within academia and beyond;
- New mind-sets and approaches to R&I work forged through international, inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary experience;
- Enhanced networking and communication capacities with scientific peers, as well as with the general public, that will increase and broaden the research and innovation impact;

For participating organisations in the Widening Countries:

- Increased alignment of working conditions for researchers in accordance with the principles set out in the European Charter for Researchers⁵¹;
- Enhanced quality and sustainability of research training and supervision;
- Increased global attractiveness, visibility and reputation of the participating organisation(s);
- Stronger R&I capacity and output among participating organisations; better transfer of knowledge;

⁵¹ Charter for Researchers, annexed to the Council recommendation C/2023/1640 of 18 December 2023 on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe (OJ C, C/2023/1640, 29.12.2023), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:C_202301640.

- Regular feedback of research results into teaching and education at participating organisations.

For Widening countries:

- Increased attractiveness for researchers to entities in Widening countries, by providing competitive grants and spreading attractive working and employment practices;
- More postdoctoral researchers attracted to Widening countries.

Scope: Fellowships should be provided to excellent researchers, undertaking cross-border mobility. Applications must be made jointly by the researcher together with a legal entity in the academic or non-academic sector located in a Widening Country.

ERA Fellowships should take place in a Widening Country. Fellowships are open to researchers of any nationality who wish to engage in R&I projects by either coming to the EU from any country in the world or moving within the EU to a Widening Country.

In order to apply for the ERA Fellowships call, applicants must submit their proposal to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowships 2025⁵². To be eligible to this call the host organisation must be located in an eligible Widening country. The application to the (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowships 2025 will be automatically resubmitted to this call in case the proposal fails to reach an adequate place in the ranking to be funded. This simplified submission procedure to the ERA Fellowships call presents applicants moving to Widening countries with an additional funding opportunity but there is the possibility to opt out during the application stage.

The proposals submitted under the ERA Fellowships must fulfil all the admissibility and eligibility conditions of the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2025 and pass all the thresholds for that call.

ERA Fellowships will be implemented applying the award criteria, scoring and threshold for Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions. The ranking order for the ERA Fellowships call will follow the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2025 call scores and evaluation procedure and proposals will also retain the scores and comments included in the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) of this call. The MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2025 model grant agreement will be used to the ERA Fellowships.

Secondments

Researchers receiving an ERA Fellowship may opt to include a secondment phase, within the overall duration of their fellowship in any country worldwide. The secondment phase can be a single period or be divided into shorter mobility periods. Secondments cannot exceed one third of the standard fellowship duration and should be in line with the project objectives, adding significant value and impact to the fellowship.

⁵² specifically to Topic HORIZON-MSCA-2025-PF-01-01, TMA Postdoctoral Fellowships - European Fellowships

Placements in the non-academic sector

ERA Fellowships can provide an additional period of up to six months to support researchers opting for a placement at the end of the project to work on R&I projects in an organisation from the non-academic sector established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country. While this possibility is also available to fellows recruited in the non-academic sector, such a placement should be implemented at a different non-academic host organisation established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country. The request for such a non-academic placement should be an integral part of the proposal, explaining the added value for the project and for the career development of the researcher, and will be subject to evaluation. This incentive aims at promoting career moves between sectors and organisations and thereby stimulate innovation and knowledge transfer while expanding career opportunities for researchers.

Training activities

The training activities implemented under the ERA Fellowships should include training for key transferable skills⁵³, foster innovation and entrepreneurship, (e.g., commercialisation of results, Intellectual Property Rights, communication, public engagement and citizen science), foster good scientific conduct such as research integrity and promote Open Science practices (open access to publications and to other research outputs, including data, FAIR data management, societal engagement and citizen science, etc.).

Career Development Plan

In order to equip ERA Fellows with skills that enhance and expand their career opportunities inside and outside academia, a Career Development Plan should be established jointly by the supervisor(s) and the researcher. In addition to research objectives, this plan should comprise the researcher's training and career needs, including training on transferable skills, teaching, planning for publications and participation in conferences and events aiming at opening science and research to citizens. The Plan has to be submitted as a project deliverable at the beginning of the action and can be updated when needed.

⁵³ As an illustration, Eurodoc published a list of such transferable skills at: <http://eurodoc.net/skills-report-2018.pdf>

Destination Reforming and enhancing the EU research and innovation system

Introduction

Horizon Europe has a new level of ambition – to maximise the impact of the European Union's research and innovation funding for European science, the economy and the wider society. It marks a paradigm change in the design of the European R&I framework programmes (FP) from an activity-driven to an impact-driven programme. Coupled to this ambition is the relaunch of the European Research Area (ERA) as described in the Commission Communication “A new ERA for Research and Innovation” (COM/2020/628 final of 30.09.2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of R&I cooperation to provide solutions to society's most demanding needs. With the priority on delivering Europe's recovery as well as on the green and digital twin transitions, a new level of ambition, linking R&I better with the economy, and with education and training, is needed to match these challenges and put scientific knowledge to work.

The new ERA calls for deepening existing priorities and creating new initiatives by strengthening the mobility of researchers and the free flow of knowledge and technology, to improve access to excellence, boost market uptake and prioritise investment and reform. Working together has been the philosophy of the ERA since its launch; however, the green and digital transitions and the COVID recovery call for more and closer cooperation between the Commission, the Member States and stakeholders. They require the setting of new priorities, launching ambitious joint initiatives and developing common approaches between policies.

To address these requirements, Destination 3 of part 11 of the Horizon Europe work programme will support efforts to reform and enhance the European R&I system. Destination 3 is built around four strands corresponding to the four objectives set out in the ERA Communication:

1. Prioritising investments and reforms in research and innovation;
2. Improving access to excellence, progressing towards excellence across the whole EU and striving for stronger research and innovation systems;
3. Translating R&I results into the economy to meet the digital and green transition objectives, and boost the resilience and competitiveness of our economies and societies;
4. Deepening the ERA, to further progress the free circulation of knowledge and to ensure an upgraded, efficient and effective R&I system.

The principle of excellence, meaning that the best researchers with the best ideas that offer the best solutions to the societal challenges obtain funding, remains the cornerstone for all investments under the ERA.

Strand 1 recognises the importance of prioritising investments and reforms to accelerate the green and digital transformation and to increase competitiveness as well as the speed and depth of the recovery. It offers support for policy-makers and addresses the need for better analysis and evidence, including simplifying and facilitating the inter-play between national and European R&I systems.

Strand 2 addresses the need to improve access to excellence and to increase the performance of R&I systems, building on dedicated Horizon Europe measures as well as complementarities with smart specialisation strategies under the Cohesion Policy.

Strand 3 focuses on the importance of translating R&I results into the economy. R&I policies should aim to boost the resilience and competitiveness of our economies and societies.

Strand 4 addresses the challenge of deepening the ERA and includes Open Science, Higher Education and Researchers, Citizen Science, Science Education, Gender and Ethics. It aims at underpinning a new ERA benefitting from knowledge creation, circulation and use. This empowers higher education institutions and research organisations to embrace a transformative process; where a highly skilled workforce can circulate freely; and where research outputs are shared; where gender equality is assured; where the outcomes of R&I are understood, trusted and increasingly used, by educated informed scientists and citizens to the benefit of society.

Expected impact:

Proposals for topics under this Destination should set out a credible pathway to contributing to the following expected impacts, focussing on those that are most relevant to the respective topic:

1. Reform and enhance of the European R&I system;
2. Prioritisation of investments and reforms, accomplish the recovery and the twin transitions;
3. Improved access to excellence;
4. High quality scientific production and stronger translation of R&I results into the economy;
5. Deepen the ERA;
6. Coordinated national and regional R&I programmes by pooling national resources and contributing to the alignment of national research and innovation policies;
7. Improved knowledge for policy making about the networking patterns of research support staff and research management;

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8. Synergies between research & innovation and higher education policies and programmes;
9. Modernised higher education sector, addressing higher education, research, and innovation;
10. Increased number of interconnected knowledge ecosystems, strong in knowledge creation, circulation and use;
11. Researchers benefitting from attractive careers;
12. Inclusive gender equality is promoted in the European research and innovation system;
13. A more open and inclusive research and innovation system;
14. Increased capacity in the EU R&I system to conduct open science and to set it as a *modus operandi* of modern science;
15. Increased engagement of citizens with research and innovation;
16. Increased alignment of strategic research with societal needs, expectations and values;
17. Identify synergies between second and third level education, and between education and business;
18. Increased trust in science and R&I outcomes, and greater two-way communication between science and society;
19. Knowledge and a highly skilled workforce circulate freely;
20. Improved capacities within the EU R&I system to conduct open science.

The following call(s) in this work programme contribute to this destination:

Call	Budgets (EUR million)		Deadline(s)
	2023	2024	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01	34.70		09 Mar 2023
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01		23.50	12 Mar 2024
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-02		28.00	25 Sep 2024
Overall indicative budget	34.70	51.50	

Call - Enhancing the European R&I system

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01

Conditions for the Call

Indicative budget(s)⁵⁴

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ⁵⁵	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2023		
Opening: 06 Dec 2022 Deadline(s): 09 Mar 2023				
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-01	CSA	6.00	Around 2.00	3
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-02	CSA	2.00	Around 2.00	1
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-03	CSA	3.00	Around 1.00	3
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-04	CSA	1.00	Around 1.00	1
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-05	CSA	2.20	Around 2.20	1
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-06	CSA	2.50	Around 2.50	1
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-07	CSA	5.00	Around 5.00	1
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-08	CSA	3.00	Around 1.50	2
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-09	CSA	2.00	Around 2.00	1
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-10	CSA	2.00	Around 2.00	1
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-11	CSA	3.00	Around 3.00	1

⁵⁴ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

⁵⁵ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-12	CSA	3.00	Around 3.00	1
Overall indicative budget		34.70		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

PRIORITISING INVESTMENTS AND REFORMS

The recent ERA Communication proposed to prioritise investments and reforms in research and innovation towards the green and digital transitions, to support the European Union's recovery from the pandemic and to increase its competitiveness, calling on the Commission to develop ambitious joint funding actions in strategic areas of common interest.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-01: Programme level collaboration between national R&I policy-makers

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.

<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action.</p> <p>Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in non-associated third countries are exceptionally eligible for Union funding.</p>

Expected Outcome: Projects are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

The actions funded under this topic will coordinate national and regional R&I funding programmes by pooling national resources and contributing to the alignment of national research and innovation policies. The expected outcomes:

- Identification of common research and innovation priorities agreed among the participating national and regional R&I programmes, taking into account international developments where relevant and leading to the development of coordinated R&I funding agendas;
- Implementation of multiannual joint calls, resulting in the funding of transnational collaborative R&I projects;
- Implementation of other joint activities supporting technology development, market introduction, regulatory aspects and societal uptake of results;
- Contribution to participating states meeting Global Challenges, including relevant contributions to the SDGs.

Scope: Since the introduction of the European Research Area (ERA) in 2000 and starting with Framework Programme 6 and the introduction of the ERA-NET scheme, programme level collaboration among Member States and Associated Countries and their research and innovation funding programmes has become a cornerstone of the ERA, with annual investment from Member States of more than EUR 800 million per year. More than 250 networks among research funders have been created over time, serving different research needs but always coordinating public research investments across borders and allowing researchers to apply for calls for transnational research projects funded by the participating states.

Horizon Europe introduces a new approach to incentivise programme level collaboration by identifying upfront candidate European co-funded, co-programmed and institutionalised partnerships in the Strategic Plan. The first Strategic Plan also identified 5 EU missions to be supported through Horizon Europe.

Co-funding to R&I partnerships of European relevance is under Horizon Europe limited to European Partnerships identified in the Strategic Plan for Horizon Europe.

The ERA part of Horizon Europe complements this new strategic approach by providing the possibility for Member States, Associated Countries and civil society organisations such as foundations, to maintain existing and establish new collaborations on priorities of their choice, thereby continuing the spirit of the successful ERA-NET scheme, and extending it also to the domain of EU missions.

Successful proposals should align national and regional research funding programmes on agreed priorities that are common to the countries participating in the action and, where appropriate, implement joint calls for transnational R&I projects as well as other joint calls or other joint activities. Applicants should demonstrate clear commitments from participating programmes to pool resources and ensure complementarity between activities and policies with those of the Framework Programme and relevant European Partnerships and EU missions.

Proposals should pool the necessary resources from the participating national (or regional) research programmes as well as, where appropriate, leverage resources from pertinent foundations, charities and transnational initiatives, with a view to implementing calls for proposals, either within the context of this action or in possible follow-up actions, resulting in grants to third parties without EU co-funding in this area.

The proposals should also demonstrate potential impact at national, regional and transnational level. The proposals should demonstrate that activities exclude overlaps with on-going actions co-funded by the EU under Horizon 2020 or Horizon Europe.

The actions should envisage a duration appropriate to the ambition and complexity of the proposed topic.

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-02: A strong European R&I Foresight Community to better inform R&I policy decisions in the European Research Area about potential futures

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 2.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:

	The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.
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Expected Outcome: The project is expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Strengthening the European R&I foresight community, its networks, resources and functions, and its engagement with citizens. Improve the use of foresight in R&I policy and planning across the European Research Area to support prioritisation, coordination and direction of R&I investments and reforms, which will support the implementation. Common visions and pathways to the future(s), and “accounting” of Member States R&I foresight activities contribute to the monitoring of the ERA;
- Building and mobilising joint resources to inform R&I policies at EU and national levels, including through the European Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Strategic Plan and Work Programmes), such as collection of manuals and guidebooks, a library of futures, expert pools, digital tool-boxes or shared software solutions to support horizon scanning, citizen engagement projects, scenario building, and science and technology road mapping;
- Joining forces on pilot activities and projects on topics of common interest, supporting and “training” the networking within the R&I foresight community including governmental R&I foresight organisations, which already organised regular workshops meetings under several Council Presidencies.

These targeted outcomes in turn contribute to medium and long-term impacts:

- Common visions and shared appreciations of future challenges and opportunities amongst R&I policy-makers in the European Research Area;
- Improved capacity of Member States within the European Research Area to anticipate the future and tackle new challenges, and to take advantage of new opportunity spaces, identifying trajectories for R&I interventions at EU and national level, combining knowledge, data, expert advice and citizen engagement;
- Improved engagement of researchers, communicators, journalists, industry, policy-makers and civil society, with foresight in general and foresight for R&I in particular, improving the contributions of science and research to policy across the board for improved preparedness for future disruptive events;
- Stronger engagement of society in R&I policy as a consequence of citizen discourses on future implications of S&T&I, improved coherence and overall effectiveness of research and innovation interventions across Europe through better anticipation of futures, and thus improved impact on the economy and on policy priorities at EU and national levels;

- More and better contributions of R&I to societal ideals and political and economic objectives across Europe, namely the twin green and digital transition, and increasing public engagement and participation in the ERA as well as resilience of the EU.

Scope: Foresight has become an important element of policymaking across the European Union and much of the world. It is increasingly recognised for its potential to help anticipation and preparedness to deal with challenges and capture opportunities of the future.

Foresight is an important and proven means to engage with citizens on issues of science, technology and innovation and their possible contribution to tackle societal challenges. It supports the needed just, sustainable and digital transitions, and the move towards the future we want.

R&I policy has been amongst the first to support and use foresight in Europe, at both national and European levels. The longstanding experience provides a strong foundation for a European R&I foresight community. However, the extent of use of foresight in R&I policy across Europe is still uneven, as well as its degree of institutionalisation.

Foresight today is a common tool in strategy development and programming in science and technology and in policy making in a broader sense. It complements and incorporates much of the classical R&I policy toolbox of technology assessment, trend analysis, forecasting, road mapping, evaluation, strategic or SWOT analyses etc. The unevenness of the use of foresight affects the potential of foresight to support national and European R&I policies in the European Research Area.

The objective of this action is to accelerate the development of a European R&I foresight community supporting the development of national R&I foresight communities that are well integrated in national policy systems; and can contribute not only to the design of national reforms and policies but also to the evidence underpinning and the governance of a vibrant European Research Area, which delivers on common priorities and objectives.

The diversity of experiences with foresight can be a resource for a European foresight community, underscoring the need and being a foundation for highly beneficial networking actions, to exchange experiences, share ideas and work on topics of common interest. Such topics should have a clear link to ERA agenda points. Previous discussions with Member States suggest for instance the workforce skill and capacity needs for the twin transition. The consortium to carry out the CSA tasks should reflect the diversity of R&I foresight settings across Europe and involve government R&I foresight agencies and institutions from across the EU including countries associated with Horizon Europe.

This action should include:

- A stocktaking of the organisation of foresight activities informing R&I policy in the European Research Area, covering institutional, methodological, and analytical practices as well as an assessment of the main strengths and weaknesses nationally and in relation to policy needs at European level;

- Networking activities for institutions and people engaged in the R&I foresight community as well as potential users and stakeholders of foresight. This could be workshops, seminars, programmes, guidelines, methodology toolboxes, training modules, annual conferences, common social media platforms, network services and infrastructures (e.g., a database of science and technology experts who are interested in futures' intelligence, which could be used for Delphi surveys, scenario building, horizon scanning etc.);
- Development and practical application of the network in pilot foresight projects on topics of common interest, which are linked to ERA Policy Agenda Actions, possibly in coordination with the ERA Forum;
- Participatory approaches and engaging with citizens for foresight across Europe, as well as activities promoting futures literacy should play a core role in order to exploit foresight to the full;
- A network of national agencies on foresight and R&I (including foresight units in ministries and government institutions) should lie at the core of the action and at the core of Europe's R&I foresight community, covering as many member states and countries associated with Horizon Europe as possible.

The European R&I foresight community should build on, and valorise and disseminate results from, foresight projects funded as part of Horizon 2020 and in Horizon Europe including the foresight work done by the JRC: The community will be supported by a principally publicly accessible online platform, providing common resources, further development of training, mutual exchange, and joint foresight work on topics of common interest amongst Europe's R&I policy-makers. Developing a model for the governance and financial sustainability of the network and platform is part of the task, as is a sound European programme on foresight methodologies, resources and activities that will inform the policies shaping the future of science, technology and innovation across the European Union and interested Horizon Europe participating countries.

TRANSLATING R&I RESULTS INTO THE ECONOMY

The Council has asked the Commission to develop a strategy to accelerate the potential uptake of research and innovation results and data. The recent ERA Communication calls for the valorisation of research results with citizens at the forefront; people expect science to be a driving force that will support the transition towards a greener and fairer society and economy.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-03: Experimentation and exchange of good practices for value creation

Specific conditions

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<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 1.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: Projects are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

- Value creation and transfer to the economy and society by increased interlinkages and cooperation between knowledge valorisation actors (academia/research; industry/SMEs; public administration/policy-makers and society/citizens) in line with ERA Policy Agenda action 7;
- New solutions to societal and economic challenges by stronger uptake and deployment of research results, including through the involvement of citizens and civil society;
- Improvements of structures, strategies, practices and skills for knowledge valorisation through sustainable reforms and new initiatives.

Scope: To emerge stronger from the pandemic and address the challenges we are facing, such as climate change, and enable the twin transition, Europe needs to translate available scientific knowledge and research results to innovative solutions, including technological as well as non-technological and social innovations, in the market, in society and for better policy making. To bring existing good practices in knowledge valorisation to support value creation across Europe, we need more experimentation, peer learning and testing of new models as well as trying out good practices in different environments.

Replication and adaptation of best practices is a powerful way to support the design, implementation and evaluation of knowledge valorisation investments and measures that enhance the quality and extent of knowledge uptake at all levels. It involves identifying and taking inspiration from best practices developed across Europe, engaging in an exchange of experiences with peers and connecting to new partners, as well as driving and supporting the set-up of new measures or the reform of existing ones. Cross-border transfer of best practices in knowledge valorisation is challenging because the corresponding strategies, initiatives or tools need to be adapted to a different context and legal and financial framework and take into account skills and competences.

Researchers can play an important role in engaging citizens and communities through creative interactions. This can contribute to making research results more adapted to the needs of citizens and communities, and strengthen the uptake of research by society benefitting both the research communities and the citizens as users and co-creators.

Proposals should address at least one of the following challenges:

- a. Innovative ways to strengthen channels of valorising knowledge and research results, in particular targeting activities in the field of academia–society collaboration. Within the scope of the topic are schemes and incentives for researchers to engage with society that promote the uptake of research results. This can include means to incentivise researchers to engage with society, contributing to a stronger translation of research results to the economy and society through better adaptation to citizens’ needs and collaboration with industry. The experimentation will highlight what works well and under what conditions and what are the barriers and opportunities in the academia-society interaction;
- b. Transfer of best practices in knowledge valorisation, in the area of ‘academia-industry/SME linkages’ or ‘quadruple helix-based innovation’, i.e., involving academia/research; industry/SMEs; public administration/policy-makers and society/citizens in an ecosystem approach. Consortia are expected to involve partners that implement one or several best practices and partners that plan to introduce a new practice or reform an existing one. The action will lead to tangible change in some or all participating entities, be it at strategic and/or investment level and/or through the implementation of new or adapted instruments, tools, guidelines, trainings etc. The action can also help develop and prepare knowledge valorisation projects and investments that receive support from the European cohesion policy or the Recovery and Resilience Facility. Inspiration for best practices can be found in the repository on the [EU Knowledge Valorisation Platform](#).

The action should facilitate the sharing of experiences and lessons learned from the experimentation or transfer of best practices, develop policy recommendations and links to other relevant actions.

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-04: Development of new approaches to the macroeconomic modelling of research and innovation

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 1.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 1.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: The successful proposal will improve the integration of R&I within macro-economic modelling, while at the same time bringing fresh light on the role of R&I to tackle current societal challenges, with a particular focus on the European context. Project results are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- Support research at the knowledge frontier of macroeconomic models;

- Contribute to the development of innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to modelling of Research and Innovation (R&I) and R&I policy in Europe;
- Better integrate R&I activities in macro-economic models, leading to better measurement of their impact and a better understanding of the channels through which research and innovation lead to impact (direct and indirect) in Europe;
- Investigate new approaches to R&I macroeconomic models that link R&I-related drivers to economic, scientific and societal outcomes;
- Improve macro-economic modelling for the evaluation of R&I policy on different outcome variables, at different levels of policy intervention (EU, national, regional);
- Produce a novel macro-economic model able to simulate the economy, including the R&I dimension, linking R&I to sustainable and fair growth;
- Provide the full description of the models, codes and datasets, to allow easy access to forefront modelling ideas to the European scientific community and broader audience.

Scope: Existing macroeconomic models still fall short in providing sound ex-ante estimates of the various impacts of R&I. Therefore, the European Commission has engaged in a medium- to long-term agenda to improve the treatment of research and innovation (R&I) in macroeconomic models by supporting and financing cutting edge research on macroeconomic modelling able to attract the best researchers to work and develop new models capable of supporting the rising demand for policy evaluation tools in the EU. This agenda started in 2014 following the Commission Communication "Research and innovation as sources of renewed growth". The Council of the European Union called on the Commission to promote further research to build the evidence base for R&I policy making and for budgetary decision making, including by further improving the way R&I is accounted for in macro-economic models.

On the one hand, R&I are acknowledged as key engines for long-term growth and societal prosperity by an extensive body of economic literature. On the other hand, there is still need to develop further evidence about the quality, relevance and impact of R&I investments and the role that related policies have in scientific, technological, economic and social development. There is a crucial need for more developed and nuanced tools that would be able to account for the heterogeneity of different economic actors and that would be able to simulate the effects of a wide range of policies along different dimensions relevant for societal wellbeing. In addition, it is important that models are able to distinguish between the innovation process and the adoption / diffusion process.

Against these backdrops, the proposals, building upon the current state of the art existing in the literature, should develop and provide new macro-economic models with R&I, capable to integrate socio-economic challenges.

DEEPENING THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA

The challenge of deepening the ERA includes Open Science, Higher Education and Researchers, Citizen Science, Science Education, Gender and Ethics. It aims at underpinning a new ERA benefitting from knowledge creation, circulation and use. This empowers higher education institutions and research organisations to embrace a transformative process; where a highly skilled workforce circulates freely; where research outputs are shared; where gender equality is assured; where the outcomes of R&I are understood, trusted and increasingly used, by educated informed scientists and citizens to the benefit of society.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-05: Exploitation and valorisation of results relevant for the ERA Policy Agenda

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.20 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 2.20 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: Projects are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- Boosting the dissemination, valorisation and broad uptake of results stemming from the different ERA Policy Agenda actions;
- Supporting mutual learning between Member States and stakeholders on their implementation of ERA Policy Agenda action;
- Building of an ERA community and branding at national and European level;
- Recommendations for policy-makers and stakeholders on how to best implement institutional changes related to ERA policies.

Scope: The ERA Policy Agenda, the 20 actions and their implementation will be supported with a range of actions under the different parts of the Horizon Europe Work Programme, and in particular, under the WIDERA work programme. Many of these actions will produce results that require a broad uptake by Member States, Associated Countries and their stakeholders. At the same time, important actions under Horizon Europe support the transformation and institutional change of universities, research organisations and enterprises. The action will implement a facility to disseminate results widely, facilitate their use, tailor them to the needs of the different communities and build a community of practitioners that

support mutual learning and exchange of good practices in institutional change in the spirit of the New ERA. It will furthermore design measures for mutual learning among Member States and stakeholders, with a focus on those ERA Policy Agenda actions where no other configuration support this. It will provide expertise to countries participating in the implementation of an ERA Policy Agenda action to address bottlenecks and increase stakeholder engagement. It will contribute to the building of an ERA community, including, with regular events at European level, and support a coherent approach to communication activities and their branding at national level. This will also allow the consortium to provide recommendations on how the necessary institutional and structural changes can best be achieved, including identifying gaps in methodologies and tools that would help to address these.

The action consists of four parts, all of which should be addressed:

- Design and implement a dissemination and valorisation facility covering the relevant actions of the ERA Policy Agenda;
- Support the coordination, sharing of information, mutual learning and awareness raising, across Member States and stakeholders, with the help of meetings, workshops, working groups and other tools to exchange experience, identify, monitor and showcase case studies, including good practices and lessons learnt, with a focus on those ERA Policy Agenda actions where no other configuration support this;
- Community building, with regular events at European level, and support to coherent communication on ERA Policies, outcomes and results at national and European level;
- Design a process to develop and share guidance and recommendations for policy-makers and stakeholder organisations, across the European Union.

In order to support the achievement of the ERA objectives across the EU, the consortium should demonstrate that it covers the Member States in a geographically comprehensive way, as well as the capacity to provide or access expertise related to all relevant ERA Policy Agenda actions. Proposals should describe how they intend to collaborate closely with the Commission services, and build on the ERA Policy Platform in order to avoid additional IT developments.

The actions should envisage a duration appropriate to the ambition and complexity of the proposed topic, but not exceed 36 months.

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-06: Building a virtual European Info Platform on Contemporary China

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a

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<i>project</i>	proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 2.50 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: The action funded under this topic will have the objective of networking excellent knowledge nodes supporting the advancement of independent knowledge on contemporary China from across the European Union to build a virtual European Info Platform on contemporary China that will become sustainable beyond the end of the project. The goal of the platform would be to collect, connect, produce, select, disseminate, and give visibility to excellent knowledge on Contemporary China produced in the European Union (e.g., by universities, think tanks, research centres, NGOs, private companies, public organisations etc.) so as to foster the development of a network of independent knowledge on contemporary China at European level, raise awareness, and mainstream information on China also within the wider remit of civil society. The virtual European Info Platform will aim to become a key go-to source for independent knowledge on contemporary China at European level across all major relevant research areas (foreign policy, domestic politics, contemporary society and culture, science, technology, and innovation policy, economics, law, etc.). This action supports ERA Policy Agenda action 9 on promoting international cooperation.

Projects are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

- Bring together knowledge nodes on contemporary China from across Europe to build and manage a virtual European Info Platform on contemporary China that would become a European key go-to source of independent knowledge on contemporary China;
- Coordinate with other initiatives and stakeholders where relevant for the action. Synergies with the two projects that were selected for funding under the previous call ‘HORIZON-CL2-2021-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-07: Upgrading Independent Knowledge on Contemporary China in Europe’ are strongly encouraged. The work they bring forth should contribute to the development of the European Info Platform on Contemporary China;
- Regularly upload and disseminate knowledge on contemporary China, (including analyses, reports, articles, policy briefs, scoping studies, interviews, podcasts, etc.), not only produced by the successful consortium, but also filtered/selected from the work of external prominent and emerging knowledge nodes on contemporary China from across Europe, so as to give visibility to all relevant European centres of excellence (including the smaller ones);
- Successful proposals would be expected to build into the website a section dedicated to the translation into English of key Chinese policy-documents and to create related policy briefs that would be openly accessible;

- Organise the material to be uploaded on the platform into thematic sections taking into account the priorities identified through the interactions with the relevant experts. A section of the platform should be specifically dedicated to understanding China's STI (science, technology, and innovation) system/policy and its implications for the European Union;
- Organise virtual and physical events (conferences, workshops, networking activities, trainings, staff exchanges, etc.), and manage their related communication activities, to foster pan-European connections among the different EU knowledge nodes on contemporary China. The organisation of China-focused thematic courses, ad-hoc seminars, and trainings, is encouraged in order to raise awareness on key China-related subjects, also involving the wider civil society/public/private institutions beyond China experts;
- Provide the Commission with regular policy recommendations and updates on the activities of the project;
- Reach out and encourage the participation of excellent knowledge centres from Eastern European Member States producing independent knowledge on contemporary China to enhance the visibility and impact of their work and foster the cross-fertilisation of knowledge;
- Prepare and put in place a sustainability plan for the platform to ensure the continuation of the work after the end of the action.

Scope: This topic contributes to the priority areas of action number 9 on *promoting a positive environment and level playing field for international cooperation based on reciprocity* listed in the Council Conclusions on the Future Governance of the European Research Area⁵⁶ (ERA). More specifically it aims to satisfy the objective of *launching a pilot initiative on the Team Europe approach for a specific world region and/or topic*.

This action seeks to bolster a stronger European understanding of contemporary China and to strengthen European's capacity to sustain the production of such knowledge that is key to develop excellent EU-China policy-making based on facts, independent and unbiased analyses, and foresight. In accordance with the EU-China – A Strategic Outlook Communication of 2019⁵⁷ and the Global Approach to Research and Innovation Communication of May 2021⁵⁸, the action aims to empower the European Union to act coherently and proactively on the international stage preserving an open research and innovation ecosystem while safeguarding European interests and values.

Today China is a key global actor and a leading scientific and technological power. China's increasing relevance in the geopolitical system has exposed the weakness the European Union

⁵⁶ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14126-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

⁵⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/communication-eu-china-a-strategic-outlook.pdf>

⁵⁸

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research_and_innovation/strategy_on_research_and_innovation/documents/ec_rtd_com2021-252.pdf

faces in its capacity to better understand contemporary China in its various specificities, complexities, and goals and respond to its rapid evolution and new policy directions. The European Union needs to get to know and understand it on its own terms: not through the lens of other external sources but from its own European perspective. The underlined priority for the EU to develop its own knowledge capacity to navigate China's continuous transformations is embedded in the concept of independent European knowledge, which should guide the work of successful applicants.

Following interactions with Member States, China experts, and stakeholders in the framework of the EU R&I Knowledge Network on China (EUKNOC) and following the publication of the SFIC recommendations on China in November 2021⁵⁹ it has emerged that at the European level expertise on contemporary China is often fragmented and difficult to access. Networking existing prominent and emerging knowledge nodes, gathering, categorising, and mainstreaming their work on an easily accessible public information platform would be therefore pivotal to break siloes and provide policy-makers, researchers, businesses, and civil society with the tools needed to develop a deeper understanding of the different dimensions that characterise contemporary China. Doing so would also increase the circulation of information and foster the creation of new knowledge, in line with the Commission's efforts to upgrade independent knowledge on contemporary China in Europe started in the 2021-2022 Horizon Europe work programme⁶⁰. Building synergies with granted projects from topic HORIZON-CL2-2021-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-07, would be therefore strongly encouraged.

This action should bring forth the creation of a virtual European Info Platform on Contemporary China through networking relevant knowledge nodes from across the European Union that pursue the advancement of independent knowledge on contemporary China. The platform would collect, connect, produce, select, disseminate, and give visibility to excellent research material and provide translations from Chinese into English of relevant Chinese policy documents (and produce subsequent policy briefs on such documents). The successful consortium will be in charge of setting up the platform, organising/curating the material on the new virtual tool, setting up relevant events, thematic courses and trainings, communication activities, and developing a sustainability plan to ensure the successful continuation and growth of the platform after the end of the action.

The involvement of excellent knowledge centres from Eastern European Member States producing independent knowledge on contemporary China is strongly encouraged to foster the cross-fertilisation of knowledge on contemporary China across the European Union and enhance the visibility of their work.

⁵⁹ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-1204-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

NB - Such recommendations call, among others, for the EU to build a permanent EU Info Centre for policy, academic, media and business based on existing networks and expertise available on China and to establish links between stakeholders from academia, public and private sector to create a network of China related actors and work on China in a concerted way.

⁶⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/horizon-cl2-2021-transformations-01-07> -

OPEN SCIENCE

Open science is a policy priority for the European Commission and the standard method of working under its research and innovation funding programmes as it improves the quality, efficiency and responsiveness of research. The effective linking of open science practices to innovation and business models requires careful consideration of issues such as Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), licensing agreements, interoperability and reuse of data.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-07: Support to reforms of research assessment in the European Research Area

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action.</p> <p>Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in non-associated third countries are exceptionally eligible for Union funding.</p>
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties.</p> <p>The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants.</p> <p>The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60.000. The respective options of the Model Grant Agreement will be applied. Beneficiaries should refer to General Annex B of the Work Programme for further information and guidance.</p>

Expected Outcome: Projects are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- Support and contribute to the implementation of institutional changes for reforming research assessment (i.e., the assessment of research projects, researchers, research units,

and research institutions), in line with Action 3 of the ERA Policy Agenda actions and in support of Action 1;

- Connection of existing organisations and initiatives for reforms of research assessment, facilitating the exchange of information and mutual learning, and stimulating consensus building among the stakeholders;
- Recommendations for policy-makers, research funding and performing organisations, higher education institutions and other research and innovation actors on how to best implement institutional changes to research assessment;
- Global outreach of European efforts to reform research assessment and reinforced international cooperation on evolutions in research assessment.

These targeted outcomes in turn contribute to medium and long-term impacts:

- Research proposals and researchers evaluated in an unbiased manner on their intrinsic merits and performance rather than on the number of publications and where these are published;
- Researchers evaluated based on a broader range of research outputs and tasks (including open science practices);
- Researchers benefit from attractive careers, regardless of gender or other social characteristics;
- Modernised higher education sector, benefitting from improvements to the research assessment systems (including for performance-based funding).

Scope: The way research projects, researchers, research units, and research institutions are assessed is fundamental for a well-functioning research and innovation system. The research and innovation system is undergoing major transformations with diversification of desired research outputs not restricted anymore to publications, and of research tasks and required skills; with a culture of sharing of knowledge and tools and of open collaboration (including societal engagement) becoming mainstream; and with a growing need of multi-disciplinary approaches and collaboration to tackle ever more complex scientific questions and societal challenges. However, the current system often uses limited methods to assess the quality, performance and impact of research, favouring quantity of results of individual researchers and the impact factor of the venue where they are published.

Several institutions including research funders and universities, in Europe and beyond, are currently reforming the assessment systems of their research and researchers. At a global level, the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment⁶¹ (DORA) aims at improving how the output of scientific research is evaluated. The Recommendation on Open Science⁶² adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

⁶¹ <https://sfdora.org/>

⁶² <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379949.locale=en>

in November 2021 calls for a review of research assessment systems to align them with the principles of open science. The Global Research Council (GRC) held a conference⁶³ in 2020 on “Responsible Research Assessment” and established a dedicated working group in 2021. The European Research Area ERA Policy Agenda for 2022-2024⁶⁴, adopted by the Council of the European Union on 26 November 2021, includes a priority action for reforming the assessment systems for research, researchers and institutions to improve their quality, performance and impact. Accordingly, the European Commission is taking steps to facilitate an agreement between research funders, research performing organisations, national/regional evaluation agencies or authorities, and other stakeholders like learned societies, to reform research assessment criteria and processes in willing organisations, along commonly agreed principles and actions. In 2021, consultation of stakeholders⁶⁵ identified convergence on 10 principles expected to guide the reform of research assessment⁶⁶.

The establishment of a coalition of committed organisations is expected to accelerate changes towards research assessment systems that promote qualitative judgement with unbiased peer-review, supported by a more responsible use of quantitative indicators. The reformed research assessment systems should consider a more diverse set of research cultures and outputs, by valuing not only publications but also other research outputs such as data sets, software, models, workflows, methods, etc., and proper conduct including integrity and gender equality, equal opportunities and inclusiveness. The reformed systems are expected to reward open collaboration as well as early knowledge and data sharing, as these practices enable good science⁶⁷. It should also reward the diversity of tasks of researchers, and consider the different contributions to the work of teams.

This action aims at supporting the reform of the assessment of research projects, researchers, research units, and research institutions. The action consists of three parts, all of which must be addressed:

- The first part aims at supporting the operation of the coalition. This includes support to the sharing of information, mutual learning and awareness raising, across individual organisations, umbrella organisations, and initiatives, involved in the coalition and beyond, including with national and regional authorities. The action is expected to

⁶³ <https://www.globalresearchcouncil.org/news/responsible-research-assessment/>

⁶⁴ Annex to the Council Conclusions on the future governance of the European Research Area of 26 November 2021 <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14308-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

⁶⁵ Scoping report “Towards a reform of the research assessment system”:
<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/707440>

⁶⁶ The 10 principles identified during the stakeholders consultation and listed in the scoping report are: Ethics and integrity; Freedom of scientific research; Autonomy of research organisations; Independence and transparency of the data, infrastructure and criteria; Quality; Contribution to advancing knowledge and the (potential) impact of research results; Diversity of research activities, practices, outputs; Variety of scientific disciplines, research approaches, research career stages; Diversity in research roles and careers, and team science; and Gender equality, equal opportunities and inclusiveness

⁶⁷ Open science practices include: early and open sharing of research (for example through preregistration, registered reports, pre-prints, or crowd-sourcing); research output management; measures to ensure reproducibility of research outputs; providing open access to research outputs (such as publications, data, software, models, algorithms, and workflows); participation in open peer-review; and involving all relevant knowledge actors including citizens, civil society and end users in the co creation of R&I agendas and contents (such as citizen science).

support workshops, working groups and other tools to: raise awareness, exchange experience and disseminate information on institutional changes, contribute to the development and piloting of metrics needed for research assessment; identify, monitor and showcase case studies, including good practices and lessons learnt, and develop and share guidance and recommendations for research organisations and policy-makers;

- The second part involves financial support to third parties, by launching ‘cascading grant’ call(s) to support institutions from across the ERA, notably those engaged in the coalition approach, to implement sustainable institutional changes to reform and improve research assessment criteria and processes. This may require support services to be developed and provided to the beneficiary third party organisations. The ‘cascading grant’ mechanism is expected to contribute to institutional changes in a significant number of organisations (e.g., 40-50 individual organisations involved, of different types and across different geographical areas). As such, a significant proportion of the funding should be allocated to this mechanism, and one or more call(s) for proposals should be launched;
- The third part aims at international cooperation on research assessment. The action will envisage international cooperation with entities outside the EU Member States and Associated Countries. The action will promote internationally the European efforts, will support exchange of information and explore opportunities for aligning policies, and will seek to attract non-European organisations to join the coalition.

The proposals should develop close cooperation, share knowledge and evidence, and build on various institutional, national and international initiatives, including DORA, GRC, UNESCO and the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC). Proposals should also build on the results of projects funded under earlier Framework Programme actions. Notably, applicants are expected to cooperate with relevant projects funded under call topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-45, call topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-81, call topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ERA-01-51, call topic HORIZON-INFRA-2022-EOSC-01-01, to ensure synergies and complementarity of outcomes. Further collaborations are expected to emerge at a later stage, e.g. resulting from the call topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-03 of Horizon Europe

The actions should envisage a duration appropriate to the ambition and complexity of the proposed topic, but not exceed 36 months.

CITIZEN SCIENCE

One of the eight ambitions under the Open Science policy of the European Union is citizen science. ‘The general public should be able to make significant contributions and be recognised as valid European science knowledge producers.’ The aim under Horizon Europe is to ‘engage and involve citizens, civil society organisations and end-users in co-design and co-creation processes and promote responsible research and innovation.’

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-08: Laying the groundwork towards Europe-wide citizen science campaigns

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 1.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action.</p> <p>Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in non-associated third countries are exceptionally eligible for Union funding.</p>
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties.</p> <p>The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants.</p> <p>The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60.000. The respective options of the Model Grant Agreement will be applied. Beneficiaries should refer to General Annex B of the Work Programme for further information and guidance.</p>

Expected Outcome: Projects are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- Identification of citizen science initiatives with high potential impact if upscaled to ERA level;
- Establishment of broad societal coalitions/networks of quadruple helix actors organised around promising citizen science initiatives;
- Protocols and working modalities for use of open transnational data repositories and infrastructures;
- Proposals and commitments for mobilising diverse sources of funding to ensure sustainability of citizen science initiatives.

These targeted outcomes in turn contribute to medium and long-term impacts:

- Increased collaboration with all stakeholders, including citizens in all phases of research and innovation, leading to more responsible R&I;
- Increased alignment of ERA countries' citizen science efforts;
- Transnational citizen science community building;
- Contributions to the objectives of Horizon Europe's EU Missions;
- Increased public trust in, and understanding of, science.

Scope: Citizen science, involving citizens directly in the development of new knowledge or innovations, is a rapidly emerging mode of research and innovation that can lead to increased quality and effectiveness, e.g., through collecting, processing or analysing new qualities and quantities of data.

Many citizen science initiatives could achieve much higher impact if they were implemented on a transnational basis, collecting, analysing and exploiting vast amounts of cross-country data and, thereby, building a multinational community of citizen scientists. However, small-scale national citizen science projects often face practical, technical, or conceptual challenges and lack the support, the transnational coordination skills, and the resources, to upscale their efforts to a transnational level.

This action should conduct preparatory work for the launch of Europe-wide citizen science campaigns under the New ERA, which will also have synergies with Horizon Europe EU Missions. The action should identify the most promising citizen science initiatives for transnational upscaling, foster the development of broad societal coalitions around the identified and promising initiatives, and propose how to unlock the necessary funding commitments (e.g., from EU and national programmes and funders, philanthropic, and/or commercial sources) required.

Europe-wide citizen science campaigns should require the involvement of quadruple helix stakeholders. Citizen science 'champions' in public authorities should be envisaged, to raise awareness, 'connect the dots' between different services and institutions, and obtain broad and high-level commitments. The involvement of SMEs and industry could lead to new means to organise, collect and analyse data, and disseminate and exploit results. The involvement of research stakeholders will be essential to ensuring rigorous and credible research approaches and maximising scientific and technological impacts. Obtaining the inputs of civil society, involving and making youth aware of CS, building understanding of the activities (including their scientific bases), and fostering broad societal ownership of the promising initiatives could prove crucial to the scale and intensity of the eventual citizen science campaigns.

Europe-wide citizen science campaigns should aim to cover a majority, – and potentially all – ERA countries; involve citizens at different stages of the research cycle (e.g., development of

methods, data collection, data analysis, evidence-based advocacy processes, testing and evaluation); be inclusive and make particular efforts to involve those from lower socio-economic groups; and aim to deliver a range of additional benefits such as increased scientific literacy, improved trust in science, improved social inclusion and employability, and improved capacity within the scientific workforce to engage with society.

The action should conduct a thorough screening of potential initiatives to be upscaled, analysing the most promising in terms of synergies with one or more Horizon Europe EU Missions, the potential to advance scientific knowledge, and generation of a range of additional benefits. The action should develop scientific protocols, establish working modalities with open data repositories and infrastructures, prepare training (e.g., for volunteers and volunteer co-ordinators), develop societal engagement and science communication strategies, and propose how to mobilise diverse commitments for funding.

The action will build on the existing knowledge base and experience, including previous projects focused on citizen science, citizen engagement activities in the context of Horizon Europe EU Missions, citizen observatories, and the upscaling of the Plastic Pirates – Go Europe! (plastic-pirates.eu) campaign. It will work in collaboration with existing networks and actions, and develop synergies with the actions supported by HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-60 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-61. The action supports ERA Policy Agenda action 14 to bring science closer to the citizens.

GENDER

With Horizon Europe, the Commission reaffirms its commitment to gender equality in research and innovation. The aim is to improve the European research and innovation system, create gender-equal working environments where all talents can thrive and better integrate the gender dimension in projects to improve research quality as well as the relevance to society of the knowledge, technologies and innovations produced.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-09: Policy support to facilitate the implementation of a zero-tolerance approach towards gender-based violence in the ERA

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 2.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: Projects are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- Support to various national R&I entities, including national administrations, with adopting a zero-tolerance approach towards gender-based violence (GBV), including sexual harassment at higher education institutions and research organisations, in line with the ERA Policy Agenda action 5;
- Cooperation between national R&I actors from Member States and Associated Countries, including with less advanced organisations, to facilitate the exchange of information, mutual learning, and best practice sharing on the implementation of measures to tackle GBV;
- Training and awareness-raising activities for research funding and performing organisations, and other research and innovation actors on how to best implement a zero-tolerance approach towards GBV at their organisation;
- Data collection and monitoring on the implementation of GBV measures at higher education institutions and other research organisations, in line with the Ljubljana Declaration on gender equality in research and innovation.

These targeted outcomes in turn contribute to medium and long-term impacts:

- Research entities in Member States and Associated Countries having measures in place to effectively address cases of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, and to provide victim support and hold perpetrators accountable;
- Research talents, particularly women and LGBTIQ+ persons, remain in academic careers due to safer, gender-inclusive, and mental health supportive working environments;
- A safe and gender-inclusive higher education and academic sector, benefitting from a strong network and knowledge base on the prevention of and protection from GBV.

Scope: Gender-based violence (GBV), including sexual harassment, sexual assault and psychological violence, occurs at all career levels of higher education and research and in all disciplines. It has destructive consequences for individuals, disrupts careers, damages institutions, and affects the quality of research and education itself. Nevertheless, very few countries have comprehensive policies in place to address the issue, as relatively little public policy attention has been given to GBV in universities and research institutions in the EU.⁶⁸ With the institutional change approach through gender equality plans, measures to address GBV (e.g., through a code of conduct or a protocol for complaints), are expected to advance among R&I organisations, as they are recommended components of these plans, defined in the Horizon Europe eligibility criteria. However, a more comprehensive and strategic policy coordination is needed to ensure that R&I entities in Member States and Associated Countries are supported in implementing the necessary institutional changes to foster safe and inclusive working environments in academia. Interplays between gender-based violence and more

⁶⁸ [ERAC 1205/1/20 REV 1](#): Sexual Harassment in the Research and Higher Education Sector: National Policies and Measures in EU Member States and Associated Countries

subtle forms of psychological violence, such as stress and pressure, often inherent in reward-based and hierarchical systems such as academia, should also be taken into account.

This action should support Member States, Associated Countries, as well as national research funding organisations (RFOs) and research performing organisations (RPOs), with the implementation of a strategic zero-tolerance approach towards gender-based violence in higher education and research. This action should directly contribute to the outcome under the ERA policy agenda, action 5⁶⁹, and support the implementation of EU Presidencies priorities.

During its lifetime, the action should:

- Support the sharing of information, mutual learning, best practice sharing, training, and awareness raising on tackling GBV in academia across Member States, Associated Countries, RPOs and RFOs. Providing support and advancing the knowledge of R&I actors in Widening countries is thereby of particular importance. The action should build on the zero-tolerance policy established by the Communities of Practice, under call topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-81;
- Facilitate the implementation of an EU baseline code of conduct on zero-tolerance towards GBV, including sexual harassment, adapted to a wide range of RPOs, including higher education institutions, RFOs and other research organisations in Member States and Associated Countries;
- Foster dialogue, awareness-raising and training to counter more subtle forms of psychological violence, including cases that result from PhD supervisor/PhD candidate, mentor/mentee dependencies, and other forms of hierarchical relationships;
- Particular attention should be given to protection mechanisms for internationally mobile students and researchers, as well as early-career stage researchers in precarious positions;
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation process of the code of conduct on zero-tolerance of GBV at a wide range of higher education institutions, RPOs, RFOs, and other research organisations.

The action should develop close cooperation with relevant R&I stakeholders, including umbrella organisations, share knowledge and evidence, and build on the outputs and recommendations of related actions, e.g., Horizon 2020-SwafS funded UniSAFE⁷⁰ project, the GEAR tool⁷¹, as well as on other key initiatives at national level⁷² and institutional level from

⁶⁹ [ERA Policy Agenda Action 5 outcome](#): “Strategy to counteract gender-based violence including sexual harassment in the European R&I system and to assure gender equality in working environments through institutional change in any research funding or performing organisation”

⁷⁰ <https://unisafe-gbv.eu/>

⁷¹ EIGE’s Gender Equality in Academia and Research tool: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/action-toolbox>

⁷² See e.g., ERAC 1205/1/20 REV 1, by former ERAC Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation (SWG GRI): [Sexual Harassment in the Research and Higher Education Sector: National Policies and Measures in EU Member States and Associated Countries](#)

gender equality plan (GEP) implementing projects. Proposals should also build on the results of projects funded under earlier Framework Programme actions. Notably, applicants are expected to cooperate with relevant projects funded under call topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-81 and call topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ERA-01-81 of Horizon Europe, to ensure synergies and complementarity of outcomes.

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-10: Support to the implementation of an EU Manifesto for STE(A)M education and research and innovation career paths to tackle gender inequalities in the ERA

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 2.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: Projects are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- Common principles and joint commitment on gender-inclusive STEAM education, research and innovation among a wide range of R&I actors in Member States and Associated Countries;
- Network of STEM-oriented businesses, secondary and higher education institutions, research organisations, informal science education establishments, and civil society organisations, supporting knowledge sharing, mutual learning and structural change towards gender equality and diversity at their organisations;
- Increased cooperation between relevant R&I actors from academia, the private sector, and national administrations to foster women and girls’ participation in STEM studies and careers through a STEAM approach.

Scope: Persisting gender gaps, particularly in STEM fields, are hindering the potential of the European Research Area (ERA) to meet pressing challenges like the green and digital transitions. According to She Figures 2021, women outnumber men at Bachelor and Master levels overall, but are still underrepresented as doctoral graduates in STEM fields, including physical sciences (38%), ICT (20.8%), engineering (27%), and mathematics (32.5%).⁷³ In order to increase the uptake in scientific careers, feed the talent pipeline, and counteract women’s underrepresentation, a STEAM approach, featuring creative thinking, applied arts (the “A” in STEAM), and the teaching of science in political, environmental, socio-economic

⁷³ European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, She Figures 2021: gender in research and innovation: statistics and indicators, Publications Office, 2021, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/06090>

and cultural contexts, can prove particularly useful. By highlighting the social impact and market relevance of research and innovation, the STEAM approach would also strengthen the appeal of scientific careers.

In line with the European Strategy for Universities and the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027⁷⁴, this action aims to support the cooperation between STEM-oriented businesses, secondary and higher education institutions, research organisations, as well as informal science education establishments, NGOs, and civil society organisations, committed to fostering gender-inclusive career paths in the STEM fields through a STEAM⁷⁵ approach.

More specifically, the action should ensure the implementation of a European Manifesto for STEAM education and career paths to tackle gender inequalities among relevant R&I actors, through the adoption of common principles and actions on gender-inclusive STEAM education, research and innovation. Particular attention should also be paid to addressing bottleneck moments and structural barriers in young researchers' careers. The implementation of this manifesto should build on the STE(A)M roadmap(s) for science education, developed by projects under the call topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-70, and seek synergies with the ERA Talent Platform initiative and the Digital Education Hubs.

To support relevant R&I actors, including umbrella organisations, with the implementation of an EU Manifesto for STEAM education to tackle gender inequalities, proposals are expected to cover the following:

- Development of a network of national R&I and education actors from Member States and Associated Countries, involved in STEAM education, research and innovation, to support best practice sharing, mutual learning, and transformative actions to tackle gender inequalities at education institutions and R&I organisations;
- Setting-up of principles and a joint commitment on gender equality and diversity in STEM education, research and innovation at organisational level, in line with the ERA, EEA and the European Innovation Agenda;
- Communication and awareness-raising on the deconstruction of gender stereotypes and unconscious biases in science and the benefit of STEAM education, research and innovation;
- Support STEM skills-development and learning opportunities for all genders through the use of arts, social sciences and humanities, including e.g., mentoring sessions, non-cost summer schools, workshops, and traineeship opportunities, and involving inter alia start-

⁷⁴ Commission Communication on a European Strategy for Universities, 4.2 Foster diversity, inclusiveness and gender equality, <https://education.ec.europa.eu/document/commission-communication-on-a-european-strategy-for-universities>; Digital Education Action Plan 2021 -2027, Action 13: Women participation in STEM, <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital/education-action-plan>.

⁷⁵ Science, technology, engineering, (the arts) and mathematics (STEAM) is a multidisciplinary set of approaches to education removing traditional barriers between subjects and disciplines to connect STEM and ICT education with the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

ups, incubators, innovative industries, universities, schools, science and technology museums etc;

- Support teachers' and practitioners' skills development on gender-responsive STEAM education to increase knowledge and expertise on STEAM approaches and enable them to act as ambassadors for the implementation of the Manifesto and the innovative approaches produced under this action.

Particular attention should be given to targeting and involving a diverse range of young women and girls, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g., ethnic minorities, people with migration background, or with disability, children from poor families or of low qualified parents). Geographically balanced participation is also important.

Proposals are expected to seek collaboration with the living labs for gender-responsive innovation, funded under the call HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ERA-01-80, and build on the outcomes of projects funded under call topic Horizon SwafS-26-2020 'Innovators of the future: bridging the gender gap'⁷⁶, as well as gender equality plan implementing projects. Proposals should also take into account project results, funded under earlier Framework Programmes (e.g., HYPATIA, SPARKS and Scientix 4)⁷⁷.

ETHICS

Ethics is an integral part of research from beginning to end, and ethical compliance is seen as pivotal to achieve real research excellence. Ethics challenges go from the production, sharing and use of scientific knowledge and data in designing and implementing responses to anticipating future global urgencies. It is key to preserving the ethics principles while supporting a rapid and effective response to a crisis and improving overall preparedness.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-11: Research ethics for environmental and climate technologies

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following

⁷⁶ [Shemakes.EU](#) and [EQUALS-EU](#)

⁷⁷ <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/665566>;
<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101000063>

<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/665825>;

<i>conditions</i>	<p>exceptions apply:</p> <p>Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in non-associated third countries are exceptionally eligible for Union funding.</p> <p>Moreover, due to the scope of this topic, applications must be submitted by consortium and the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition set out in part B of the General Annexes applies. In addition, proposals must include at least two additional participants (joining as an associated partner or beneficiary if eligible for funding), each of whom must be a legal entity established in one of the following countries: Japan, China, Republic of Korea, or African countries not-associated to Horizon Europe.</p>
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Beneficiaries will be subject to the following additional dissemination obligations:</p> <p>Proposals must include structured cooperation (including the necessary technical aspects) with the e-platform Embassy of Good Science⁷⁸. The output material of the action must be made available on this e-platform.</p>

Expected Outcome: In order to promote a responsible implementation of the EU Green deal, the projects are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

- Design an operational ethics and integrity framework, which preserves and promotes the key ethics principles while supporting a rapid and effective green transition in the European Union;
- Promote awareness, ethics education and training about climate and environmental aspects of research activities, as well as insight in ethical aspects of the development of related knowledge and applications (for example: new agricultural and breeding techniques, environmental protection, geoengineering, tools facilitating energy efficiency and behavioural change).

Scope: Becoming the world’s first climate-neutral continent by 2050 is the greatest challenge and opportunity of our times. For this reason, the European Commission adopted the European Green Deal, the most ambitious package of measures that should enable European citizens and businesses to benefit from a sustainable green transition. In order to support the green transition, it is a priority for the European Research Area to build an encompassing framework for research and innovation activities⁷⁹.

⁷⁸ www.embassy.science

⁷⁹ Council Conclusions on Biodiversity – the need for urgent action, 11829/20, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11829-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

The high magnitude and multi-fold nature of the consequences that we would face, if we do not tackle the global environmental risks, necessitate adapting the way we work, protect the world's scarce resources, and decide on policy priorities. This inevitably raises important ethical questions and dilemmas including some related to the production of scientific knowledge and the development of novel technologies.

There is a growing awareness that biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation at local, regional and global scale pose direct and existential threats to human life and wellbeing⁸⁰. At the same time, actively pursuing the preservation of the environment can, in some cases, lead to some tensions between the pure environmental objective and the protection of human rights. This is the case in particular when the implementation of anthropomorphic models gives to natural elements the same status as human beings.

An important aspect that characterises global challenges is that they, by nature, go beyond the well-being of persons and touch the whole society notably in terms of solidarity and social justice. Mid and long-term socio-economic consequences are also more prominent in these complex research contexts, not only those affecting vulnerable populations exposed to environmental degradation, but also those caused by a green transition depending on social and geographic circumstances⁸¹.

Some research topics intrinsically also have a complex environmental and ecological ethics dimension including for example research and innovation in the area of electro-magnetic fields and the high frequency communication systems that are necessary to achieve a European gigabit society, or the digital innovation and biotechnology in food production practices that should not only remain safe for human health and the environment, but also allow a fair and sustainable system⁸².

In this context, the action should conduct an analytical work covering the following aspects:

1. What characterises the different dimensions and concepts associated with climate and environmental ethics in the context of research and development;
2. Identify the ethics and integrity challenges related to the production and use of scientific knowledge in designing and implementing novel technologies and approaches to the global environmental challenge facing the European Union and the Planet;
3. Develop strategies to uphold the integrity of scientific research in addressing climate change issues⁸³.

Elements to tackle by this action should encompass the issues related to the role of ethics and integrity experts (as advisors, for example), informed consent of communities and

⁸⁰ Council Conclusions on Biodiversity – the need for urgent action, 11829/20, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11829-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

⁸¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-green-deal-communication_en.pdf

⁸² Council Conclusions on the Farm to Fork Strategy, 12099/20, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12099-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

⁸³ UNESCO Declaration of Ethical Principles in Relation to Climate Change (2017), <https://en.unesco.org/themes/ethics-science-and-technology/ethical-principles>.

individuals⁸⁴, undue inducement and opt out approach, as well as equitable sharing of benefits arising from research⁸⁵.

The action should clearly highlight what cannot be accepted or neglected in the name of addressing environmental issues. This notably includes the need to always conduct, prior to the start of a research, an independent ethical review, which remains a necessary safeguard for the individuals involved and enhances the trust from the impacted communities and the society as a whole, in the name of the ‘do no harm’ principle⁸⁶. Environmental concerns justify immediate actions and should not lower ethics and integrity standards.

In addition, issues related to refining environmental risk assessment in various fields of research and innovation should be addressed. The action should explore also how the quality of data estimating environmental impact is assessed and fed back in policy design. This action supports ERA Policy Agenda actions 11 and 12.

The action should result in:

- Producing an operational (“how-to”) guidelines to support the work of research teams’ ethics committee members and integrity experts, taking into account the concept of climate justice, including intergenerational justice as well as gender justice. The guidelines should include, among others, clear guidance for addressing ethical challenges related to the development of novel technologies and approaches to address climate change (e.g., in relation to technologies encouraging behavioural change, geo-engineering) and the application of the precautionary approach in different fields of research and innovation;
- Assessing the need to complement the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity⁸⁷ with specific guidelines and if relevant propose short documents complementing the Code, focusing on the need to ensure an “inclusive and just transition that leaves no one behind”⁸⁸;
- An effective incorporation of the objectives of the “Do No Significant Harm” Principle⁸⁹;
- Developing traditional and online training material (reflecting the guidelines) for students, early career and experienced researchers. The material must be made available

⁸⁴ As also highlighted in the Council Conclusions on Biodiversity – the need for urgent action, 11829/20, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11829-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Also reaffirmed in the Council Conclusions on Biodiversity – the need for urgent action, 11829/20, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11829-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

⁸⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020-ethics_code-of-conduct_en.pdf

⁸⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-green-deal-communication_en.pdf

⁸⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/programme-guide_horizon_en.pdf

on the e-platform Embassy of Good Science⁹⁰. The priorities of the European Digital Education Plan must be taken into account;

- The action should in this context foresee the training of 400-450 Horizon Europe ethics appraisal scheme experts, paying close attention to gender balance, as well as to gender equality and diversity related ethical aspects, and make use of their feedback to improve the trainings.

Overall, the work should be based on existing know how and have a bottom-up approach, involving all relevant stakeholders (e.g., researchers, research funders, policy-makers, publishers, citizens, civil society organisations) through the organisation of participatory events (workshops, consultations, ‘town hall’ meetings). Every effort should be made to achieve a 45% - or higher- female participation, especially among students, researchers, and ethics experts.

- The activities should propose ways and means to encourage changes in the research culture and promote openness, communication, dialogue and stronger links among stakeholders. This work should involve relevant ethics and integrity networks, such as ENRIO⁹¹ or European networks of (early) career researchers and educators in the field of research ethics and integrity.

In order to improve the impact of the expected output (such as effectiveness of training courses, guidelines, toolboxes, etc.), cooperation with research management offices and ethics officers in Research Performing Organisations is highly recommended. In addition, National Contact Points should be provided with all the materials relevant to support their advisory activities.

Proposals should ensure that the publicly available results from relevant EU funded research projects (e.g., SOP4RI, Integrity, TRUST, Path2Integrity, TechEthos)⁹² are taken into account. Budgeted cooperation (including the necessary technical aspects) with Embassy of Good Science⁹³ should be included.

In order to achieve the expected outcomes, cooperation with at least two participants from Japan, China, the Republic of Korea and/or African countries non-associated to Horizon Europe is required.

Consortia with EU partners or partners from Associated Countries that have not previously collaborated are encouraged to participate.

For all published articles and deliverables produced in the context of the activities, an authorship contribution statement must be added, in accordance with a recognised standardised taxonomy developed for this purpose (e.g., CRediT).

⁹⁰ www.embassy.science

⁹¹ <http://www.enrio.eu/>

⁹² Detailed information of the mentioned EU funded projects can be found on CORDIS website: <https://cordis.europa.eu/>

⁹³ www.embassy.science

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-12: The future of research ethics review in the changing research environments

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Beneficiaries will be subject to the following additional dissemination obligations:</p> <p>Proposals must include structured cooperation with the e-platform Embassy of Good Science⁹⁴ (including the necessary technical aspects), and the European Networks ENERI (European Network of Research Ethics Committees and Research Integrity Offices)⁹⁵.</p> <p>The output material of the action must be made available on the e-platform Embassy of Good Science.</p>

Expected Outcome: In order to support an effective adaptation of the ethics reviews to the evolution of scientific research, notably due to the emergence of new areas of research and new forms of research collaborations, projects are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of current approaches to the ethics reviews in ensuring the embeddedness of human rights in the development of digital technologies and promoting adherence to ‘digital rights’ and ‘digital principles’ in the context of research and related international cooperation and partnership⁹⁶;
- Develop new approaches to ethics reviews and assessments. This should focus on developing systems and procedures that promote an ethics by design culture fostering innovation, while supporting the research community to operationalise and embed new

⁹⁴ www.embassy.science

⁹⁵ <http://eneri.eu/>

⁹⁶ Communication From the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: 2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade, COM(2021) 118 final, Brussels, 9.3.2021, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:12e835e2-81af-11eb-9ac9-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

and upcoming EU human rights driven legal frameworks in research proposals, in line with the ethics by design approach;

- Enable the ethics processes to better inform policy choices about the uses of new and emerging technologies and support the researchers in incorporating ethical considerations into their research, thereby contributing to the protection of human rights and the promotion of EU values. For example, the GDPR, since its adoption has inspired the adoption and reform of privacy and data protection frameworks globally, resulting in a so-called ‘Brussels effect’⁹⁷.

The emergence of new areas of research and development, including in the areas of gene editing and artificial intelligence, and the shift of research activities and collaborations to the online digital space, challenge the future of research ethics reviews.

At the same time, ethics should focus on the adherence to values and principles and not be a legal compliance mechanism. It is also necessary to prevent ethics reviews and assessments from becoming a red-tape mechanism, especially as the ex-ante-model of traditional ethics oversight might not be apt to deal with new challenges for example stemming from various forms of data re-use and the often unpredictable and tentative nature of big data research and unforeseeable risks.⁹⁸

Scope: Among the key concerns are research activities that do not involve traditional ‘research participants’ or where there are no established practices or legal obligations to undergo ethics review. A pertinent example is research assembling and analysing large volumes of existing (anonymised) research data, data produced as a by-product of people’s use of technological devices and services, and other categories of non-personal data. The absence of the traditional individual research participant or data subjects, however, does not mean the research activities do not pose ethical challenges or risks.

In addition, a broader variety of players, often in an international setting, is frequently involved in such research activities. These may include universities, corporations, public and private foundations, civil society organisations, online service providers, open exchange and collaboration initiatives and platforms, and other formal and informal associations.

Another important element to be taken into account when investigating how the ethics committee should evolve is the development of a new legal framework related to the protection of human rights. In particular, to prepare for ‘Europe’s Digital Decade’, there are several important initiatives in the pipeline that aim to facilitate the access to and use of digital data, such as the Data Governance Act⁹⁹ and the proposals for a Data Act¹⁰⁰ and the

⁹⁷ Floridi, L. The European Legislation on AI: a Brief Analysis of its Philosophical Approach. *Philos. Technol.* 34, 215–222 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-021-00460-9>.

⁹⁸ Ferretti, A., Ienca, M., Sheehan, M. *et al.* Ethics review of big data research: What should stay and what should be reformed?. *BMC Med Ethics* 22,51 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12910-021-00616-4>.

⁹⁹ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/PE-85-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

¹⁰⁰ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/data-act-proposal-regulation-harmonised-rules-fair-access-and-use-data>

European Health Data Space¹⁰¹. Meanwhile, the EU has been a frontrunner in the formulation of normative frameworks that aim at safeguarding human rights and freedoms in the context of digital innovation, and has committed to incorporate those values into international research collaboration¹⁰². What is more, the GDPR, since its adoption, has inspired the implementation and reform of privacy and data protection frameworks globally, resulting in a so-called ‘Brussels effect’,¹⁰³ and the Commission has indicated a clear willingness to move further ahead with the proposal for an Artificial Intelligence Act¹⁰⁴ and the Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles for the Digital Decade.

In this context, the proposed actions should:

1. Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the current approaches to ethics review in their capacity to address the challenges above (new technologies, new players, new forms of collaboration and partnerships, new human rights related framework, etc.), and, on this basis, propose concrete ways of adapting ethics committees (working methodologies, composition, etc.) in view of matching the new challenges. The overall objective is to identify gaps in practice and formulate proposals to enhance the capabilities of the existing ‘ethics infrastructure’ in Europe. As regards the role of the bodies, it is important not to limit the scope to the ex-ante ethics review, prior to the start of the research concerned, but to also cover the monitoring during the implementation of the research and innovation activities. Practical ways to support the work of relevant stakeholders, notably research funders should also be identified, including the development of quality criteria or benchmarking tools to assist in the evaluation of existing research ethics oversight mechanisms¹⁰⁵. The applicability of the proposed approaches should also be tested via the use of specific case-studies (involving non-EU partners where appropriate);
2. Organise stakeholder consultations and interdisciplinary mutual learning initiatives to enable the identification of best practices for the ethics oversight of new modes of research. As cutting-edge research is of cross-border character, this action should involve institutions that engage in research ethics review and relevant related activities, including at the international level;
3. Develop guidelines and corresponding training and education materials to enable ethics experts involved in ethics reviews to assess compliance with the new ethics standards resulting from the new challenges addressed under point 1 and above;

¹⁰¹ https://ec.europa.eu/health/ehealth-digital-health-and-care/european-health-data-space_en

¹⁰² As confirmed by the [Marseille Declaration on International Cooperation in Research and Innovation](#) of 8 March 2022, and reflected as priority of the [European Research Area Policy Agenda for 2022-2024](#).

¹⁰³ Floridi, L. The European Legislation on AI: a Brief Analysis of its Philosophical Approach. *Philos. Technol.* 34, 215–222 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-021-00460-9>.

¹⁰⁴ [EUR-Lex - 52021PC0206 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹⁰⁵ For health research, a notable example of a Benchmarking Tool for ethics oversight has been developed by the WHO. See https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/ethics/who-benchmarking-tool_research-ethics-oversight_draft-for-consultation-26-nov-2021.pdf?sfvrsn=ed34a0ec_5

4. Train Framework Programme ethics appraisal scheme experts (250-300). Close attention should be paid to gender balance, as well as to gender equality- and diversity-related ethical aspects. Feedback of the trainees should be used to improve the trainings.

In addition, this action should produce traditional and innovative training material (reflecting the developed approaches and guidelines) for students, early career and experienced researchers, as well as for research administrators and managers (to support the professionalisation of research management in the area of research ethics). The priorities of the EU Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027)¹⁰⁶ should be taken into account.

Proposals should ensure that the publicly available results from relevant EU-funded research projects (e.g., SOPs4RI, SHERPA, SIENNA, TechEthos, RoSie)¹⁰⁷ are incorporated, in particular the guidelines that they have produced.

Proposals should foresee budget for cooperation with Embassy of Good Science (including the necessary technical aspects) and ENERI¹⁰⁸, as well as cooperation with other existing European Networks with clear attribution of research ethics responsibilities, including (associations of) European networks of (early) career researchers or educators in the field of research ethics and integrity. The material must be made available on the e-platform Embassy of Good Science¹⁰⁹.

In order to improve the impact of the expected output (such as effectiveness of training courses, guidelines, toolboxes, etc.), cooperation with research management offices and ethics officers in Research Performing Organisations is highly recommended. In addition, National Contact Points should be provided with all the materials relevant to support their advisory activities.

To achieve the expected outcomes, international cooperation is strongly recommended.

Consortia with EU partners or Associated Countries partners that have not previously collaborated are encouraged to participate.

For all published articles and deliverables produced in the context of the activities, an authorship contribution statement must be added, in accordance with a recognised standardised taxonomy developed for this purpose (e.g., CRediT).

Call - Enhancing the European R&I system

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¹⁰⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/digital-education-action-plan_en

¹⁰⁷ Detailed information of the mentioned EU-funded projects can be found on CORDIS website:
<https://cordis.europa.eu/>

¹⁰⁸ <http://eneri.eu/>

¹⁰⁹ <https://embassy.science/>

Conditions for the Call

Indicative budget(s)¹¹⁰

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ¹¹¹	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2024		
Opening: 06 Dec 2023 Deadline(s): 12 Mar 2024				
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-01	CSA	6.00	Around 2.00	3
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-03	CSA	1.00	Around 1.00	1
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-04	CSA	0.50	Around 0.50	1
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-05	CSA		Around 1.00	2
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-07	CSA	2.00	Around 2.00	1
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-08	CSA	2.50	Around 2.50	1
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-09	CSA	2.00	Around 2.00	1
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-10	CSA	3.50	Around 3.50	1
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-11	CSA	3.00	0.50 to 1.00	4
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-12	CSA	3.00	Around 3.00	1
Overall indicative budget		23.50		

General conditions relating to this call

<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
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¹¹⁰ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

¹¹¹ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

PRIORITISING INVESTMENTS AND REFORMS

The recent ERA Communication proposed to prioritise investments and reforms in research and innovation towards the green and digital transitions, to support the European Union's recovery from the pandemic and to increase its competitiveness, calling on the Commission to develop ambitious joint funding actions in strategic areas of common interest.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-01: Programme level collaboration between national R&I policy-makers

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: Legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action. Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in non-associated

	third countries are exceptionally eligible for Union funding.
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Expected Outcome: Projects are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

The actions funded under this topic will coordinate national and regional R&I funding programmes by pooling national resources and contributing to the alignment of national research and innovation policies. The expected outcomes:

- Identification of common research and innovation priorities agreed among the participating national and regional R&I programmes, taking into account international developments where relevant and leading to the development of coordinated R&I funding agendas;
- Implementation of multiannual joint calls, resulting in the funding of transnational collaborative R&I projects;
- Implementation of other joint activities supporting technology development, market introduction, regulatory aspects and societal uptake of results;
- Contribution to participating states meeting Global Challenges, including relevant contributions to the SDGs.

Scope: Since the introduction of the European Research Area (ERA) in 2000 and starting with Framework Programme 6 and the introduction of the ERA-NET scheme, programme level collaboration among Member States and Associated Countries and their research and innovation funding programmes has become a cornerstone of the ERA, with annual investment from Member States of more than EUR 800 million per year. More than 250 networks among research funders have been created over time, serving different research needs but always coordinating public research investments across borders and allowing researchers to apply for calls for transnational research projects funded by the participating states.

Horizon Europe introduces a new approach to incentive programme level collaboration by identifying upfront candidate European co-funded, co-programmed and institutionalised partnerships in the Strategic Plan. The first Strategic Plan also identified 5 EU missions to be supported through Horizon Europe.

Co-funding to R&I partnerships of European relevance is under Horizon Europe limited to European Partnerships identified in the Strategic Plan for Horizon Europe.

The ERA part of Horizon Europe complements this new strategic approach by providing the possibility for Member States, Associated Countries and civil society organisations such as foundations, to maintain existing and establish new collaborations on priorities of their choice, thereby continuing the spirit of the successful ERA-NET scheme, and extending it also to the domain of EU missions.

Successful proposals should align national and regional research funding programmes on agreed priorities that are common to the countries participating in the action and, where appropriate, implement joint calls for transnational R&I projects as well as other joint calls or other joint activities. Applicants should demonstrate clear commitments from participating programmes to pool resources and ensure complementarity between activities and policies with those of the Framework Programme and relevant European Partnerships and EU missions.

Proposals should pool the necessary resources from the participating national (or regional) research programmes as well as, where appropriate, leverage resources from pertinent foundations, charities and transnational initiatives, with a view to implementing calls for proposals, either within the context of this action or in possible follow-up actions, resulting in grants to third parties without EU co-funding in this area.

The proposals should also demonstrate potential impact at national, regional and transnational level. The proposals should demonstrate that activities exclude overlaps with on-going actions co-funded by the EU under Horizon 2020 or Horizon Europe.

The actions should envisage a duration appropriate to the ambition and complexity of the proposed topic.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO EXCELLENCE

This part of the Work Programme addresses the need to improve access to excellence and to increase the performance of R&I systems, building on dedicated Horizon Europe measures as well as complementarities with smart specialisation strategies under the Cohesion Policy.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-03: Support for the professionalisation of research management

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 1.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 1.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: This action aims to contribute to improve the European R&I system across the entire ERA by particularly strengthening the capacity for research management in the European Union's public research performing and funding organisations. Actions are expected to:

- Involve a large number of public research performing and research funding organisations and their research management staff in the training and networking programmes, including by improving accessibility for staff from regions of lower R&I intensity;
- Improve training, skills and career development of research management staff in the participating organisations;
- Contribute to professionalisation, including through certification of training programmes;
- Increase recognition of the research management profession in Member States and the important role of research managers across the ERA.

Strengthen research management capacity and support for a Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) approach across the entire ERA, including in regions of lower R&I intensity.

Scope: Research management takes various shapes across the ERA (and beyond), and therefore its definition/scope is multi-dimensional, including but not limited to the following roles: research policy advice, evidence-based policy making, foresight and strategy development; research coordination, research development, research project and funding management, financial support; evaluation and assessment support; research and complementary training programme management; data-based research support, such as data stewards and data analysts, exploitation of research data, data protection; specialised research infrastructure operation; scientific integrity and ethics expertise, gender perspective support, legal support; science communication support; knowledge transfer and innovation support, knowledge brokering, incubator coordination and business development. In particular, the aim of this action is to further develop and implement a methodology to identify, train and 'professionalise' individuals who are essential support for the 'research enterprise'.

There is a strong need for creating sustained pan-European research management training – both in virtual and in non-virtual curricula. This would help to create solid networks of early career and experienced managers that will last throughout their careers, in the various dimensions of research management for which such opportunities do not yet exist. Secondly, research performing and funding entities, local ecosystems, and regions that are strong in knowledge creation and circulation usually rely on a strong community of research managers. An important challenge for the European R&I system in this respect is the uneven distribution of research management communities and expertise across the ERA. Lower R&I intense countries, regions, institutions often lack such communities, or do not have sufficient access to expertise. Thirdly, the need for new skills is constantly evolving, and upskilling of staff requires ready access to training and practice exchange platforms and across the ERA. Fourthly, there seems to be a lack of recognition of research management as a profession, compared to other policy sectors. Similarly, accreditation of training and career development programmes for research managers in the diverse specialisations is lacking.

This call intends to support initiatives towards flexible careers for research managers and career diversification of R&I talents towards research management. Actions should create joint virtual and non-virtual training programmes and curricula for research managers and prepare the road to certification and accreditation. Actions should take measures to realise equal opportunities for access to training programmes for staff from across the entire ERA, including from regions with lower R&I intensity.

The call addresses also support for virtual and non-virtual networks of research managers from public research performing and funding organisations at European level, as well as cross-border European operational networks (existing or new), complementing and coordinating existing national initiatives. Focus could be put on equal access for staff to such networks and exchanges, building capacity in regions and institutions of lower R&I intensity.

HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-04: Strengthening researchers’ skills for better careers – leveraging the European Competence Framework for Researchers

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 0.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 0.50 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: Projects are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

- Researchers at all career stages equipped with a comprehensive set of transversal skills based on the European Competence Framework for Researchers (ResearchComp), to foster more open and inter-sectoral research careers, and a better recognition of the researcher profession;
- Coordination and exchange of best practices between Higher Education Institutions, research institutions, and other training providers for the improvement of research and transversal skills training;
- Meeting of labour market demands by strategic partnerships of training providers with labour market actors in the development of training programmes;
- Contribution to certification of microcredentials;
- Improved communication of science to the public, to make research careers more appealing to younger generations.

Scope: Skills are of utmost importance for researchers, they allow them to perform high quality research, and to make the overall European R&I system competitive and challenges-

proof. However, it is crucial that researchers are equipped not only with research-specific skills, but also with transversal skills that allow them to be interoperable between academia and the other sectors, including industry and business, and to be capable to establish entrepreneurial activities to turn innovative ideas into business and lead to social, environmental and economic profitability.

Being equipped with a wide spectrum of skills is of high benefit for researchers, who can have access to an enlarged number of opportunities for career development compared to the limited ones available in academia, but also for the labour market, which is in constant need for highly skilled talents such as researchers.

To support inter-sectoral mobility and a broad recognition of the research profession in academia and beyond, and in line with the Skills Agenda, the Commission has developed a set of skills and occupations relevant for researchers which contributed to the update of the European Skills, Competences and Occupations (ESCO) classification. It has also finalised a European Competence Framework for Researchers (ResearchComp)¹¹², which contains the competences that researchers should have for a successful and interoperable career in academia and beyond, including via entrepreneurship creation and through effective communication of science to the public, to engage an increasing number of young people in research careers. ResearchComp is divided into 7 competence areas, and for each competence it provides four progression levels, each of them with a number of foreseen learning outcomes.

Projects are expected to support research performing organisations in adapting and reinforcing formal and targeted training for researchers based on:

- The use of ResearchComp, so that training is provided not only on research-specific skills, but also on transversal skills that can foster better research careers in academia and beyond;
- Strategic interaction with ecosystem actors, in order to have a better understanding of labour market needs, close the gap between demand and supply, and jointly develop training programmes;
- The promotion and support for networking and the exchange of best practices between Higher Education Institutions and other training providers with regard to the development of formal and targeted training opportunities for researchers that can foster inter-sectoral and inter-disciplinary mobility;

¹¹² ResearchComp has been developed in line with the new ERA Communication and the Skills Agenda to strengthen researchers skills for successful careers in academia and beyond. The conceptual model of the framework includes 38 skills, divided in 7 competence areas (Cognitive abilities, Doing research, Managing research, Managing research tools, Making an impact, Working with others, Self-management). Each stakeholder will be able to use the framework according to its own needs. The final version of ResearchComp, to be rolled out by the end of 2022, will also include learning outcomes for each of the relevant skills. More information can be found in the policy brief “Knowledge ecosystems in the new ERA: Using a competence-based approach for career development in academia and beyond” <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8d536780-3025-11ed-975d-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

- Without prejudice to the other transversal skills needed by researchers for inter-sectoral and inter-disciplinary mobility, put a specific emphasis on science communication to make researchers capable to correctly and effectively communicate to the public, and to make research careers more attractive for young talents.

Projects are also expected to contribute to the certification and recognition of targeted training opportunities to up-skill and re-skill, provided under the form of micro-credentials.

Activities may include roadmap development, networking, sector-specific training development, seed funding for training providers in academia and beyond (non-exhaustive list of activities that projects may consider).

TRANSLATING R&I RESULTS INTO THE ECONOMY

The Council has asked the Commission to develop a strategy to accelerate the potential uptake of research and innovation results and data. The recent ERA Communication calls for the valorisation of research results with citizens at the forefront; people expect science to be a driving force that will support the transition towards a greener and fairer society and economy.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-05: Experimentation and exchange of good practices for value creation

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 1.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 0.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Scope: The Commission has cancelled the topic “HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-05: Experimentation and exchange of good practices for value creation”. The topic has been re-introduced as "HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-02-01: Experimentation and exchange of good practices for value creation" with an updated description under the call HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-02.

DEEPENING THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA

The challenge of deepening the ERA includes Open Science, Higher Education and Researchers, Citizen Science, Science Education, Gender and Ethics. It aims at underpinning a new ERA benefitting from knowledge creation, circulation and use. This empowers higher

education institutions and research organisations to embrace a transformative process; where a highly skilled workforce circulates freely; where research outputs are shared; where gender equality is assured; where the outcomes of R&I are understood, trusted and increasingly used, by educated informed scientists and citizens to the benefit of society.

OPEN SCIENCE

Open science is a policy priority for the European Commission and the standard method of working under its research and innovation funding programmes as it improves the quality, efficiency and responsiveness of research. The effective linking of open science practices to innovation and business models requires careful consideration of issues such as Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), licensing agreements, interoperability and reuse of data.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-07: Capacity building on Intellectual Property (IP) management to support open science

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 2.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries will be subject to the following additional obligations regarding open science practices: Beneficiaries must ensure early and open sharing of the outputs deriving from their activities under a Creative Commons Attribution –CC BY- or equivalent license, including training and educational materials. Applicants must acknowledge and incorporate these obligations in the proposal, outlining the efforts they will make towards meeting them and in Annex I to the Grant Agreement.

Expected Outcome: Projects are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- Analysis of how adequate IP management enables and boosts open science and how both open science and IP management are complementary in achieving a better dissemination and valorisation of knowledge;
- Specific training materials, modules or courses on Intellectual Property assets and open science, including how to manage IP assets to enable open access to scientific

publications and to ensure scientific results are Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable (“FAIR principles”); the open licenses applied to the outputs deriving from this call will allow for their reusability by the wider R&I community; resulting training materials, modules or courses are expected to reuse or build on existing materials, updating them when necessary;

- High-quality training on the diverse aspects of IP management and how an adequate IP management enables open science delivered to research performing organisations’ professional and managerial staff and/or academic staff (“train the trainers”);
- Support the trainers in acting as multipliers of the acquired knowledge, in particular, by embedding the training materials, modules and courses resulting from the projects into the curricula/learning or research support material of research performing organisations;
- Gather experiences and share good practices for the further development of programmes and specialised courses on the topic; the project is expected to deposit the resulting good practices in the Knowledge Valorisation Platform¹¹³ repository of best practices under IP management;
- Awareness-raising campaign on how an adequate management of IP enables and fosters open science; such a campaign is expected to be built on the previous awareness raising campaigns on IP management organised by the European Commission (Directorate General for Research and Innovation), with the European Patent Office (EPO), the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) and the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA).

These targeted outcomes in turn contribute to medium and long-term impacts:

- Support to research performing organisations and researchers in practising open science by providing them with relevant training materials, sharing best practices and raising awareness on the importance of adequate IP management;
- Increased understanding among the research community of IP assets and the role their adequate management plays in enabling open science;
- Better management of IP in line with the Code of practice for the smart use of IP to be developed in 2022, including better IP management to facilitate open science;
- Improved overall capacities within the EU R&I system to conduct open science and implement it as a *modus operandi* of modern science for researchers and research organisations (e.g., by integrating the expected outcomes into their open science and IP policies).

Scope: Open science is an approach based on open cooperative work and systematic sharing of knowledge and tools as early and widely as possible in the scientific process. Adequate

¹¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/research-area/industrial-research-and-innovation/eu-valorisation-policy/knowledge-valorisation-platform_en

management of IPR over research results is necessary for such cooperative work and systematic sharing to happen. However, a lack of awareness and understanding of IPR -in particular given the complexity of the relevant legal and regulatory landscape- sometimes leads to mismanagement of IP and the consequent difficulty of researchers and institutions to determine how their research is disseminated.

Copyright is an area of particular importance for open science within the field of IP, since the bundle of rights that authors have on their original works (e.g., scientific publications or databases) allow them to set the conditions for their dissemination and re-use.

Greater awareness of their rights and how they can be exercised would help authors to make more informed choices and get them in control about the further usage of their research results. They will also align themselves better with open science practices and comply with funder open access mandates.

Adequate IP management is therefore an important enabler of open science. Against this context, there is the need to improve knowledge among researchers and their institutions of concepts such as copyright, licences and patents, leading to an understanding of the options at their disposal for, amongst other, archiving, posting, distributing and eventually publishing their scholarship in ways that enable open science in their own terms. There is also a need to improve the understanding of the relationship between open science and IP, in particular how the adequate management of IP lies at the very core of open science. This calls for supporting education and training in IP management that enables open science and for building capacity in research organisations and their staff, with the objective to support and equip researchers at all stages of their career with the knowledge they need in this area.

In contributing to the above-mentioned outputs, projects are expected to take into account the existing IP service delivery landscape and the existing training and capacity building efforts and materials offered by European Commission service contracts (i.e., IP Helpdesk¹¹⁴, IP Scan¹¹⁵, IP Booster¹¹⁶) and the work of EUIPO on copyright and trademarks and EPO's work on patents. The projects are also expected to build on the European Commission code of practice for the smart use of IP (expected to be delivered in 2022) and further strengthen the relationship with open science.

Duration: The action should be no longer than 24 months.

HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-08: Global cooperation in not-for-profit open access publishing

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.

¹¹⁴ https://intellectual-property-helpdesk.ec.europa.eu/regional-helpdesks/european-ip-helpdesk_en

¹¹⁵ https://intellectual-property-helpdesk.ec.europa.eu/horizon-ip-scan_en

¹¹⁶ <https://ipbooster.meta-group.com/>

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<i>project</i>	Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 2.50 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: Legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action. Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in non-associated third countries are exceptionally eligible for Union funding.

Expected Outcome: Projects are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- Enhanced understanding of the different non-for-profit open access publishing solutions, their business models and sustainability;
- Coordination amongst institutional not-for-profit open access publishing services between Europe and other areas in the world at the non-technological level leading to high-quality publishing services and publishing venues at the global scale that are trusted by researchers;
- Enhance the uptake of elements of open science by open access publishing services in Europe and other areas of the world (e.g., open peer review, early sharing of research, post-publication peer review models etc.);
- Fit for purpose training materials and trainings for service providers and scientific journal editors in different disciplines enabling the improvement of the quality of publishing services and of the scientific quality of publishing venues along internationally accepted standards.

These targeted outcomes in turn contribute to medium and long-term impacts:

- Increased equity, diversity and inclusivity of open science practices, and in particular open access publishing on a not-for-profit basis, in the European Union and in the world;
- Structured mechanisms for knowledge transfer between relevant not-for-profit open access publishing services in the European Union and other areas of the world.

Scope: A significant increase in open access publishing activities based on not-for-profit business models can be observed in Europe and across the world, which in principle do not charge authors for publishing. They are the result of technological advancements leading to shifting roles of actors involved in scholarly communication. Their offering is presented as an alternative to commercially oriented publishing, or is a continuation of long-term traditions of institutional and mission-oriented publishing in a new digitally enabled context. Such services

enable inclusivity for all authors, regardless of affiliation and funding, and support a healthy diversification in the scholarly publishing ecosystem. Research institutions and their libraries are often involved in their operation. In some countries, they operate at the national level and are frequently supported by national funding agencies. In many cases, such initiatives have evolved into robust and reliable services which enjoy the trust of researchers.

The aim of this topic is to support the cooperation between such not-for-profit publishing services and their editors to enable the flow of knowledge between the European Union and one or more other areas of the world, and in more than one discipline. It is expected that most of the activities of the actions will take place online, and that platforms and other online tools will be used to perform as many of the activities as possible.

The call will fund activities that will:

1. Gather, share and improve good practices with regard to the non-technological aspects of service provision (editorial scopes, peer-review policies, organisation of editorial and publishing business processes, translation, among others), and with regard to business models;
2. Implement practices that will strengthen high-quality publishing services at the global scale so that they are trusted by researchers across countries and disciplines;
3. Develop training materials and organise virtual trainings for not-for-profit publishing service providers and their editors to increase knowledge transfer and dissemination of good practices. The materials should become available in open access.

Applicants are expected to cooperate with projects funded under call topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-43: Capacity-building for institutional open access publishing across Europe, and call topic HORIZON-INFRA-2022-EOSC-01-02: Improving and coordinating technical infrastructure for institutional open access publishing across Europe, to ensure synergies and complementarity of outcomes.

Duration: The action should be no longer than 36 months.

HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-09: Support to the development and implementation of policies and practices for reproducibility of scientific results

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 2.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action.</p> <p>Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in non-associated third countries are exceptionally eligible for Union funding.</p>
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Expected Outcome: Projects are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- Facilitated development, implementation and monitoring of interventions in research organisations that increase the reproducibility of scientific results;
- More collaboration, joint actions by stakeholders, and mutual learning, notably between national reproducibility networks, to increase reproducibility of scientific results;
- Greater alignment of policies and reduction in disparities between research organisations and between countries in terms of their attention to reproducibility of scientific results;
- Facilitated development and implementation of training programmes and awareness raising.

These targeted outcomes in turn contribute to medium and long-term impacts:

- Increased proportion of reproducible results;
- Increased re-use of scientific results by research and innovation;
- Greater quality of the scientific production.

Scope: Increasing the reproducibility of scientific results, i.e., the possibility for scientists and the scientific community to obtain the same results as the originators, contributes to higher quality and more efficient research processes, more trustworthy results, increasing reuse by other researchers, more effective translation into innovations, and higher return on investments in research (see the scoping report “*Reproducibility of scientific results in the EU*”¹¹⁷).

The aim of this topic is to facilitate the development and implementation of policies and practices, by research performing organisations, research funding organisations, learned societies and publishers that enhance reproducibility of scientific results. The action will support the mutual learning and dissemination of good practices between organisations across the European Union, as well as with relevant organisations outside the European Union, with broad disciplinary representation. It will build expertise and will support research organisations to develop and implement policies and interventions, and will coordinate efforts between stakeholders, notably between existing European national reproducibility networks. The action may facilitate the development of national networks in additional European

¹¹⁷ <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/341654>

countries. The action will support the development of training materials and training programmes, the mutual learning and exchange of practices and tools, and awareness raising, for researchers, reviewers and research organisations. The action will also put in place mechanisms to monitor the effects of policies and practices implemented, thus enabling future adaptations based on evidence gathered. In order to better achieve the expected outcomes, international cooperation is encouraged, in particular with third countries that are active in the development of policies and initiatives to increase the reproducibility of research results.

The action should build on the research results and recommendations from projects selected under call topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ERA-01-41 that aims at understanding the underlying drivers of reproducibility and recommending effective interventions, as well as from other relevant projects and initiatives.

GENDER

With Horizon Europe, the Commission reaffirms its commitment to gender equality in research and innovation. The aim is to improve the European research and innovation system, create gender-equal working environments where all talents can thrive and better integrate the gender dimension in projects to improve research quality as well as the relevance to society of the knowledge, technologies and innovations produced.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-10: Policy coordination to support all aspects of inclusive Gender Equality Plans and policies in the ERA

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.50 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: Projects are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

- Advanced and sustainable policy coordination support on ERA objectives on gender equality and inclusiveness among Member States and Associated Countries and through stakeholder and citizen engagement;
- Improved career paths and working conditions in European research and innovation organisations, including in the private sector, through enhanced policy dialogue on inclusive gender equality plans and policies;

- Increased research quality and societal responsibility and relevance of knowledge and innovations, through the integration of the gender and intersectional dimension in research and innovation content;
- Increased geographical inclusiveness by targeting less experienced countries and regions in terms of inclusive gender equality policies in research and innovation;
- Increased inclusion of underrepresented and socially disadvantaged persons in European research and innovation, through an intersectional lens on gender equality plans and policies.

Scope: As the new package adopted on 26 November 2021 on the European Research Area (ERA) framework¹¹⁸ reaffirms, there is a need for policy coordination to advance the implementation of the ERA gender equality and inclusiveness objectives within Member States, Associated Countries and among other ERA stakeholders, building on the commitment expressed through the Ljubljana Declaration on gender equality in research and innovation¹¹⁹.

Ensuring the active promotion of gender equality and inclusiveness entails opening up gender equality policies in R&I to diversity, and more specifically to: social categories and grounds for discrimination intersecting with gender, such as ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic status; ensuring geographical inclusiveness; and opening to the innovation and private sector. This new inclusive approach to gender equality is also embedded in the new European Commission Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.

This action focuses on the development of a sustainable network of national representatives from all EU Member States and Associated Countries, both from national bodies (e.g., ministries) and from national research funding organisations, to support the implementation of the gender equality and inclusiveness objectives of the ERA. It should build on related actions funded through Horizon Europe call topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-81, HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-80, HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ERA-01-80 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ERA-01-81, the European Gender Equality Competence Facility funded under the 2022 WIDERA work programme, as well as on projects funded under the Horizon 2020 Science with and for Society (SwafS) programme.

During its lifetime, the action should:

- Develop knowledge and build capacities, competences and expertise on the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of inclusive gender equality plans and policies in R&I with a variety of European and national stakeholders. Special consideration will be given to mutual learning exercises to enhance the competence of national gender equality representatives, including helping less experienced national gender equality representatives to acquire expertise;

¹¹⁸ [Council Recommendation on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe](#), and [ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024](#) annexed to the Council Conclusions on the future governance of the ERA

¹¹⁹ [Ljubljana-Declaration-on-Gender-Equality-in-Research-and-Innovation- endorsed_final.pdf \(gov.si\)](#)

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- Further the development of a transnational Community of Practice of R&I funding organisations for the promotion of an inclusive and gender-responsive culture change in R&I institutions across the European Union;
- A specific focus should be placed on developing joint activities with actors from the private, innovation and entrepreneurship sectors, from across the European Union;
- Develop various innovative engagement activities, connect citizens, experts and policy-makers, and contribute to policy making on inclusive gender equality in R&I at national and European administration level;
- The work by this action should be performed in coordination with ERA-related official groups, such as the ERA Forum, and in collaboration with the European Commission, in line with ERA objectives.

The participation of national representatives of at least 23 Member States, and in addition, of national representatives from Associated Countries, to the consortium, is strongly encouraged, and the project should engage and deploy activities with all EU Member States and, as much as possible, with all Associated Countries.

The action should also develop close cooperation with relevant ERA stakeholders, including umbrella organisations, sharing knowledge and evidence, and build as well on the outputs and recommendations of related initiatives funded under Horizon 2020-SwafS, such as GENDERACTION, ACT, GE Academy and the GEAR Tool, as well as recommendations from Horizon Europe funded initiatives, e.g. the Expert Group on the impact of COVID-19 on gender equality in R&I.

HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-11: Support to the implementation of inclusive gender equality plans

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 0.50 and 1.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The scheme must involve at least one leading higher education institution, research organisation, or public body (e.g., ministry, funding agency) in terms of gender equality and inclusiveness, and at least three less

	advanced higher education institutions, research organisations or public bodies (e.g., ministry, funding agency) from Widening Countries.
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Expected Outcome: Projects are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

- Enhance the reputation, attractiveness, inclusiveness and R&I excellence of less advanced organisations as a result of implementing inclusive gender equality plans;
- Transform R&I organisations to advance ERA policy objectives on gender equality and inclusiveness.

Scope: The institutional change strategy implemented through gender equality plans (GEPs) has had very positive impacts in many R&I organisations and been a catalyser at national and EU level, as attested by several reports¹²⁰. The introduction of a GEP eligibility criterion in Horizon Europe, for public bodies, research organisations and higher education institutions from Member States and Associated Countries, has increased the level of uptake of gender equality activities. However, there remains a heterogeneity in the implementation of GEPs across the EU and Associated Countries, particularly in the Widening countries. Furthermore, the new ERA framework established through the Council Recommendation and Council Conclusions adopted on 26 November 2021¹²¹, sets the implementation of inclusive GEPs as a core objective for the promotion of gender equality and inclusiveness.

This inclusion scheme aims to strengthen and go beyond the minimum GEP requirements as defined in Horizon Europe eligibility criterion and to support the implementation of inclusive GEPs and policies, in line with the new ERA policy agenda objectives. Advanced organisations will mentor less advanced organisations on best practices, processes, monitoring and actions to undertake in the inclusive GEPs.

Actions should clearly outline the approach for boosting gender equality strategies by addressing new areas, such as intersectionality and diversity, gender budgeting, gender and innovation, and the long-term impact of COVID-19 on gender equality in R&I, among others.

Proposals are expected to address the following:

- Methods for exchanging and implementing good practices and materials, tailored to individual organisations' needs for the development and monitoring of inclusive GEPs;
- Support for reinforcing their networking in the area of gender equality and inclusiveness, especially with already existing Communities of Practice;
- Activities such as on-site visits, on-site or virtual training; workshops; dissemination and outreach and capacity building activities;

¹²⁰ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-1202-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

¹²¹ [Council Recommendation on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe](#), and [ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024](#) annexed to the Council Conclusions on the future governance of the ERA

- Implementation of specific actions in the less advanced institutions specifically addressing the opening to intersectionality and diversity, targeting other underrepresented or socially disadvantaged groups, and including the integration of intersectional sex and gender analysis into R&I content.

Proposals should build on the knowledge and expertise developed through related Horizon 2020 projects and tools (e.g., GEAR Tool, ACT Communities of practice, GE Academy) as well as under projects funded through Horizon Europe call topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-80, HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-81, and HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ERA-01-81.

The partners involved in the action are expected to revolve either around a specific thematic area or have widening partners with similar national/regional background, for a better contextualisation.

ETHICS

Ethics is an integral part of research from beginning to end, and ethical compliance is seen as pivotal to achieve real research excellence. Ethics challenges go from the production, sharing and use of scientific knowledge and data in designing and implementing responses to anticipating future global urgencies. It is key to preserve the ethics principles while supporting a rapid and effective response to a crisis and improving overall preparedness.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-12: Next generation AI and Human Behaviour: promoting an ethical approach

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action.</p> <p>Legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action.</p> <p>Due to the scope of this topic, in addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the General Annexes, proposals must include at</p>

	<p>least two participants from Japan, China, the Republic of Korea and/or African countries non-associated to Horizon Europe. Participants from countries, which are not eligible for funding according to the General Annexes, may take part in the project as associated partners.</p> <p>Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in non-associated third countries are exceptionally eligible for Union funding.</p>
<p><i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i></p>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The rules are described in General Annex G. Beneficiaries will be subject to the following additional obligations:</p> <p>Proposals must include budgeted cooperation (including the necessary technical aspects) with the e-platform Embassy of Good Science¹²². The output material of the action must be made available on this e-platform.</p>

Expected Outcome: In order to promote a responsible, trustworthy, and human-centric design and development of the next generation of artificial intelligence (AI), proposed actions are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

- The operationalisation of available general guidance on the ethics of AI into practical specific guidelines. These guidelines will focus on the impact of AI on human cognition and behaviour. The guidelines must also address the ethics dimension of the study of human behaviour and cognition in developing and improving AI systems. The guidelines should incorporate ethics into the relevant research and development processes and take into account strategies for ensuring adequate participation of all those affected by the development, deployment and use of the relevant applications;
- Develop and validate education and training material reflecting the produced guidelines. This should be based on participatory processes involving all relevant stakeholders, including citizen groups and industry.

Scope: While the European Union has been a front runner in the global effort to formulate guidelines and regulate AI, it is certain that the road ahead will be full of challenges. One of the key challenges is that the meaning and appropriate interpretation of the key concepts and principles in AI guidelines will often be highly context specific. For example, the ethical risks related to the development or use of AI-based techniques for emotion recognition might be very different when applied for recruitment and selection purposes than when used for detecting levels of distress to assist in dealing with emergency calls or to detect situations of abuse. Similarly, AI-enabled differentiation based on physical characteristics may be unethical in the context of law enforcement but useful in a medical context.

¹²² www.embassy.science

At the same time, research and development of AI-based application surges in all domains, from education, over measuring consumer behaviour, to assisting in making important decisions, such as supporting the mental health of people, promoting driver safety, and filtering job candidates.

Current developments and learning in the field of AI come from a strong collaboration of multidisciplinary teams working together to acquire further knowledge on human cognition and behaviour in order to understand, predict and impact human behaviour (e.g., for improving health or sustainability). To develop affective AI systems, researchers aim to improve their understanding of the way the human brain learns and transfers knowledge. Potentially, this understanding will help to build explainable, trustworthy, and human-centric AI systems and processes. However, while systems for automatic emotion recognition and sentiment analysis can be facilitators of enormous progress (e.g., in improving public health and commerce), they are also enablers of considerable harm (e.g., acting against dissidents, manipulating voters).

In addition to ensuring the protection of research participants, research ethics review plays a pivotal role in facilitating the integration of ethical concerns into research projects and protocols from the conception phase. While ensuring the development of ethical AI will require technical solutions - for example to improve transparency and explainability - guidance for the operationalisation of AI ethical principles (in a non-technical manner) needs to be developed and continuously evaluated in light of new developments in the field (in particular the increasing in-depth study of human behaviour in AI research and development).

Therefore, as policy-makers and AI actors around the world move from principles to implementation, the action should:

- To better understand the ethical challenges (1) associated with the study of human behaviour and cognition to support the development or improve AI systems and (2) related to the impact of AI on human cognition and behaviour, the current landscape should be reviewed and three chosen exemplary areas of research can be selected (such as of emotion recognition applications, deep learning and general intelligence);
- Establish specialised, inclusive networks of expertise, comprised of multidisciplinary teams (including, amongst others, engineers, data scientists, legal experts, ethicists, cognitive researchers, researchers with expertise in other relevant areas, research administrators and policy experts);
- In collaboration with the networks of experts, and based on findings and case-studies, develop operational guidelines for AI systems that build on the study of human cognition and behaviour. These guidelines should incorporate ethics into the relevant research and design processes and facilitate the ethical assessment and auditing of research projects and outcomes (including toolboxes for algorithmic impact assessment). The guidelines should target the research community, with an emphasis on early career researchers as well as the ethics experts (e.g., members of ethics review committees) and project managers. The developed guidelines must adjust the ethics-by-design approaches (as

included in the guidelines *Ethics by Design and Ethics of Use Approaches for Artificial Intelligence*¹²³) to the relevant areas of study and development. These should include mechanisms to assess ‘ethics readiness levels’ for the relevant ‘technology readiness levels’ and encompass the relevant mechanisms to incorporate ethics-enhancing methods directly in the design of the research protocols and prototypes (e.g., privacy-enhancing technologies, explainability, human-centred approach in design);

- Develop a toolbox for international cooperation in AI research and development in the relevant areas, taking into account the regulatory and ethical landscape in key strategic partners (for example China, the Republic of Korea, Japan, Canada and the US). Incorporate principles of benefit sharing in AI research and development in accordance with the *Global Code of Conduct for Research in Resource-Poor Settings* (TRUST Code)¹²⁴;
- As a result of the above activities, this action should also produce innovative training material (reflecting the guidelines) for students, early career and experienced researchers. In addition, Framework Programme ethics appraisal scheme experts should be trained (250-300). Close attention should be paid to gender balance, as well as to gender equality- and diversity-related ethical aspects. Feedback of the trainees should be used to improve the trainings.

All activities proposed must be based on multidisciplinary, inclusive networks of expertise, including amongst others, engineers, data scientists, AI legal experts, ethicists, cognitive researchers, linguists and educators, as well as private sector representatives. Every effort should be made to achieve a 45% - higher- female participation, especially among students, researchers, and experts. This should also involve relevant ethics and integrity networks, such as ENERI (European Network of Research Ethics Committees and Research Integrity Offices)¹²⁵ and ENRIO¹²⁶ or (associations of) European networks of (early) career researchers and/or educators in the field of research ethics and integrity. In addition, in order to improve the impact of the expected output (such as effectiveness of training courses, guidelines, toolboxes etc.), cooperation with research management offices and ethics officers in Research Performing Organisations is highly recommended.

In order to achieve the expected outcomes, cooperation with at least two actors from Japan, China, the Republic of Korea and/or African countries not associated to Horizon Europe is required.

It is important to ensure that the publicly available results from relevant EU funded research projects (e.g., SHERPA, SIENNA, TechEthos)¹²⁷ and the TRUSTWORTHY AI project¹²⁸ are

¹²³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ethics-by-design-and-ethics-of-use-approaches-for-artificial-intelligence_he_en.pdf

¹²⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/coc_research-resource-poor-settings_en.pdf

¹²⁵ <http://eneri.eu/>

¹²⁶ <http://www.enrio.eu/>

¹²⁷ Detailed information of the mentioned EU-funded projects can be found on CORDIS website: <https://cordis.europa.eu/>

taken into account, and that cooperation is envisaged with the beneficiaries of the Call HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA2023 01-12 – The future role and format of research ethics review in the changing research environments”.

Consortia with EU partners or Associated Countries partners that have not previously collaborated are encouraged to participate.

Budgeted cooperation (including the necessary technical aspects) with the Embassy of Good Science must be included in the proposal, and the output material of the action must be made available on this e-platform.

Finally, the action should aim at valorising and widely disseminating the material produced beyond the community of ethics and integrity experts, in particular by promoting its use for the students and young researchers that will constitute the next generation of ethics experts and reviewers. The priorities of the EU Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027)¹²⁹ should be taken into account. In this perspective, cooperation should be sought with large university/research networks in order to enrich the relevant ethics related curriculum with the material produced by the action. In addition, National Contact Points should be provided with all the materials relevant to support their advisory activities.

For all deliverables and academic publications produced in the context of the activities, an authorship contribution statement should be added, in accordance with a recognised standardised taxonomy developed for this purpose (e.g., CRediT).

Call - Enhancing the European R&I system

HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-02

Conditions for the Call

Indicative budget(s)¹³⁰

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ¹³¹	Indicative number of projects expected to be
		2024		

¹²⁸ <https://www.trustworthyaiproject.eu/framework-for-trustworthy-ai-education/>

¹²⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/digital-education-action-plan_en

¹³⁰ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

¹³¹ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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				funded
Opening: 15 May 2024 Deadline(s): 25 Sep 2024				
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-02-01	CSA	2.00	Around 1.00	2
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-02-02	CSA	6.00	Around 6.00	1
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-02-03	CSA	20.00	1.00 to 2.00	15
Overall indicative budget		28.00		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

DEEPENING THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA

The challenge of deepening the ERA includes Open Science, Higher Education and Researchers, Citizen Science, Science Education, Gender and Ethics. It aims at underpinning a new ERA benefitting from knowledge creation, circulation and use. This empowers higher education institutions and research organisations to embrace a transformative process; where a highly skilled workforce circulates freely; where research outputs are shared; where gender equality is assured; where the outcomes of R&I are understood, trusted and increasingly used, by educated informed scientists and citizens to the benefit of society.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-02-01: Experimentation and exchange of good practices for value creation

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 1.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 2.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: Projects are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

- Value creation and transfer to the economy and society by increased interlinkages and cooperation between knowledge valorisation actors (academia/research; industry/SMEs; public administration/policy-makers and society/citizens);
- New solutions to societal and economic challenges by stronger uptake and deployment of research results, including through the involvement of citizens and civil society;
- Improvements of structures, strategies, practices and skills for knowledge valorisation through sustainable reforms and new initiatives in line with the ERA Policy Agenda action 7 – Upgrade EU guidance for a better knowledge valorisation, and with the European Council Recommendation on the Guiding Principles for knowledge valorisation¹³².

Scope: To emerge stronger from the pandemic and address the challenges we are facing, such as climate change, and enable the twin transition, Europe needs to translate available scientific knowledge and research results to innovative solutions, including technological as well as non-technological and social innovations, in the market, in society and for better policy making. To bring existing good practices in knowledge valorisation to support value creation across Europe, we need more experimentation, peer learning and testing of new models as well as trying out good practices in different environments.

Replication and adaptation of best practices is a powerful way to support the design, implementation and evaluation of knowledge valorisation investments and measures that enhance the quality and extent of knowledge uptake at all levels. It involves identifying and taking inspiration from best practices developed across Europe, engaging in an exchange of experiences with peers and connecting to new partners, as well as driving and supporting the set-up of new measures or the reform of existing ones. Cross-border transfer of best practices in knowledge valorisation is challenging because the corresponding strategies, initiatives or

¹³² Council Recommendation (EU) 2022/2415 of 2 December 2022 on the guiding principles for knowledge valorisation, ST/14448/2022/INIT; OJ L 317, 9.12.2022.

tools need to be adapted to a different context and legal and financial framework and take into account skills and competences available in the new setting.

Researchers can play an important role in engaging with citizens and bringing research results into communities that need innovative solutions. This can contribute to making research results more adapted to the needs of citizens and communities, and strengthen the uptake of research by society benefitting both the research communities and the citizens as users and co-creators.

Proposals should address at least one of the following challenges:

1. **Experimentation in knowledge valorisation**, developing innovative ways to strengthen channels of valorising knowledge and research results, in particular targeting activities that engage citizens together with researchers in producing and taking up innovative solutions.. Within the scope of the topic are schemes and incentives for researchers to engage with society and for citizens and citizens' groups to engage in knowledge valorisation and promote the co-creation of new solutions and uptake of research results. This can include means to incentivise researchers to engage with society, contributing to a stronger translation of research results to the economy and society through better adaptation to citizens' needs and collaboration with industry, as well as co-creation of innovation schemes so that citizens' needs are addressed from the beginning. The experimentation will highlight what works well and under what conditions and what are the barriers and opportunities for greater knowledge valorisation through the collaboration of researchers and citizens;
2. **Transfer of best practices in knowledge valorisation**, in the area of 'academia-industry/SME linkages' or 'quadruple helix-based innovation' (i.e., involving academia/research; industry/SMEs; public administration/policy-makers and society/citizens in an ecosystem approach). Consortia are expected to involve partners that implement one or several best practices and partners that plan to introduce a new practice or reform an existing one. The action will lead to tangible change in some or all participating entities in terms of strengthening knowledge valorisation capacities, be it at strategic and/or investment level and/or through the implementation of new or adapted instruments, tools, guidelines, trainings etc. The action can also help develop and prepare knowledge valorisation projects and investments that receive support from the European cohesion policy or the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). If support from the European cohesion policy or the RRF is sought, the concrete measures planned to be taken should be described. Inspiration for best practices can be found in the repository on the [EU Knowledge Valorisation Platform](#).

The involvement of practitioners beyond academic institutions would allow to address the challenges appropriately.

HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-02-02: Science comes to town

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply: Applications must be submitted by a consortium including at least three legal entities, independent of each other, established in three different Member States or Associated countries, of which at least two are different Member States.</p>
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>This action allows for the provision of financial support to third parties in the form of prizes. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.</p> <p>Subcontracting is not restricted to a limited part of the action.</p>

Expected Outcome: Part of the ambition of the new European Research Area is to increase societal responsibility, trust and commitment in science and innovation by engaging stakeholders, local communities and citizens in the design and implementation of R&I policies and by enhancing science communication activities. This action provides a unique opportunity to cities in Member States and Associated Countries to take centre stage in implementing this vision. It allows them to bring together their citizens and R&I communities to showcase the contribution of science in addressing the needs of citizens and its contribution to improving the wellbeing of citizens on a sustainable planet together with economic prosperity. The call topic invites a small group of cities to jointly design and implement a vibrant and engaging year-long programme of activities under the label “Science comes to town 2026” with impact at local, regional and European level. The programme should connect local R&I communities with a broad group of stakeholders and, most importantly, citizens around the topic of science and its role in society.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

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- A year-long programme of diverse events and activities with a robust concept and brand, jointly developed and organised by a group of cities, promoting R&I in Europe and fostering dialogue and exchange on science and its role in society.
- Improved communication of science to the public through regular activities showcasing the latest developments and results in R&I and their relevance to citizens and their lives, and through experimentation with innovative ways of connecting citizens and scientists, involving different age and social groups at local, regional and European level.
- Enhanced discussion and debate on the future of science and R&I policy in Europe, with emphasis on inclusive and participatory approaches, involving all relevant stakeholders within and outside the EU (e.g., researchers, research funders, policy-makers, publishers, citizens, civil society organisations).
- Improved appeal of younger generations to careers in R&I (in academia, industry or starting own business) through organising European-wide science competitions, including the European Union Contest for Young Scientists (EUCYS) and the European Union Contest for early-career researchers (EU TalentOn), as well as other similar initiatives.

Scope: The new European Research Area (ERA) has the engagement of citizens, local communities and civil society at its core, seeking greater societal impact and increased trust in science. This action supports ERA Policy Agenda (2022-2024) action 14 – ‘Bring science closer to citizens’ through broad and inclusive engagement of all relevant stakeholders in a range of activities with a view to increasing the understanding, acceptance, uptake and impact of R&I in society.

The action supports a consortium involving cities to host a coordinated joint 1-year programme with focus on connecting citizens and scientists in the participating cities and beyond, including the following:

- A year-long programme of various events and activities, such as lectures, workshops, exhibitions, competitions or prizes, in the spirit of the European Capital of Culture or the European Green Capital, that highlights the contribution of science to society and the results of R&I projects supported by national/regional/EU funds, including the Horizon Europe programme.

In addition, the programme of activities must include the following two components:

- EUCYS 2026, the European Union Contest for Young Scientists, an annual science competition for 14- to 20-year-olds that brings together first prize winners of national science contests for pre-Higher Education Institution school science projects to compete for prizes and awards. The contestants are judged by a jury of eminent scientists selected by the European Commission. The jury award 1st, 2nd and 3rd monetary prizes as well as other prestigious prizes donated to the contest by international research organisations and other similar bodies. The EU Contest takes place each year in a different location.

The organisation of the contest is based on the General Guidelines on the organisation of the European Union Contest for Young Scientists and its Annex 1 – Rules of the contest. These are updated annually by the European Commission¹³³. The participating city that the proposal designates as host for EUCYS 2026 must provide as part of the proposal the commitment from its respective National EUCYS Organiser to run the 2026 competition as part of the project.

- EU TalentOn 2026, the European Union Contest for Early Career Researchers, is a biennial science competition for 21- to 35-year-olds that brings together at least 100 early-career researchers to work on scientific solutions to societal challenges¹³⁴. The objective is to promote careers in research, facilitate cross-border and cross-sectoral collaboration among early-career researchers, and to promote entrepreneurship and opportunities in academia and industry. The researchers are divided into small teams, which should be gender-balanced and be as much as possible geographically and socially inclusive, to compete for prizes and awards. The teams are mentored by experts from academia, industry and SMEs. Specific challenges are determined through a consultation with stakeholders in the field and are based on broader policy priorities.

The programmed activities should target a wide population of European citizens with impact at local, regional and European level, and involve participants of different ages and across social groups and actors (students, researchers, citizens, policymakers, business and third sector organisations).

Proposals should develop and test the overall concept and brand of “Science comes to town” with a view to future editions. Proposals are invited to experiment with new interactive and engaging formats across the programmed activities. In this context, special emphasis is placed on exploring and supporting citizen science as an important dimension of open science and as a way to promote science education and various forms of public engagement with science. The programme should take place in the participating cities, but proposers are encouraged to design and implement outreach activities that reach communities beyond the ones in the cities directly participating. Wherever possible, synergies should be sought with the European Researchers’ Night, Europe’s largest science communication and promotion event which brings together over 1,5 million visitors across Europe every year; as well as the Researchers at School initiative, both funded under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions¹³⁵.

The programme of activities must take place in at least 3 cities of 3 different Members States and/or Associated Countries, with the majority being in Member States. The consortium can comprise different types of legal entities that can represent the host cities and/or join them in designing and implementing the activities. Applicants must provide with their proposal commitment letters from the public authorities of the selected cities (city council or similar). The inclusion of local partners that provide the link to science, research and innovation is strongly encouraged.

¹³³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/eucys_en.

¹³⁴ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/eu-talenton_en.

¹³⁵ <https://marie-skłodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/actions/msca-citizens>

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Applicants must submit as part of their proposal the overall concept for the annual programme of activities, including the vision for content (focus and scope of activities), outreach strategy, and contribution to long-term vision for the cities. The concept has to distinguish between:

- a) events, including EUCYS and TalentOn, that will be funded partially or fully by the Union contribution;
- b) activities, such as the overall coordination and communication activities, that will be funded partially or fully by the Union contribution;
- c) activities and events that will be financed by the participating cities; sponsorship and other resources (activities not funded by the Union contribution).

The consortium has to quantify in their proposal their commitment to mobilise substantial resources beyond the Union contribution. Monetary or in-kind sponsorships are encouraged to support and broaden the programmed activities, and further increase the impact of the action. Already established activities of the participating cities and other partners are encouraged to be included in the programme, but are excluded from funding under this action. The consortium has to report on the implementation of the activities and events not financed by the Union contribution, but not the related costs.

If participating cities wish to further expand the collaboration by engaging with other cities, e.g., with satellite events, they can consider to include them as partners without declaring costs in order to limit the administrative effort for them.

Priority activity for the successful applicants will be to co-design the detailed draft programme of activities. This will be a deliverable, due not later than 3 months before the formal launch of the “Science comes to town 2026”, subject to the approval of the Granting Authority.

This action allows for the provision of financial support to third parties in the form of prizes to the total amount of:

- EU TalentOn: €80,000
- EUCYS: €70 000

The amount awarded to individuals must not exceed €60 000.

The expected duration of the project is between 24 and 30 months.

HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-02-03: Talent ecosystems for attractive early research careers – pilot

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 1.00 and 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed

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<i>project</i>	appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 20.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: Applications must be submitted by a consortium.

Expected Outcome: The 2020 Commission Communication on ‘A New ERA for Research and Innovation’ underlined the importance of adequate framework conditions to support research careers in Europe. Action 4 of the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024 – “Promote attractive and sustainable research careers, balanced talent circulation and international, transdisciplinary and inter-sectoral mobility across the ERA” - annexed to the November 2021 Council Conclusions on the ‘Future governance of the European Research Area’ foresees the development of a European framework for research careers, together with the upgrade of existing instruments and initiatives, including the revision of the Charter for Researchers. It also includes amongst its expected outcomes the development of new instruments to support research careers, such as the one proposed with this call topic.

This action will promote implementing the standards for attractive careers as laid down in the new Charter for Researchers and the Council recommendation on a European framework for research careers¹³⁶, responding to the political call for "labour market players to join forces for attractive careers". It will support cooperation between academic, private and public sector entities at organisational level to create ecosystems that ensure attractive early research careers perspectives, provide researchers with skill sets that match labour market requirements, thus providing the talent pool needed for a truly functioning internal market for knowledge. Projects are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

- Establishment of ecosystems for research positions, in particular for early stage researchers, in academia, R&I performing institutions and businesses, connecting research training providers (in particular academia) and the researchers’ labour market (such as businesses, universities, research and technology organisations and government entities), supplying employers with skilled research talent that match labour market needs, including skills needs from the Green Deal, digital transition, and deep tech;
- Wide implementation of the standards for attractive researcher careers as laid out in the new Charter for Researchers, leading to more attractive, more diverse and more

¹³⁶ Charter for Researchers, annexed to the Council recommendation C/2023/1640 of 18 December 2023 on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe (OJ C, C/2023/1640, 29.12.2023), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:C_202301640.

interoperable careers for researchers across all sectors, contributing to a better-balanced and sustainable circulation of skilled and entrepreneurial workforce;

- Improved early careers researchers' competences and employability within and beyond academia, as well as career interoperability between sectors.

Scope: The action supports consortia to create 'talent ecosystems' with a large pool of research and innovation positions operating under good training and working conditions in line with the new Charter for Researchers and the Council recommendation on a European framework for research careers, providing non-academic organisations, particularly businesses, with well-skilled researchers and other R&I talents, thereby increasing employability of early career researchers and improving interoperability of their careers between sectors.

This action particularly supports whole organisations and innovation ecosystems to implement the standards for attractive research careers laid down in the Charter for Researchers. A special focus is placed on organisational change in support of early career researchers¹³⁷, to offer them more and better career opportunities, including through strengthened coordination of measures at European, national, and regional level and increased cooperation between academia, industry, government and public sector.

The action is expected to be implemented by consortia consisting of both training providers (in particular academia) and employers of researchers (academia and organisations from non-academic sector, in particular businesses¹³⁸) from across the European Research Area, creating connected "talent ecosystems" that allow the free flow of talents and create attractive perspectives for researchers' careers within this ecosystem and beyond. A talent ecosystem for researchers is to be understood as a cohesive and interdependent system that encompasses various elements related to HR management of research talent. It can be thematic (e.g., targeted to R&I on climate, pharma, automotive, music industry) or have a more comprehensive target. It is designed to adapt to the evolving needs of the researcher labour market and the different occupations for researchers across sectors along the R1-R4 profiles, ensuring more customised training, career development and talent flowthrough. Such ecosystem is built around delivering a better employee experience and aligning with frequently changing priorities; it is agile and flexible to environmental shifts in the R&I system, such as changing labour market dynamics and skills needs. It provides distinct

¹³⁷ Early career researchers: First Stage Researchers, doing research under supervision up to the point of a PhD or equivalent level of competence and experience, and Recognised Researchers, with a PhD or equivalent level of competence and experience who are not yet fully independent in their ability to develop their own research, attract funding, or lead a research group; R1 and R2 profiles in the Council recommendation (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:C_202301640). R1 and R2 profiles should be considered early-career researchers.

¹³⁸ *Non-academic sector* means any socio-economic actor not included in the academic sector e.g., industry, SMEs, independent research infrastructures (e.g., ERICs), government, non-academic public bodies, private research organisations, civil society organisations, international organisations, cultural institutions, hospitals, etc. *Academic sector* means public or private higher education establishments awarding academic degrees, public non-profit research organisations for whom one of the main objectives is to pursue research or technological development, and International European Research Organisations (IERO).

strategies for managing different research profiles, essential for competing in the global labour market, while delivering skilled research talent that match European labour market needs.

Consortia are expected to mainstream the Charter's principles and good working conditions across all participating organisations, which need to demonstrate in the application a high ambition as to the number of (new or existing) research positions that will benefit from the organisational change within the duration of the grant, ultimately leading to coverage of all its research staff. Participating organisations are expected to have received the HR Excellence in Research Award (HRS4R¹³⁹) or commit to apply the new Charter for Researchers and commit to its implementation (i.e., start the HRS4R process) within the grant duration, as far as relevant for their operations linked to the employment of researchers.

This action does not support salaries and mobility of individual researchers or teams of researchers. Instead, this action supports activities that lead to organisational change for more attractive research careers in line with the needs of R&I labour market players, towards the creation of sustainable talent ecosystems.

Funding will support implementation of good working conditions and reinforce flowthrough of talents between sectors, towards better employability of talent trained as researcher and increased interoperability of research careers between academia and non-academic sector entities. Activities can include (non-exhaustive list) the mapping of challenges, the development of action plans to bring the organisations in line with the new Charter for Researchers, scaling excellence in HR, and networking and relationship building for connecting the talent ecosystem partners. On a more practical level, activities could include the roll out of ResearchComp¹⁴⁰ in the organisational training and career development activities, the establishment of career services and training systems for early career researchers, the involvement of non-academic sector in the training of researchers, and relationship building between sectors for talent circulation.

This action is a pilot, testing the principles for a future investment strategy for attractive research careers at whole organisation and ecosystem level. Actions are therefore expected to provide policy feedback to the European Commission and Member States on the progress made, the success generated, and the obstacles encountered. Grants can have a duration of up to 3 years; a longer duration is possible if duly justified.

¹³⁹ HR Excellence in Research Award: <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/hrs4r>.

¹⁴⁰ ResearchComp: skills and competencies framework for researchers (https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/jobs-research/researchcomp-european-competence-framework-researchers_en).

OTHER ACTIONS NOT SUBJECT TO CALLS FOR PROPOSALS GRANTS TO IDENTIFIED BENEFICIARIES

PRIZES

1. Horizon Impact Award

Expected Outcomes:

- To celebrate the successful uptake and use of EU funded project results, thus boosting and promoting their achieved impact;
- To showcase best practices, create role models and inspire R&I beneficiaries to use their research results to create value for the society at large.

The Commission will award on an annual basis a recognition prize to reward beneficiaries that have successfully used their research results to create value for society. The beneficiaries must be able to show proof of effective exploitation and uptake of their research results. This action aims to illustrate the wider socio-economic benefits of the EU investment in R&I and to encourage project beneficiaries to best manage and use their research results.

In particular, six winners will be selected, by an evaluation jury, for their achievements. The prizes are monetary and each of the six winners will receive EUR 25.000.

Total of six prizes of EUR 0.025 each: EUR 0.15 million from the 2024 budget.

All applicants are required to submit letter(s) of support coming from the user community that can provide testimony on achieved impact.

Essential award criteria: The prize will be awarded, after closure of the contest, to the contestant(s) who in the opinion of the jury best addresses the following cumulative criteria:

1. Pathway from results to societal benefits:

Applicants will need to detail how the R&I results were directly or indirectly exploited after the lifetime of the project. They will need to describe the activities that were done to ensure that the R&I results lead to societal benefits. They will need to describe the scale and the sustainability of their actions.

2. Achieved impact:

Applicants will need to demonstrate the already existing impact and created societal benefits. They will need to detail concrete examples of how their research results have benefitted society and who are the user communities that have profited from it. The achieved impact must be already materialised. The letter of support will serve as a testimony of the described impact (but will not be evaluated).

Eligibility criteria:

The contest is open to all legal entities (i.e., natural or legal persons, including international organisations) or groups of legal entities that participated as beneficiaries in FP7, Horizon 2020 or Horizon Europe. The projects must have ended by close of the contest. Legal entities receiving financial support to third parties under grants funded by FP7, Horizon 2020 or Horizon Europe, including under ERA-Net Co-fund (under Horizon 2020), Co-fund action (under Horizon Europe), EIT (under Horizon Europe), are also eligible. Natural persons such as ERC principal investigators or MSCA fellows and legal entities principally created by past beneficiaries for the exploitation of the project results, are also eligible.

Applicants that have already received an EU or Euratom prize cannot receive a second prize for the same activities.

For the common Rules of Contest for Prizes please see the [Funding and Tenders Portal](#).

The specific Rules of Contest will be published in 2024 by the European Commission, which will directly launch and manage the contest and award the prizes based on the judgement of independent experts¹⁴¹.

Form of Funding: Prizes

Type of Action: Recognition Prize

Indicative timetable: Q1-3/4 2023 and Q3 2024

Indicative budget: EUR 0.15 million from the 2023 budget and EUR 0.15 million from the 2024 budget

2. EU Award for Gender Equality Champions (2023 edition)

Expected Outcomes:

- Enable the creation of a European community of academic and research champions in institutional transformation towards inclusive gender equality;
- Strengthening of the inclusiveness and connectivity objectives under the new European Research Area.

The “EU Award for Gender Equality Champions” is a recognition prize scheme meant as a booster and complement to the requirement for higher education establishments, research organisations and public bodies applying to Horizon Europe to have in place a Gender Equality Plan (GEP), and a tool for advancing inclusive gender equality plans and policies in the framework of the new ERA policy agenda, in synergy with the European Education Area (EEA) and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA, Bologna process), and in line with the new Communication on a European Strategy for Universities adopted on 18 January 2022.

¹⁴¹ In 2022 and 2023 the Horizon Impact Award contests were cancelled, and therefore no prizes were awarded.

The Prize will be awarded to up to four academic or research organisations, and contestants can apply to one among the following three prize categories:

- **Sustainable Gender Equality Champions:** Organisations that can demonstrate a significant and sustained record of activity and a high level of achievement through the implementation of their GEP;
- **Newcomer Gender Equality Champions:** Organisations that have recently started implementing a GEP and can demonstrate the most progress in its implementation and achieved results;
- **Inclusive Gender Equality Champions:** Organisations that have developed the most innovative inclusive GEP addressing intersections with other social categories such as ethnicity, social origin, sexual orientation and gender identity (LGBTIQ) or disability.

Each prize winner will receive EUR 0.1 million: EUR 0.4 million maximum in total from the 2023 budget.

Contestants can only apply to one of the three prize categories and will have to provide proof of eligibility and a written presentation of their achievements, as well as support their applications with a link to a video. The submission consists of a complete application.

Essential award criteria: Eligible applications will be evaluated in each category by a jury consisting of a group of independent experts.

The prize will be awarded, after closure of the contest, to the contestants who in the opinion of the jury best address the following set of cumulative criteria set for each of the three prize categories:

Category “Sustainable Gender Equality Champions”

1. **Award criterion 1: Sustainable Impact** – The applicant demonstrates through concrete examples a high level of achievement and impact of its GEP in creating positive and sustainable institutional change towards gender equality. The applicant must support their claims with qualitative and quantitative data including performance measures and indicators, and show the sustainable anchoring of the GEP in the organisation and long-lasting improvements.
2. **Award criterion 2: Inspirational Model** – The applicant should demonstrate an influence of its GEP beyond the sole organisation, such as serving as an inspiration to other organisations e.g. through peer-mentoring, having an impact on policy at regional, national and/or EU level.

Category “Newcomer Gender Equality Champions”

1. **Award criterion 1: Progress Achieved** - The applicant demonstrates through concrete examples the progress achieved in creating positive institutional change towards gender

equality through the implementation of its GEP. The applicant must support their claims with qualitative and quantitative data including performance measures and indicators.

2. **Award criterion 2: Stakeholder engagement** – The applicant should demonstrate a high level of engagement of the organisation’s various internal stakeholders, including women and men from the different categories of staff (and student body for teaching institutions), in the design, implementation and assessment of its GEP.

Category “Inclusive Gender Equality Champions”

1. **Award criterion 1: Progress achieved** - The applicant demonstrates through concrete examples the progress achieved in creating positive institutional change towards inclusive gender equality through the implementation of its inclusive GEP. The applicant must support their claims with qualitative data, and quantitative data including performance measures and indicators, where relevant.
2. **Award criterion 2: Innovative Inclusiveness** – The applicant should demonstrate the innovative aspect as its inclusive GEP measures, such as, for example, new ideas not tested elsewhere, advanced participatory approaches, innovative partnerships, or else targeted innovative actions such as actions addressing the impact of COVID-19 on gender equality and inclusiveness, support schemes for endangered researchers, etc.

Eligibility criteria: The contestant must be a public or private research performing organisation, including a higher education establishment, located in an EU Member State or a country associated to Horizon Europe¹⁴².

Applicants that have already received an EU or Euratom prize cannot receive a second prize for the same activities.

The specific rules of the contest will be published each year by the European Commission (on the [Funding & Tenders Portal](#) but also actively publicised elsewhere to maximise participation), which will directly launch and manage the contest and award the prize based on the judgement of independent experts.

Expected results: The prizes will boost public awareness of the importance of addressing gender equality in academic and research organisations through institutional change, incentivise a high degree of commitment to the implementation of inclusive GEPs, and create a community of champions inspiring other academic and research organisations into becoming gender equality champions themselves.

Form of Funding: Prizes

Type of Action: Recognition Prize

¹⁴² In accordance with the Horizon Europe Rules for participation, due to the specific policy requirements, to the nature and objectives of the action, the type of legal entity and the place of establishment are limited to research performing organisations among legal entities falling under the eligibility criterion on the requirement to have a Gender Equality Plan in place (see General Annexes to the Horizon Europe Work Programme).

Indicative timetable: Q4 2023

Indicative budget: EUR 0.40 million from the 2023 budget

3. EU Award for Gender Equality Champions (2024 and 2025 editions)

Expected Outcomes:

- Enable the development of a European community of academic and research champions in institutional transformation towards inclusive gender equality;
- Strengthening of the inclusiveness and connectivity objectives under the new European Research Area.

The “EU Award for Gender Equality Champions” is a recognition prize scheme meant as a booster and a complement to the requirement for higher education establishments, research organisations and public bodies applying to Horizon Europe to have in place a Gender Equality Plan (GEP)¹⁴³, and as a tool for advancing inclusive gender equality plans and policies in the framework of the new European Research Area (ERA) Policy Agenda.

The Award is also an enabler for the transformation agenda for universities set forth in the new ERA, in synergy with the European Education Area (EEA) and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA, Bologna process), and in line with the Communication on a European Strategy for Universities adopted on 18 January 2022.

The Prize will be awarded to four academic or research organisations, and contestants can apply to one among the following three prize categories:

- Sustainable Gender Equality Champions: Organisations that can demonstrate a significant and sustained record of activity and a high level of achievement through the implementation of their GEP(s);
- Newcomer Gender Equality Champions: Organisations that have recently finalised the implementation of their first GEP and can demonstrate the most progress achieved through its implementation;
- Inclusive Gender Equality Champions: Organisations that have developed the most innovative inclusive GEP – i.e. a GEP addressing intersections between gender and at least two other social categories, such as racial or ethnic origin, social origin, sexual orientation and gender identity (LGBTIQ) or disability – and can demonstrate concrete results obtained through its implementation.

Each prize winner will receive EUR 0.1 million: EUR 0.4 million in total from the 2024 budget and EUR 0.4 million in total from the 2025 budget.

Contestants can only apply to one of the three prize categories.

¹⁴³ See General Annexes to the Horizon Europe Work Programme (Gender equality plans and gender mainstreaming in Annex Part B – Eligibility)

In addition to the complete application, contestants may be asked at a later stage for further documents (*for legal entity validation, bank account validation, ethics review, declaration of honour, etc.*) or for a short video message on their achievements in the chosen Prize category. This video will be used for communication purposes only.

Essential award criteria: Eligible applications will be evaluated in each category by a jury consisting of a group of independent experts.

The prize will be awarded, after closure of the contest, to the contestants who in the opinion of the jury best address the following set of cumulative criteria set for each of the three prize categories:

Category “Sustainable Gender Equality Champions”:

1. **Award criterion 1: Sustainable Impact** – The applicant should demonstrate through concrete examples a high level of achievement and impact of its fully implemented GEP(s) in creating positive and sustainable institutional change towards gender equality, and covering all five thematic areas recommended in the Horizon Europe GEP eligibility criterion. The applicant must support its claims with qualitative and quantitative data including baselines, performance measures and indicators, and show the sustainable anchoring of the GEP in the organisation and long-lasting improvements.
2. **Award criterion 2: Inspirational Model** – The applicant should demonstrate an influence of its fully implemented GEP(s) beyond the sole organisation, such as serving as an inspiration to other organisations e.g. through peer-mentoring, having an impact on policy at regional and/or national level and/or EU level.

Category “Newcomer Gender Equality Champions”:

1. **Award criterion 1: Progress Achieved** - The applicant should demonstrate through concrete examples the progress achieved in creating positive institutional change towards gender equality through the implementation of its GEP, and covering at least four of the five thematic areas recommended in the Horizon Europe GEP eligibility criterion. The applicant must support its claims with qualitative and quantitative data, including baselines, performance measures and indicators.
2. **Award criterion 2: Stakeholder engagement** – The applicant should demonstrate a high level of engagement of the organisation’s various internal stakeholders, including women and men from the different categories of staff (and student body for teaching institutions), in the design, implementation and assessment of its GEP.

Category “Inclusive Gender Equality Champions”:

1. **Award criterion 1: Progress achieved** - The applicant should demonstrate through concrete examples the progress achieved in creating positive institutional change towards inclusive gender equality through the implementation of its inclusive GEP, and covering at least three of the five thematic areas recommended in the Horizon Europe

GEP eligibility criterion. The applicant must support its claims with qualitative data, and as much as possible, with quantitative data including baselines, performance measures and indicators.

2. **Award criterion 2: Innovative Inclusiveness** – The applicant should demonstrate the impact of innovative actions implemented under its inclusive GEP such as, for example, new ideas or new tools not tested elsewhere, advanced participatory approaches, innovative partnerships, or else targeted innovative actions such as actions addressing the impact of COVID-19 on gender equality and inclusiveness, support schemes for endangered researchers, etc.

Eligibility criteria: The contestant must be a public or private research performing organisation, including a higher education establishment, located in an EU Member State or a country associated to Horizon Europe¹⁴⁴.

Applicants that have already received an EU or Euratom prize cannot receive a second prize for the same activities.

The specific rules of the contest will be published each year by the European Commission (on the [Funding & Tenders Portal](#) but also actively publicised elsewhere to maximise participation), which will directly launch and manage the contest and award the prize based on the judgement of independent experts.

Expected results: The prizes will increase public awareness of the importance of addressing gender equality in academic and research organisations through institutional change, incentivise a high degree of commitment to the implementation of inclusive GEPs, and create a community of champions inspiring other academic and research organisations into becoming gender equality champions themselves.

Form of Funding: Prizes

Type of Action: Recognition Prize

Indicative timetable: Q2 2024 and Q2 2025

Indicative budget: EUR 0.40 million from the 2024 budget and EUR 0.40 million from the 2025 budget

GRANTS TO IDENTIFIED BENEFICIARIES

1. European Science in the City next generation

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

¹⁴⁴ In accordance with the Horizon Europe Rules for participation, due to the specific policy requirements, to the nature and objectives of the action, the type of legal entity and the place of establishment are limited to research performing organisations among legal entities falling under the eligibility criterion on the requirement to have a Gender Equality Plan in place (see General Annexes to the Horizon Europe Work Programme).

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- The 'European Science in the City' will bring together more than 5000 delegates from more than 50 countries within and outside the European Union;
- Showcase latest developments in research and innovation and offer open forum for lively discussion and debate on the future of European science, policy and innovation;
- Encompass three interconnected programmes: scientific research and innovation, science-to-business and scientific careers;
- Parallel Science in the City festival targets local citizens to extend and enhance dialog and exchange on science and its role in society;
- Organise European Talent Fair at the EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF) exhibition during public access day. This matchmaking event will bring together students, early career researchers, scholars, start-ups, industry and investors promoting talent, business and job opportunities across the EU.

Scope: In addition to the ESOF conference, the host city of ESOF 2024, should include the following two initiatives:

- A festival “European Science in the City” to be organised in close collaboration with the European Commission. The goal of the new event, associated with the more general “Science in the City” festival of ESOF, will be to showcase for the general public and European citizens the results of R&I projects supported by the European Commission, including the Horizon Europe programme. The “European Science in the City” festival will be promoted together with the ESOF conference;
- A year of events: the European City of Science (ECS) - a true all-year programme with various events and activities programmed by the host city in the spirit of the European Capital of Culture or the European Green Capital. In this perspective, the yearlong programme of the European City of Science will target a wide population of European citizens beyond simple local or regional impact.

Support offered to the organisers of ESOF 2024 and its associated events, notably the European City of Science (ECS) to ensure that a structured and expanded dialogue among all societal actors (researchers, citizens, policy-makers, business and third sector organisations, including all social groups) will be developed. In this context, special emphasis is placed on exploring and supporting citizen science as an important dimension of open science and as a way to promote further Responsible Research and Innovation through outreach activities, science education and various forms of public engagement with science. Moreover, as part of ESOF conference, a talent fair should be organised.

An inclusive and integrated combination of seminars, workshops, debates and round table discussions using new interactive and engaging formats is included and centred on Horizon Europe key societal challenges.

This action supports ERA Policy Agenda action 14, bring science closer to citizens.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposals according to Article 195(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 24(3)(b) of the Horizon Europe Regulation. The City of Katowice and the University of Silesia in Katowice have a proven record of working in a partnership mode with the European Commission, and in promoting citizen science activities, thus attracting high levels of international media attention.

Procedure: The evaluation committee will be fully composed by representatives of EU institutions.

Legal entities:

Miasto Katowice (City of Katowice) - coordinator, ul. Młyńska 4, 40-098 Katowice, Poland

University of Silesia in Katowice, 12 Bankowa Street, 40-007 Katowice, Poland

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: Q4 2023

Indicative budget: EUR 2.00 million from the 2023 budget

2. Support to the further operation of cOAlition S

cOAlition S is an international consortium of research funding and performing organisations that are committed to making full and immediate open access to research publications a reality. cOAlition S has developed Plan S whereby research funders mandate that access to research publications generated through their research grants must be free to access on the day of publication.

The objective of supporting the further operation of cOAlition S is to monitor the impact of Plan S and explore future activities in support of open access to scientific publications.

This grant will support the further operation of cOAlition S by supporting activities aimed at:

1. Monitoring the impact of Plan S;
2. Providing recommendations on how to build on the achievements of Plan S;
3. Supporting cOAlition S work on open access to books and monographs by contributing to the upgrade of the OAPEN infrastructure.

The duration of this action is 24 months.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposals according to Article 195(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 24(3)(b) of the Horizon Europe Regulation. The European Science Foundation has a proven record of working in a partnership mode with the European Commission.

Procedure: The evaluation committee will be composed fully by representatives of EU institutions.

Legal entities:

European Science Foundation (ESF), 1, quai Lezay-Marnésia - BP 90015 67080 Strasbourg Cedex - France

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: Q3 2023

Indicative budget: EUR 0.20 million from the 2023 budget

3. European Union Contest for Young Scientists (EUCYS) 2023

The European Union Contest for Young Scientists is a science competition for 14- to 20-year-olds. It brings together first prize winners of national science contests for pre-Higher Education Institution school science projects to compete for prizes and awards. The contestants are judged by a jury of eminent scientists selected by the European Commission. The jury award 1st, 2nd and 3rd monetary prizes as well as other prestigious prizes donated to the contest by international research organisations and other similar bodies. The EU Contest takes place each year in a different location. This Contest provides additional stimulus to young people who have already demonstrated that they are applying science to solve problems. Many go on to become successful scientists. It attracts a considerable level of co-funding in the host country, and high levels of international media attention. The organisation of the contest is based on the General Guidelines on the organisation of the European Union Contest for Young Scientists and its Annex 1 – Rules of the contest. These are updated annually by the European Commission¹⁴⁵. This action supports ERA Policy Agenda action 14 bringing science closer to citizens.

This action allows for the provision of financial support to third parties in the form of prizes. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

¹⁴⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/eucys_en.

The starting date of the grant awarded under this topic may be as of 01 September 2022. Applicant must justify the need for a retroactive starting date in their application. Costs incurred from the starting date of the action may be considered eligible.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposals according to Article 195(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 24(3)(b) of the Horizon Europe Regulation. The Jeunesses Scientifiques de Belgique has a proven record of working in a partnership mode with the European Commission.

Procedure: The evaluation committee will be composed fully by representatives of EU institutions.

Legal entities:

Jeunesses Scientifiques de Belgique (ASBL), Avenue Latérale 17 – 1180 Brussels

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: Q1 2023

Indicative budget: EUR 1.00 million from the 2023 budget

4. Support to Retirement Savings Vehicle for European Research Institutions and research performing individuals (RESAVER)

As asserted in Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to the realisation, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organisation and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality. Nevertheless, social security in most member states is under pressure and mobile employees, researchers in particular, experience additional obstacles in accumulating an adequate amount of pension provisions. Most prominent issues experienced by mobile researchers in relation to the accumulation of occupational pensions (second pillar) are the vesting period, transferability of assets and administrative burden during the accumulation phase and at retirement. Moreover, this action contributes to the implementation of Policy Agenda action 4 on ‘Promoting attractive and sustainable research careers, balanced talent circulation and international, transdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility across the ERA’.

The RESAVER Pension Fund has been created with the ambition to tackle the issues listed above by facilitating free circulation of researchers and removing pension as an obstacle to mobility, which corresponds to the strategic objectives of the Union policy as stipulated in Article 179 TFEU on the establishment of a European Research Area.

The RESAVER Occupational fund became operational in May 2017 and since then the fund has welcomed research organisations from Hungary, Austria, Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, Cyprus, Spain and France. In parallel with geographical expansion, RESAVER should engage in mutually beneficial collaborations with local occupational pension funds for the benefit of mobile employees. In order to answer to the needs of mobile researchers who do not receive occupational pension employee benefits, or receive an insufficient level of contributions, RESAVER should provide a personal pension solution to mobile researchers. In addition, the investment strategy should be fine-tuned continuously in order to correspond to the specific needs of researchers and research performing organisations and should be aligned with the objectives with European Research Area and ERA Policy Agenda.

In this context, the pension fund is expected to perform the following tasks: pension fund management, implementation of additional countries and organisations in the pension fund, provide advice to the board concerning the legal framework, coordinate the development and distribution of a third pillar solution, support the project in ad hoc tasks, contribute to the establishment of partnerships with local pension funds and coordination of investment strategy adjustments, actively engage with relevant stakeholders to create wide support to promote pan-European solutions that benefit researchers in general, and mobile researchers in particular.

Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties such as the RESAVER Consortium. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60.000.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposals according to Article 195(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 24(3)(b) of the Horizon Europe Regulation. The RESAVER Pension Fund OFP has a proven record of working in a partnership mode with the European Commission.

Procedure: The evaluation committee will be composed fully by representatives of EU institutions.

Legal entities:

'RESAVER Pension Fund OFP' (Retirement Savings Vehicle for European Research Institutions), 22, Rue de Pascale, 1040 Brussels. Belgium

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: Q3 2023

Indicative budget: EUR 2.50 million from the 2023 budget

5. European Union Contest for early-career researchers

In order to attract more early-career researchers to a career in science and promote the opportunities not only in academia, but also industry and starting up own business, a special event for early-career researchers had been piloted as part of Leiden 2022 European City of Science. The event had a clear European dimension, and the next edition planned to take place in Katowice should build on the work already done as part of Leiden 2022 European City of Science.

The event will bring together at least 100 early career researchers from across the European Union, researchers who should be gender-balanced, and as much as possible also reflect geographical and other diversity characteristics, divided in small teams, and mentors from academia, industry and SMEs in a competition to find scientific solutions to a set of challenges. Specific challenges are determined through a consultation with stakeholders in that particular field and are based on broader policy priorities. This action supports ERA Policy Agenda action 14, Bringing science closer to citizens.

This action allows for the provision of financial support to third parties in the form of prizes. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposals according to Article 195(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 24(3)(b) of the Horizon Europe Regulation. The University of Silesia in Katowice has a proven record of working in a partnership mode with the European Commission, and in promoting citizen science activities, thus attracting high levels of international media attention. In addition, the following legal entity may participate as associated partner:

- Miasto Katowice (City of Katowice), ul. Młyńska 4, 40-098 Katowice, Poland.

Procedure: The evaluation committee will be composed fully by representatives of EU institutions.

Legal entities:

University of Silesia in Katowice, 12 Bankowa Street, 40-007 Katowice, Poland

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: Q3 2023

Indicative budget: EUR 0.50 million from the 2023 budget

6. European Union Contest for Young Scientists (EUCYS) 2024

The European Union Contest for Young Scientists is a science competition for 14- to 20-year-olds. It brings together first prize winners of national science contests for pre-Higher Education Institution school science projects to compete for prizes and awards. The contestants are judged by a jury of eminent scientists selected by the European Commission. The jury award 1st, 2nd and 3rd monetary prizes as well as other prestigious prizes donated to the contest by international research organisations and other similar bodies. The EU Contest takes place each year in a different location. This Contest provides additional stimulus to young people who have already demonstrated that they are applying science to solve problems. Many go on to become successful scientists. It attracts a considerable level of co-funding in the host country, and high levels of international media attention. The organisation of the contest is based on the General Guidelines on the organisation of the European Union Contest for Young Scientists and its Annex 1 – Rules of the contest. These are updated annually by the European Commission¹⁴⁶. This action supports ERA Policy Agenda action 14, Bringing science closer to citizens.

This action allows for the provision of financial support to third parties in the form of prizes. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposals according to Article 195(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 24(3)(b) of the Horizon Europe Regulation. The University of Silesia in Katowice has a proven record of working in a partnership mode with the European Commission. In addition, the following legal entities may participate as associated partners:

- Miasto Katowice (City of Katowice), ul. Młyńska 4, 40-098 Katowice, Poland;
- Krajowy Fundusz na rzecz Dzieci (Polish Children's Fund), ul. Pasteura 7, 02-093 Warszawa, Poland.

Procedure: The evaluation committee will be composed fully by representatives of EU institutions.

¹⁴⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/eucys_en.

Legal entities:

University of Silesia in Katowice, 12 Bankowa Street, 40-007 Katowice, Poland

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: Q1 2024

Indicative budget: EUR 1.00 million from the 2024 budget

7. Implementation of COST actions - Specific Grant under Framework Partnership Agreement

The European Commission funds almost the entire programme under a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) with underlying Specific Grant Agreements (SGAs). In the FPA and the SGAs the beneficiary COST Association commits to a mandatory conditionality to spend at least 50% of the budget at the benefit of researchers from Widening countries and to run 80% of the activities with a significant widening dimension. This specific grant agreement covers the expenditures for a duration of two years. The primary purpose of this grant is the implementation of the COST networking actions. Other services may be implemented as far as complementary and appropriate.

COST will reinforce and intensify its services and value adding activities to foster the career development of young researchers by dedicated activities such as COST Academy, leadership roles in COST networks, cross-cutting actions and potentially new initiatives in line with the general objectives and rules of the COST Framework. In particular, COST will update the training catalogue with new elements about ERA priorities, upskilling researchers to meet ERA policy objectives, and regularly communicate ERA policy developments to the COST scientific community in collaboration with the EC. This will be followed up by dedicated KPIs still to be defined.

The personnel costs operations incurred by the COST Association as the implementing structure are eligible as direct cost up to a maximum of 14,7 million Euro as far as they are necessary for the implementation of the COST networking actions and related other support activities. For the same purpose cost for other goods and services and subcontracting are eligible up to a cumulated maximum of 2,3 million Euro. COST networking actions will be implemented by third party grant holders using financial support to third parties.

The beneficiary may provide financial support to third parties in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party must be necessary to meet the objectives

of the SGA and will be fixed in the grant agreement in line with the COST Vademecum. It will be used for the implementation of networking tools defined in a closed list that is fixed in the description of the action.

The COST Association will organise competitive open calls and an independent evaluation and selection procedure according to its own rules in agreement with the European Commission. At proposal stage at least 50% of the participants must be located in Widening countries.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposals according to Article 195(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 24(3)(b) of the Horizon Europe Regulation

Legal entities:

COST Association, Avenue du Boulevard - Bolwerklaan 21, 1210 Brussels

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: Q2 2024

Indicative budget: EUR 120.00 million from the 2024 budget

8. Hungarian Presidency conferences with a European regional dimension - WIRE 2024

A two-day conference (WIRE) will be organised in 2024, under the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the EU. WIRE - The Week of Innovative Regions in Europe is the main European policy forum for innovation and regional development. The event will gather actors active in the innovation and education ecosystem with the aim of improving science-based competitiveness.

The conference will debate knowledge based regional development and will offer potential solutions of streamlining resources aimed for this. Representatives of education organizations, research organizations, start-ups, clusters, policy makers and other related interested parties will exchange views and best practices that could lead to a higher impact of innovation across users and society at large. Best practices, trends and visions will be considered.

Legal entities:

National Research, Development and Innovation Office, 1077 Budapest, Kéthly Anna tér 1, Hungary

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: Q1/2024

Indicative budget: EUR 0.25 million from the 2024 budget

9. Support to Retirement Savings Vehicle for European Research Institutions and research performing individuals (RESAVER) – 2025

As asserted in Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to the realisation, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organisation and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality. Nevertheless, social security in most member states is under pressure and mobile employees, researchers in particular, experience additional obstacles in accumulating an adequate amount of pension provisions. Most prominent issues experienced by mobile researchers in relation to the accumulation of occupational pensions (second pillar) are the vesting period, transferability of assets and administrative burden during the accumulation phase and at retirement.

The RESAVER Pension Fund has been created with the ambition to tackle the issues listed above by facilitating free circulation of researchers and removing pension as an obstacle to mobility, which corresponds to the strategic objectives of the Union policy as stipulated in Article 179 TFEU on the establishment of a European Research Area.

The RESAVER Occupational fund became operational in May 2017. Since then the fund has welcomed research organisations from Hungary, Austria, Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, Cyprus, Spain and France, making it already the occupational pension fund in the EU with the widest geographical coverage. In parallel with geographical expansion, RESAVER should engage in mutually beneficial collaborations with local occupational pension funds for the benefit of mobile employees. In order to answer to the needs of mobile researchers who do not receive occupational pension employee benefits, or receive an insufficient level of contributions, RESAVER should investigate providing a personal pension solution to mobile researchers. In addition, the investment strategy should be fine-tuned continuously in order to correspond to the specific needs of researchers and research performing organisations and should be aligned with the objectives of the European Research Area and the sustainable finance policy of the European Union. This action contributes to the implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda (2022-2024) action 4 – Promoting attractive and sustainable research

careers, balanced talent circulation and international, transdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility across the ERA.

In this context, the pension fund is expected to perform the following tasks: pension fund management, implementation of additional countries and organisations into the pension fund, communication and promotion activities, improve financial literacy, investigate the development and/or distribution of a third pillar solution, support the project in ad hoc tasks, contribute to the establishment of partnerships with local pension funds and coordination of investment strategy adjustments, actively engage with relevant stakeholders to create wide support to promote pan-European solutions that benefit researchers in general, and mobile researchers in particular.

Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties such as the RESAVER Consortium. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60.000.

Subcontracting is not restricted to a limited part of the action.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposals according to Article 195(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 24(3)(b) of the Horizon Europe Regulation. The RESAVER Pension Fund OFP has a proven record of working in a partnership mode with the European Commission.

Procedure: The evaluation committee will be composed fully by representatives of EU institutions.

Legal entities:

RESAVER Pension Fund OFP (Retirement Savings Vehicle for European Research Institutions), 10, Boulevard de l'Empereur, 1000 Brussels. Belgium

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: Q1 2025

Indicative budget: EUR 5.00 million from the 2025 budget

10. European Union Contest for Young Scientists (EUCYS) 2025

The European Union Contest for Young Scientists is a science competition for 14- to 20-year-olds. It brings together first prize winners of national science contests for pre-Higher

Education Institution school science projects to compete for prizes and awards. The contestants are judged by a jury of eminent scientists selected by the European Commission. The jury award 1st, 2nd and 3rd monetary prizes as well as other prestigious prizes donated to the contest by international research organisations and other similar bodies. The EU Contest takes place each year in a different location. This Contest provides additional stimulus to young people who have already demonstrated that they are applying science to solve problems. Many go on to become successful scientists. It attracts a considerable level of co-funding in the host country, and high levels of international media attention. The organisation of the contest is based on the General Guidelines on the organisation of the European Union Contest for Young Scientists and its Annex 1 – Rules of the contest. These are updated annually by the European Commission¹⁴⁷.

This action supports ERA Policy Agenda (2022-2024) action 14 – Bring science closer to citizens.

This action allows for the provision of financial support to third parties in the form of prizes. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Subcontracting is not restricted to a limited part of the action.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposals according to Article 195(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 24(3)(b) of the Horizon Europe Regulation.

Procedure: The evaluation committee will be composed fully by representatives of EU institutions.

Legal entities:

National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, Valņu iela 2, Rīga, LV-1050, Latvia

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: Q1 2025

Indicative budget: EUR 1.00 million from the 2025 budget

11. Danish Presidency Conference on Reforming Research Assessment

Expected outcomes: The event is expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

¹⁴⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/eucys_en.

- Progress on the implementation of ERA Policy Agenda action 3 for “*Advance towards reforming the assessment system for research, researchers and institutions to improve their quality, performance and impact*” and of the work undertaken by the signatories of the Agreement for Reforming Research Assessment, which signatories form the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA).
- Raised awareness among the scientific community and policy makers about the ERA Policy Agenda action on reforming research assessment, including the expected roles of different types of R&I actors.
- Drawing up a more coherent map of how to move ahead, using some first CoARA outcomes (expected in the fall 2025) as a stepping stone.
- Stimulating participation of the national/regional evaluation agencies and of the national research funders in the ERA Action, and providing a platform for exchanges with the CoARA members.
- Exchanging information on the design, piloting and implementation of reformed research assessment criteria, tools and processes.
- Highlighting the need for a global level playing field for R&I when it comes to research assessment principles.
- Assessing if there is a need for renewed political impetus or EU support measures.

Expected Impact: The proposal should set out a credible pathway to contributing to the impact of ERA Activity 3: “*Advance towards reforming the assessment system for research, researchers and institutions to improve their quality, performance and impact*” and of the Agreement vision that research assessment recognizes the diverse outputs, practices and activities that maximise the quality and impact of research. Furthermore, the event must help promote alignment at a global level of the principles for research assessment and explore strategic and practical tools to diffuse the work of CoARA and measure the implementation of reforms to research assessment.

Scope: In today’s knowledge economies, universities are expected to translate and disseminate research and innovation broadly, contributing to growth, competitiveness, better regulation, and quality of life. To stimulate the broader impact and uptake of research-based products and advice, incentives and metrics need to be aligned. At this conference, the organisers together with the Danish Presidency and the European Commission will address the need for reforming research assessment, present progress on CoARA, and highlight drivers of change in the broader ecosystem of science, innovation, and technology.

Specific conditions:

Procedure: The evaluation committee will be fully composed by representatives of EU institutions.

Legal entities:

Aalborg University, Fredrik Bajers Vej 7K, 9220 Aalborg East, Denmark

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: Q1 2025

Indicative budget: EUR 0.25 million from the 2025 budget

EXPERT CONTRACT ACTIONS

1. Use of individual experts in support of the new ERA's objectives

This action will support the provision of independent expertise to improve the evidence base and collect advice on various aspects related to the Reforming and Enhancing the European Union Research and Innovation System and the revitalised European Research Area. Individual experts will work in the following domains:

- Experts to contribute to monitoring of progress of the realisation of ERA's objectives;
- Experts on Human Resources and researchers' careers, experts on skills, experts on services for researchers such as those of the EURAXESS services network including the Charter & Code and HRS4R assessment process, social security and remuneration experts, experts in legal matters related to research careers and employment-related aspects, and experts in legal matters related to cross-border institutional cooperation, notably higher education institutions and public research organisations;
- Experts to contribute to the analysis of the expected impacts of the ERA Policy Agenda actions, to the development of these actions, and to the analysis of potential barriers.

The ERA Scoreboard will provide internationally comparable quantitative data and indicators to monitor progress on the realisation of the new ERA at EU and national level, revise priorities and actions in the ERA Roadmap and provide evidence and analysis for the European Semester. The Scoreboard will be issued on an annual basis.

For the European Framework for Research Careers and all areas linked to it, including reinforcing the human resources and skills dimensions in RPOs, an encompassing approach covering multiple expertise is expected to enable, among others, the current EURAXESS, HRS4R and RESAVER as well as any initiative covered by the Framework for Research

Careers, to tap into the competences and the resources of a single expert pool, thus avoiding unnecessary multiplication of roles and dispersion of financial and organisational resources. In addition, experts in cross-border institutional cooperation and mobility of R&I talents should allow gathering evidence and advice to facilitate cross-border cooperation between higher education institutions and between higher education institutions and other actors of the ecosystem, as well as facilitate circulation of talents.

A special allowance of EUR 450/day will be paid to the experts appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest.

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

Indicative timetable: Q3 2023-Q1 2025

Indicative budget: EUR 0.68 million from the 2023 budget and EUR 0.58 million from the 2024 budget and EUR 0.60 million from the 2025 budget

2. External expertise for ad hoc tasks related to the implementation of the HE Ethics Appraisal

This action will support the use of independent experts to advise on or assist with the implementation of the Horizon Europe Ethics Appraisal scheme in view of ensuring and maintaining its quality and effectiveness.

Since the above tasks require specialised knowledge in research ethics/integrity and the related national and European legal framework (e.g., Data protection and privacy, Informed Consent, Artificial Intelligence and Emerging technologies, Benefit sharing, etc.) a special allowance of EUR 450/day will be paid to the experts appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest.

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

Indicative timetable: Q2 2023-Q1 2025

Indicative budget: EUR 0.10 million from the 2023 budget and EUR 0.10 million from the 2024 budget and EUR 0.10 million from the 2025 budget

3. External expertise for evaluation and monitoring of Widening and ERA actions

This action will support the use of appointed independent experts for the evaluation and monitoring of actions (grant agreement, grant decision, public procurement actions, financial instruments, evaluation) funded under Horizon Europe and previous Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation and where appropriate, include ethics checks as well as compliance checks regarding the Gender Equality Plan eligibility criterion. A special

allowance of EUR 450/day will be paid to the experts appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest.

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

Indicative timetable: Q1 2023-Q1 2025

Indicative budget: EUR 0.65 million from the 2023 budget and EUR 0.45 million from the 2024 budget and EUR 0.65 million from the 2025 budget

4. Monitoring experts for Horizon 2020 legacy

This action is for financing external experts in charge of reviewing legacy projects from Horizon 2020 related to SEWP and Swafs. A special allowance of EUR 450/day will be paid to the experts appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest.

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

Indicative timetable: Q1 2023 to Q4 2024

Indicative budget: EUR 0.40 million from the 2023 budget and EUR 0.25 million from the 2024 budget

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

1. Development of the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) and the Regional Innovation Scoreboard (RIS)

Scope

This action will assure the continuation and further development of the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) which is already produced annually for almost two decades, as well as of the biennial Regional Innovation Scoreboard (RIS). The scoreboards provide European, national and regional policy-makers, innovation practitioners and all interested public with a solid, European Union-wide analytical tool to help measure, monitor, and benchmark the innovation performance of the European Union (EU), individual Member States and their regions as well as Associated Countries and other key international economic partners. The scoreboards identify the relative strengths and weaknesses of the research and innovation systems, and help the Member States to assess areas in which they need to concentrate their efforts in order to boost their innovation performance.

In addition, the action will explore further methodological advancements and R&I related topics not yet addressed to strengthen the analytical capacity of the tool and increase its robustness, usability and outreach.

The outcomes of the project are expected to provide a solid evidence base for tailored innovation policies aiming at supporting competitiveness, value creation, employment and prosperity in the European Union.

Expected outcomes

The services under this action cover the production of the EIS annually and of the RIS every two years for the period 2024-2027, as well as their underlying data and relating documents, such as the methodology report and the country profiles. The services will also cover methodological advancements of the analytical frameworks and the overall methodology, and exploratory research studies to address new challenges and priorities related to the innovation systems, not covered by the scoreboards.

Finally, the services will cover communication and dissemination activities, which will increase the uptake and visibility of the tools, including the maintenance, update and further development of the interactive tool, which allows customised visual comparisons of the innovation performance between countries and regions

A new framework contract will be concluded for a duration of 4 years, covering the EIS 2024 – 2027 including the above-described services and reports with an estimated budget ceiling of EUR 2 million over the whole duration of the framework contract.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q1 2023

Indicative budget: EUR 0.80 million from the 2023 budget

2. EU data for R&I policy

The initiative allows Member States and the European Commission to share microdata related to R&I projects, and the progressive integration of R&I project data with other sources of related data, are fundamental to strengthen ERA and reinforce our research and innovation systems by informing better evidence-based policy making. The main tasks are: (1) Data sharing and interoperability of different sources of competitive or non-competitive Research and Innovation funding in the European Union, and integration with relevant external data sources; (2) Digital enabling infrastructure; (3) Data analysis and visualisation tools (The EU Dashboard); (4) Capacity building. These activities will be complemented with other data activities aimed at acquiring, interlinking and visualising R&I related data.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q1 2023

Indicative budget: EUR 1.00 million from the 2023 budget and EUR 1.00 million from the 2024 budget

3. Development, maintenance and promotion of the ERA Talent Platform, including EURAXESS and associated websites and tools + IS Coordinators

The ERA Talent Platform, including EURAXESS is one of the key initiatives enhancing researcher careers and, as such, is one of the operational instruments of the European Research Area (ERA). It particularly contributes to removing the barriers to mobility and making the European Union more attractive to researchers. As an ERA implementation measure, and an important instrument under ERA Policy Agenda (2022-2024) action 4, the EURAXESS portal and instruments under its umbrella are expanded towards a comprehensive recruitment, career development and social networking web-platform, dedicated to researchers and institutions seeking for R&I talent or willing to improve their institutional talent management policies and practices.

This action will build on the work under the previous Work Programme ‘Science with and for Society’, in particular the Study on ERA Priority 3 and ERA TOP IV Extension, as well as on the current Work Programme, more specifically the action on the EURAXESS.

The portal is supporting institutional transformations on recruitment, working conditions and career development of researchers, and it is aligned to the reviewed European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, as well as the updated Skills Agenda. It is also interoperable with other European websites and platforms such as EURES and the new Europass, and has adopted new functionalities required in line with the European Skills, Competences Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO), the enhanced framework of research careers, etc. The improved EURAXESS portal will be called ERA Talent platform.

Different activities will be undertaken to increase the capacity and ensure the user-friendliness of the EURAXESS portal and associated websites and tools (among which EURAXESS, HRS4R, RESAVER). They also include technical maintenance, architectural developments, and graphical and functional enhancements related to the most recent political developments. These activities will also encompass services by external information system providers who, on the basis of inputs provided by the responsible Commission services, guarantee the smooth running of the EURAXESS portal and associated websites and tools.

The promotion activities will increase awareness about the ERA and its priorities. The promotion activities, among which stakeholder dialogues, events, workshops or conferences, such as the EURAXESS Conference, the HRS4R Info days, or the HR Strategy Mutual Learning seminars, will also address topics concerning the barriers to the mobility of researchers across borders, sectors and disciplines, with a focus on creating and stimulating conditions for open, transparent and merit-based recruitment, as well as attractive career options for researchers across the European Union and beyond.

The newly designed EURAXESS website should be seen as an interface that facilitates matching between researchers and employers, candidates and jobs, beneficiaries and benefits, research and funding. The action will also further develop activities to sections of the website and the instruments under its umbrella, *inter alia* additional modules for RESAVER and the upgrade of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) e-tool based on the Charter and Code future revisions and developments. The EURAXESS is also expected to integrate an additional online instrument - a portal gathering EU and national programmes and schemes for intersectoral mobility, which should provide easy access for individuals who want to engage in intersectoral mobility or want to be employed as intermediate between the academic and non-academic sector, notably businesses.

The newly designed website will improve automatised data gathering in order to allow the Commission to produce high quality data and evidence in support of future ERA policy developments, relevant legislation and actions.

This action requires collaboration with a large group of stakeholders, including EURAXESS Bridgehead Organisations/National Coordinators, national portal administrators, EURAXESS Worldwide and other relevant stakeholders. Activities should also include services by external information system provider(s) who, on the basis of inputs provided by the responsible Commission services, guarantee the smooth running of the platform.

Web communication and online promotion activities with stakeholders related to the rollout of the newly designed platform and the portals and tools under its umbrella should also be foreseen as part of this action.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q4 2023 and Q2 2025

Indicative budget: EUR 2.50 million from the 2023 budget and EUR 1.00 million from the 2025 budget

4. EURAXESS Worldwide - Implementation 2024-2026

The new ERA Communication outlines that EURAXESS services, network and portals will be broadened into an online one-stop shop with improved structure and governance. The Council Conclusions on the Future of the ERA calls on the Commission and Member States to develop EURAXESS to foster “inclusiveness” within the ERA to address existing barriers to unbalanced mobility pattern by supporting researchers in their career development within the ERA, connecting researchers and institutions and improving employability and talent absorption and mobility schemes.

The specific contracts implementing the EURAXESS WORLDWIDE Framework Contract cover the continued animation of the network and guarantee the continuity of the operations

of the Euraxess Worldwide Hubs in the different locations around the world, allowing for the extension of the activities to new countries and tasks as appropriate.

This action aims to complement the European dimension of EURAXESS with an additional dimension and module addressing international and European researchers living and working outside of the European Union. It is expected to consist of the development of a portfolio of support services and associated tools, designed to create transnational ties with researchers and scientific communities within the global R&I ecosystem.

This action will build on the EURAXESS Worldwide structure of international hubs and it is expected to be a physical and virtual networking, knowledge-sharing and advocacy platform of services and tools. It will serve as a diplomacy asset and it will promote European R&I instruments, and attract international talents to the European Union and European researchers back home.

This action should operate in solid alignment with the European dimension of EURAXESS. Collaboration is foreseen between EURAXESS Worldwide international hubs and EURAXESS Bridgehead Organisations, National Coordinators and centres across the European Union. The action is expected to bridge researchers working outside of the European Union to their peers working inside the European Union, activate scientific communities and connect them with business and professional associations, as well as R&I employers and funders.

The international dimension of EURAXESS should also be fostered through networking events, information sessions or training, as well as online instruments and tools, with a mission, inter alia to:

- Promote the European values and R&I landscape as a favourable environment for excellent research;
- Facilitate knowledge and skills transfer, scientific collaboration and recruiting processes, while lifting obstacles to return;
- Strengthen S&T links with home countries through policy feedback tools and dialogues, as well as;
- Improve data to a better understanding of European researchers living and working outside of the European Union, as well as on mobility and research careers policy in general;
- Support international researchers and innovators to exploit European possibilities to create future markets, leverage private finance and scale up their businesses by connecting them with regional and national innovation actors.

EURAXESS WORLDWIDE officers are located in the following countries and regions: Africa, ASEAN, Australia & New Zealand, China, India, Japan, North America, South Korea, and Latin America.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q3 2023, Q4 2024 and Q1 2025

Indicative budget: EUR 2.00 million from the 2023 budget and EUR 2.00 million from the 2024 budget and EUR 2.00 million from the 2025 budget

5. Monitoring gender equality in Research and Innovation - Development, implementation and dissemination of indicators (She Figures)

Gender equality as a priority has been strengthened progressively in the EU. In Research and Innovation (R&I), there is a need to better capture progress made towards the individual European Research Area (ERA) priorities and inform evidence-based policy-making. In cooperation with the Member States, the European Commission will continue collecting comparable sex and/or gender disaggregated data and monitoring, with appropriate indicators, the implementation of gender policies and actions at different levels - institutional, national, EU and, where available, world level. The study will update the collection of data and propose new indicators to show the progress towards gender equality in R&I, following the chronological journey of researchers from graduating from doctoral studies to participating in the labour market and acquiring decision-making roles, while exploring differences in women's and men's working conditions and research and innovation output.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q3 2024

Indicative budget: EUR 0.50 million from the 2024 budget

6. Eurobarometer on European citizens' knowledge and attitudes towards science and technology

Fostering science and innovation is a central priority for the European Union (EU). EU support for research and innovation (R&I) aims to improve the quality and quantity of research and innovation conducted, ensure that the processes and outcomes of research and innovation align with the needs, values and expectations of society, and that it addresses the many pressing issues that face us as individuals, as society, and as a planet.

Increasing expectations are placed on R&I to develop social and technological solutions to pressing problems, for instance in the fields of public health, climate change and biodiversity loss, as R&I undergoes a transformation of its modus operandi towards open and responsible research and innovation. Yet ethical, research integrity, and other issues continue to damage the standing of science and scientific practice, innovations continue to be developed that are questioned or even rejected by society, and scientific knowledge – and support for research

and innovation – is highly unequally distributed across the European Union and its population.

Up-to-date and robust evidence is needed to understand societal trends, improve interactions and the relationship between science and society, and to inform the continued development of policy responses at different levels of governance.

This Eurobarometer will provide a snapshot of European citizens' knowledge and attitudes towards science and technology, ensuring time-series comparisons to important sets of questions in previous Eurobarometers. In addition, it will capture data needed for the continued monitoring of the evolution and benefits of open and responsible research and innovation, and the relationship between science and society more generally. Finally, it may focus on specific aspects that have not been covered or examined in detail in recent or previous exercises.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q3 2024

Indicative budget: EUR 1.50 million from the 2024 budget

7. Studies and communication

Activities should support the Pact for Research and Innovation and the implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda and may include studies, support and communication activities that are needed to analyse and enhance the EU R&I environment, for example

- Collection of project feedback, in particular with respect to key exploitable results;
- Organisational support for consulting the R&I stakeholders community on R&I needs;
- Production and dissemination of communication material and the organisation of events related the ERA, synergies with the EEA, European R&I agendas and Horizon Europe;
- Support to Member States ensuring coherent communication activities on the implementation of the ERA policy agenda across target groups;
- Analysis of the expected impacts of the ERA Policy Agenda actions, and of potential barriers to their development.

The limited numbers of contracts may be implemented on the basis of framework contracts, in order to further ensure that the Commission is provided with appropriate and timely analyses, which in turn should facilitate the proper integration of policy studies into the preparation of new policy initiatives.

Cooperation with the presidencies of the Council of the European Union and stakeholders is envisaged and could include direct support to ERA-related presidency events.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q3 2023-Q1 2025

Indicative budget: EUR 1.00 million from the 2023 budget and EUR 1.00 million from the 2024 budget and EUR 1.00 million from the 2025 budget

8. Implementation of the ERA Monitoring Mechanism

The Council Conclusions on the Future Governance of the European Research Area (ERA) calls on the Commission and Member States to develop a new **ERA online policy platform** with the aim to have a consistent, robust and quality tested national reporting system, taking into account current instruments. Furthermore, the Council recommendation on a Pact for Research and Innovation in the European Union (Pact for R&I), defines that the platform should inform on (i) the implementation of the ERA policy agenda at Union and national level; and on (ii) other relevant investments, reforms and activities supporting the principles and ERA priority areas set out in the Pact for R&I. The Commission and the Member States should share information through the ERA policy online platform on their current and planned policies and programmes that contribute to implementing the ERA policy agenda, and more broadly contribute to the principles and priorities set out by the Pact for R&I. In that sense, the online platform could serve as a kind of “hub” for sharing information around the new ERA and ease exchange between all actors. The action supports the ERA Policy Agenda (2022-2024) action 19 – Establish an efficient and effective ERA monitoring mechanism.

Considering this, the online policy platform should be structured around the various elements that ensure the future monitoring of and reporting on the ERA implementation, including a scoreboard and dashboard and a tool for reporting from the Member States and the Commission on the implementation of the ERA policy agenda (e.g., annual reports to the Member States). Moreover, it should provide for easy access to and information on the priorities areas of the Pact for R&I, the ERA policy agenda, including its list of joint actions and their state of implementation, and on Member States. A clear structure should ensure compatibility and comparability of information per country and per action.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q1 2024

Indicative budget: EUR 1.00 million from the 2024 budget

9. EURAXESS Worldwide - Framework contract 2024-2027

The Directorate-General for Research and Innovation launched the EURAXESS Worldwide initiative (formerly called ERA Link) in 2006 with the aim of creating a networking of European researchers abroad giving them a virtual connection to the European Union and thus

maintaining them as a European resource even if they are not physically present in the European Union. This action was initially launched in the United States (2006), then in Japan (2008) and China (2009). EURAXESS WORLDWIDE officers are currently located in the following countries and regions: Africa, ASEAN, Australia and New Zealand, China, India, Japan, North America, South Korea, and Latin America. New countries could be opened during the implementation phase of the framework contract. The new framework contract will cover more countries or hubs during the contractual period.

EURAXESS is an initiative of the European Research Area (ERA) strategy that addresses barriers to the mobility of researchers and seeks to enhance scientific collaboration between the European Union and the rest of the world. The initiative strives to become the global support and career development tool for European and international researchers, not only for their mobility experience inside and outside the European Union, but also for their social networking with researchers from all over the world. Designed as a comprehensive toolset it provides access to a complete range of information and supports services.

The objective of the international arm of the EURAXESS initiative is to link the European Union to the rest of the world and to promote international collaboration of researchers, mobility and career development. Through their websites, monthly newsletters and activities the EURAXESS WORLDWIDE country representatives maintain the link between the European Union and the world. The aim is to promote the attractiveness of the European Union to undertake research both European and non-European researchers outside of the European Union.

This framework contract will guarantee the continuity of the operations of the network for the period 2024-2027 in the different destinations and allow the extension of the activities to new countries and tasks. Its estimated budget is EUR 9.5 million.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q2 2023

10. Administrative management of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)

The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)¹⁴⁸ is the implementation mechanism of the European Charter for Researchers¹⁴⁹, and is key to the career development of researchers as well as to generating, transferring, sharing and disseminating knowledge about Human Resources best practices. HRS4R supports the ERA Policy Agenda (2022-2024) action 4 by contributing to the development of an attractive, open, and sustainable

¹⁴⁸ HR Excellence in Research Award: <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/hrs4r>.

¹⁴⁹ Charter for Researchers, annexed to the Council recommendation C/2023/1640 of 18 December 2023 on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe (OJ C, C/2023/1640, 29.12.2023), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:C_202301640.

European labour market for researchers, enhancing the commitment of research organisations' leadership towards human resources as well as improving the researcher-employer relationship.

The HRS4R is a structured and monitored auditing mechanism centred on a continuous assessment in three-year cycles for recognising with the "HR Excellence in Research Award" the institutions that make progress in aligning their human resources policies to the 40 principles of the Charter for Researchers, based on a customised action plan/HR strategy.

To date, over 700 institutions from 39 EU and associated countries have obtained the award and every year several new institutions enter the process.

The contractor will be responsible, in collaboration with the Commission, the applicant institutions and the experts, for organising the continuous assessment of applications, including the organisation of desk-based assessments and site visits, the selection of experts, the administrative validation of experts' reports and institutions' submissions, as well as managing the communication with applicants, promoting the award and providing feedback to the Commission for policy purposes.

A framework contract will be set up for a total duration of 4 years, covering the above-described services, with an estimated budget ceiling of EUR 7 million over the whole duration of the framework contract.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q3 2024

Indicative budget: EUR 3.00 million from the 2024 budget

11. Implementation of the Horizon Policy Support Facility

In order to make research and innovation deliver on their full potential to be the key drivers of economic growth and of the transition towards a sustainable society, ambitious policy reforms of national R&I systems are necessary. Through the Policy Support Facility (PSF), the Commission assists Member States and countries associated to Horizon Europe in developing and implementing those reforms. It offers, on a voluntary basis, high-level expertise and tailor-made advice to national public authorities. An overview of past activities can be found on a dedicated webpage¹⁵⁰. The PSF has demonstrated that it serves as an enabler for concrete policy changes.

This action supports the ERA Policy Agenda (2022-2024) action 20 – Support to the prioritisation, coordination and direction of R&I investments and reforms.

Form of Funding: Procurement

¹⁵⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/research-and-innovation/en/statistics/policy-support-facility>

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q1 2024 and Q1 2025

Indicative budget: EUR 1.50 million from the 2024 budget and EUR 1.50 million from the 2025 budget

12. Study on the R&I measures in the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)

The Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) is the core instrument of NextGenerationEU. It was established in February 2021 to provide large-scale financial support to Member States (EUR 338bn in grants and EUR 385.8bn in loans) in the context of the Covid-19 crisis. The RRF is a performance-based instrument and provides support for both investments and reforms. Member States have shown a strong commitment to R&I in their national Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRPs). All approved RRP include measures supporting R&I (A total of 333 measures and EUR 47.4 billion in investment). This procurement will focus on the impacts and functioning of the R&I measures included in the RRP and will assess the contribution of these measures to (1) achieving key EU objectives (such as fostering the twin transition, strengthening territorial cohesion and promoting gender equality); (2) advancing the ERA Policy Agenda and the New European Innovation Agenda; (3) creating synergies between the RRF and other R&I relevant European funds (notably Horizon Europe). It will also take into account the differences in the design of the RRF in comparison to other EU programmes and how this may affect its ability to deliver impact. This learning-oriented assessment will help draw initial conclusions that could be relevant for the future design of the new R&I programmes.

This action supports the ERA Policy Agenda (2022-2024) action 20 – Support to the prioritisation, coordination and direction of R&I investments and reforms.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q2-Q3 2024

Indicative budget: EUR 0.35 million from the 2024 budget

INDIRECT MANAGEMENT

1. Research Careers Observatory – contribution agreement with OECD

To monitor the implementation of the European Framework for Research Careers and to provide evidence on the effectiveness of measures aiming at balanced talent circulation and strengthening research careers, Directorate-General Research and Innovation is establishing a Research Careers Observatory, to enable the tracking of researchers in terms of mobility, careers, skills, and working conditions. Anticipated outcomes are the following: ability to monitor the implementation of the Framework for Research Careers and system reform; shared understanding on support data needs of Member States and research performing

organisations; increased attractiveness of European research performing organisations for the best talents through accessible data.

The objective of this action is to put in place a European Research Careers Observatory that combines the best of the current EU data tools and capacities in one single place, in addition to collecting new data, while further enhancing their use and relevance for policy-makers, organisations, and researchers. In collaboration with the European Commission, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) will be responsible for the design, development and maintenance of the database, managing the data collection and dissemination process. The aim is also to fill the gaps in data related to certain focus areas of the Framework, such as digital and green skills, in order to provide relevant evidence for policy making at European and national level in a global context.

Conceptually, the observatory is proposed to monitor three dimensions of research careers: (i) skills and training, (ii) research jobs, and (iii) mobility and exchange. The Observatory will be accessible via the ERA Talent Platform / EURAXESS. The work should provide indicators on the attractiveness across the EU territory for research careers and talents, taking into account national schemes for observatory and monitoring. It should enable real-time monitoring of national systems of remuneration and employment conditions, social security policies, portability of grants and pensions, as well as research mobility patterns of researchers, both geographically and intersectoral mobility, paying particular attention to gender and intersectional differences in research careers. The agreement with OECD envisages annual reporting to feed the observatory, where feasible, and a duration from 2023 until up to 2028.

Legal entities:

OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2 Rue André Pascal, 75016 Paris, France

Form of Funding: Indirectly managed actions

Type of Action: Indirectly managed action

Indicative timetable: Q1 2023

Indicative budget: EUR 1.50 million from the 2023 budget and EUR 2.20 million from the 2024 budget

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2023-2025
Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area

Budget¹⁵¹

	Budget line(s)	2023 Budget (EUR million)	2024 Budget (EUR million)	2025 Budget (EUR million)
Calls				
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-01		16.00	158.00	
	<i>from 01.020401</i>	<i>16.00</i>	<i>158.00</i>	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02		140.00		
	<i>from 01.020401</i>	<i>140.00</i>		
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-03		54.00		
	<i>from 01.020401</i>	<i>54.00</i>		
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-04		20.00		
	<i>from 01.020401</i>	<i>20.00</i>		
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-05		5.00		
	<i>from 01.020401</i>	<i>5.00</i>		
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-06		40.00	40.00	
	<i>from 01.020401</i>	<i>40.00</i>	<i>40.00</i>	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-07		60.00		
	<i>from 01.020401</i>	<i>60.00</i>		
HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-ACCESS-01				270.00
	<i>from</i>			<i>270.00</i>

¹⁵¹ The budget figures given in this table are rounded to two decimal places. The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2023-2025
Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area

	<i>01.020401</i>			
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-TALENTS-01		50.00	47.00	
	<i>from 01.020401</i>	<i>50.00</i>	<i>47.00</i>	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-TALENTS-02		8.00		
	<i>from 01.020401</i>	<i>8.00</i>		
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-TALENTS-02			8.00	
	<i>from 01.020401</i>		<i>8.00</i>	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-TALENTS-03			40.00	
	<i>from 01.020401</i>		<i>40.00</i>	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-TALENTS-01				8.00
	<i>from 01.020401</i>			<i>8.00</i>
HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01		34.70		
	<i>from 01.020402</i>	<i>34.70</i>		
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01			23.50	
	<i>from 01.020402</i>		<i>23.50</i>	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-02			28.00	
	<i>from 01.020402</i>		<i>28.00</i>	
Other actions				
Prize		0.55	0.55	0.40
	<i>from 01.020402</i>	<i>0.55</i>	<i>0.55</i>	<i>0.40</i>
Grant to identified		6.20	121.25	6.25

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2023-2025
Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area

beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e)	<i>from</i> 01.020401		120.25	
	<i>from</i> 01.020402	6.20	1.00	6.25
Expert contract action		1.83	1.38	1.35
	<i>from</i> 01.020401	0.75	0.60	0.45
	<i>from</i> 01.020402	1.08	0.78	0.90
Public procurement		7.30	11.85	5.50
	<i>from</i> 01.020401		0.03	
	<i>from</i> 01.020402	7.30	11.82	5.50
Indirectly managed action		1.50	2.20	
	<i>from</i> 01.020402	1.50	2.20	
Estimated total budget		445.08	481.73	291.50