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Annex I

Horizon Europe

Work Programme 2026-2027

1. General Introduction



About this work programme

Horizon Europe funds research and innovation (R&I), especially through *work programmes*, which set out funding opportunities for R&I activities¹.

This introduction covers the following parts of Horizon Europe for 2026-2027:

- Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions,
- Research Infrastructures,
- Health,
- Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society,
- Civil Security for Society,
- Digital, Industry and Space,
- Climate, Energy and Mobility,
- Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment,
- European Innovation Ecosystems,
- Widening participation and spreading excellence, and reforming and enhancing the European R&I system,
- EU Missions,
- New European Bauhaus Facility
- Horizontal activities: horizontal calls for R&I in support of the Clean Industrial Deal, on artificial intelligence (AI) in science, on biodiversity and bridging actions towards the next R&I Framework Programme, Horizon Europe 2028-2034.

In addition to the work programme parts listed above, the *general annexes* to this work programme set out the general conditions applicable to calls for proposals under this work programme, such as eligibility rules, details on how to apply and how the Commission evaluates applications.

Getting started

If you are interested in applying for funding through Horizon Europe, you can find all topics that are currently open for applications on the [Funding and Tenders Portal](#), now also accessible via [mobile app](#). To help you navigate the application process, the network of [National Contact Points](#) is available to answer your questions and provide support in your own language.

You can also find out more about the Horizon Europe programme on the [Horizon Europe web page](#).

¹ See [Council Decision \(EU\) 2021/764](#).

Key novelties

Simplification measures

The Commission is committed to making the Horizon Europe work programme even simpler, shorter and more impactful. This work programme introduces several measures aimed at simplifying processes, enhancing transparency and inclusiveness. The key simplification measures in this work programme are set out below.

- **Less prescriptive topic descriptions.** The average length of topic descriptions has been reduced, making these less prescriptive and thereby allowing applicants more flexibility in how they approach the topics. This includes more open topics² introduced across clusters in Pillar II. This also means that the overall **length of the Work Programme 2026-2027 has been reduced** by 30% compared with the Work Programme 2023-2024.
- **Fewer topics.** The number of topics has been reduced by 33% compared with the Work Programme 2023-2024. This streamlining is intended to focus resources on fewer but larger topics, thereby increasing the potential impact. Moreover, the number of topics funding only one project has been decreased by 45%.
- **Increased use of lump-sum funding.** 50% of the call budget of this work programme is implemented through lump sums. This particularly concerns topics intended to result in grants below EUR 10 million. The use of lump sums simplifies financial management and reduces administrative burden for participants.
- **‘Newcomer-friendly’ and SME-friendly topics.** This work programme includes topics that are specifically designed to be newcomer-friendly, encouraging participation by SMEs, start-ups and scale-ups, civil society organisations and small public administrations. These topics can, for instance, use the Fast Track to Research and Innovation Scheme. Similarly, there are more topics that allow for [financial support to third parties](#) than in previous work programmes³.
- **Use of two-stage calls.** The programme includes 41 call topics with two-stage evaluation. These allow applicants to submit a shorter summary proposal and only submit a full proposal if successful at the stage of the short proposal evaluation. Many of these short proposals are evaluated blindly, thanks to anonymised applications, as a way to avoid potential risk of bias. By reducing the submission period for first-stage proposals and simplifying evaluation processes, the time to grant is shortened.

² Open topics are topics for which the expected outcomes or impacts are clearly defined, but the pathways and methods to achieve them remain open-ended. This flexibility allows for diverse approaches and outputs. Open topics are subject to the same evaluation criteria as the other topics.

³ In the implementation of cascade grants, the Commission will take into account the related [recommendations](#) of the European Court of Auditors.

- **Reduced complexity of proposal template.** Standard templates for the most common type of actions have been updated, simplifying the requirements for the impact and implementation sections and reducing the overall page limits.

These measures collectively aim to make the work programme more efficient, accessible and impactful by reducing administrative burdens and promoting inclusivity and innovation.

Horizontal calls

A key novelty in this work programme is the introduction of horizontal calls, which are designed to connect different parts of Horizon Europe in support of key strategic areas. These calls ensure that Horizon Europe is more in tune with the EU's evolving policies by tackling them in a consistent, cross-cluster, multidisciplinary way. By combining efforts and pooling resources, they aim to create critical mass and deliver greater impact. The horizontal calls are built around open, broadly defined topics guided by a shared strategic direction. The topics are intentionally non-prescriptive, giving applicants the flexibility to propose different approaches for achieving the expected outcomes.

R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal

The horizontal call 'R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal', set out in the 'Horizontal Activities' part of this work programme, is designed to implement the EU's commitments under the Clean Industrial Deal through targeted research and innovation. With an indicative budget of EUR 540 million, this call aims to accelerate the market deployment of cutting-edge clean technologies and decarbonised industry solutions, with a focus on both technological excellence and market readiness.

The call takes a bottom-up, industry-led approach, facilitating cross-sectoral integration and market-driven R&I responses. It consists of two large, open topics focusing on: (1) **decarbonisation of energy-intensive industries**; and (2) **clean technologies for climate action**. The focus is on creating 'fit-for-deployment' projects that not only are technologically feasible but also have robust business and market readiness strategies.

As announced in the [Clean Industrial Deal Communication](#), this call fosters synergies between Horizon Europe and the Innovation Fund by ensuring a continuous pipeline of R&I solutions ready for market deployment. Ultimately, the call seeks to accelerate the roll-out of clean tech solutions, boost European competitiveness, mobilise investments and reduce energy prices, thereby contributing significantly to the EU's industrial decarbonisation and clean energy objectives.

AI in Science

The horizontal call 'AI in Science', set out in the 'Horizontal Activities' part of this work programme, is aimed at fostering trustworthy AI solutions to tackle significant societal and industrial challenges. It contributes to the implementation of the 'Resource for AI Science in Europe' (RAISE) pilot, as announced in the [European Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in Science](#). This call supports safe, responsible, ethical and transparent AI applications across key sectors, such as advanced materials, agriculture, environment and food, and is in line with Europe's broader digital transition goals. By embedding these innovations, this work programme seeks to enhance Europe's R&I leadership, thereby having a substantial impact on sustainability, digital innovation and inclusive growth.

With an indicative budget of around EUR 90 million, this call includes open topics on **thematic networks of excellence for AI in science, automated scientific discovery** and **RAISE doctoral networks for AI in science**. These topics are designed to apply across different R&I areas within the work programme, ensuring a cohesive and comprehensive approach to advancing AI science in Europe. Through these initiatives, the call not only supports safe, secure and trustworthy technological advancement but also strengthens Europe's strategic position in the global AI landscape.

In parallel to this horizontal call, at least EUR 867 million is invested in AI in science through the rest of this work programme.

Transformative changes towards a nature-positive economy and society

The horizontal call 'Transformative Change Towards a Nature-Positive Economy and Society', set out in the 'Horizontal Activities' part and introduced under the 2026 amendment to the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2026-2027, reinforces the EU's commitments to biodiversity. While progress has been made, the 10% biodiversity spending target outlined in the Horizon Europe strategic plan 2025-2027 has not yet been fully achieved through earlier work programmes. This call ensures the target is met by funding 11 focused R&I actions that accelerate the transition to sustainability by supporting EU biodiversity objectives.

This initiative is crucial for the EU, as thriving ecosystems underpin economic sustainability, climate resilience and food security. Biodiversity loss is increasingly recognised as a systemic economic and financial risk, affecting productivity, supply chains and financial stability. Integrated policy and research responses are required to deal with the interconnectedness of the pressures and drivers.

Actions in this call aim to strengthen competitiveness, supporting the capacity to sustain long-term productivity, resilience and innovation. They play a strategic role in supporting the transition towards nature-positive economic models, contributing to Europe's long-term competitiveness, economic and societal resilience and strategic autonomy.

By generating cutting-edge knowledge and solutions, it will enable progress towards objectives of the [EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030](#) and the long-term vision of the [8th Environment Action Programme](#), while helping shape future biodiversity policies. Among others, the call supports the implementation of the [EU Nature Restoration Regulation](#), providing the scientific foundation needed to restore degraded ecosystems, aligning notably with the vision for Agriculture and Food, the Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture towards 2040, as well as with the environmental objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy and the Strategy for a Competitive and Sustainable EU Bioeconomy. It also supports the Clean Industrial Deal, the [European Water Resilience Strategy](#), and the [Communication on Integrated Wildfire Risk Management](#). Moreover, it supports the European [Ocean Pact](#) and EU [OceanEye](#) initiative with a dedicated action to strengthen the global ocean in-situ observing system that is expected to significantly improve biodiversity in-situ observation parameters.

With an indicative budget of around EUR 230 million, this call includes **11 actions**, covering: (1) a stronger Global Ocean Observing System for strategic autonomy, climate assessments and biodiversity conservation, (2) biodiversity benefits and impacts of the clean and digital transitions, (3) systemic approaches to accelerate transformative change for biodiversity, (4) direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity decline of invertebrates (5) the effects of PFAS on biodiversity and ecosystem services, (6) living labs co-creating solutions for the restoration of ecosystems addressing implementation

bottlenecks and improving resilience to risks, (7) networking to scale up living labs for nature restoration solutions and to address bottlenecks to implementation, (8) solutions to fight wildlife trafficking and to reduce invasion of invasive alien species, (9) cost-effective biodiversity monitoring for EU policies, (10) interdisciplinary, data-driven research at the biodiversity- health interface under a One Health approach and (11) support to the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

Bridging actions

The horizontal call ‘Bridging Actions 2027’, set out in the ‘Horizontal Activities’ part in this work programme, aims to facilitate a smooth transition between Horizon Europe 2021–2027 and the next EU R&I framework programme, Horizon Europe 2028–2034. It prepares for tight links with the future European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), introducing the ‘innovation to investment journey’, a seamless process from research to market deployment.

Among others, the call funds ‘fit-for-deployment’ projects, i.e. technologically advanced solutions with strong market potential, to create a pipeline of innovations ready for market uptake. Its open, technology-driven topics allow for both broad and targeted proposals. In addition, the call addresses relevant strategic priorities in a horizontal way, for instance in relation to skills, data and infrastructure.

With an indicative budget of EUR 260 million, this call includes **16 actions**, covering: skills, knowledge valorisation through innovation ecosystems, deployment of innovative climate preparedness and resilience solutions, critical research data, knowledge repositories and scientific services for the life sciences, advancement of research results through the innovation to investment journey, access to research infrastructure services to enable R&I addressing industry needs, research and technology infrastructures as strategic assets for talent to Choose Europe, climate projections and related data records, EU AI Media Platform, monitoring of Solar Radiation Modification activities and their impacts on Earth's climate and ecosystems, Autonomous Drive Ambition Cities, piloting of next-generation AI-driven digital platforms for the European energy system, and advanced scaling frameworks for high-performance AI models.

Choose Europe for Science

The [Choose Europe for Science](#) initiative, a key element of the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2026-2027, aims to make Europe a premier destination for scientific careers. By offering stable funding opportunities and access to cutting-edge facilities, the EU enables researchers to tackle some of the world's most pressing challenges. The first support package, adopted on 5 May 2025 and worth EUR 500 million, supports the MSCA Choose Europe pilot and ERC+ grants.

On top of this, and building on the 2025 pilot supporting postdoctoral programmes, the **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions** (MSCAs) part of this work programme allocates about EUR 50 million to improve long-term fellowships and career stability. By linking MSCA grants to competitions for long-term positions in universities and research organisations, this initiative underscores the EU's commitment to providing excellent research opportunities, working conditions and long-term professional prospects. Under the 2026 amendment of the work programme, the MSCA budget is further reinforced through an additional MSCA Choose Europe boost of EUR 70 million in 2026 and EUR 141.5 million in 2027. This additional funding will strengthen the Postdoctoral Fellowships and

Doctoral Networks actions, allowing more excellent researchers to undertake research and training activities in Europe.

Other parts of this work programme also support these objectives. For instance, by strengthening Europe's world-class **research infrastructures** – including through transnational access, training, and international cooperation – the programme contributes about EUR 80 million to the initiative. The **ERA** Chairs call, aiming to attract high-level researchers to widening institutions, also supports the initiative with a budget of EUR 240 million. Moreover, the **European Innovation Ecosystems** part supports the initiative by creating conditions for global, technology-driven companies to grow.

The initiative is further strengthened through the '**Bridging Actions 2027**' call under the amendment of the work programme, with EUR 57 million for actions on life sciences and EUR 7.5 million for research and technology infrastructures.

Including these bridging actions and the additional MSCA Choose Europe boost, the total funding linked to the Choose Europe for Science initiative reaches almost EUR 1.15 billion.

Delivering on EU policy priorities

Europe has made its choice. We are choosing to start a new age of invention and ingenuity. We are choosing to put research and innovation, science and technology at the heart of our economy. We are choosing to be the continent where science is a pillar of our society and our way of life. A multidisciplinary approach and the integration of social sciences and humanities (SSH) remain a key element.

Europe's global competitiveness and leadership in the clean and digital transitions remain central to the future. These transitions hinge on a bold, coordinated approach to R&I which fuels scientific breakthroughs, accelerates the development of critical technologies and addresses pressing societal and environmental challenges.

With this work programme, the EU and the countries associated to Horizon Europe are investing over EUR 14 billion in research and innovation to enhance Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness. Building on the previous Horizon Europe work programmes, it introduces significant new initiatives designed to tackle the most pressing EU challenges and priorities, including the Clean Industrial Deal, advancements in AI, the restoration and protection of biodiversity and the preparation towards the EU's next R&I Framework Programme, Horizon Europe 2028-2034. The EU's shift to a circular economy is also integral to the work programme for 2026-2027, with a focus on systemic changes across sectors such as construction and textiles and promoting innovative, market-ready solutions through high-impact, cross-cluster actions. Alongside initiatives under the Clean Industrial Deal to help increase circularity in energy-intensive industries and clean tech, the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative focuses on local and regional authorities, fostering place-based innovation and experimentation. The New European Bauhaus also continues to play a role by connecting sustainability with aesthetics and inclusion, promoting innovative solutions for the built environment and supporting citizen-centred, place-based approaches. A further example of a key EU strategy supported by this work programme is the [Strategy for European Life Sciences](#).

Amid ongoing geopolitical uncertainties, including conflicts in Europe and the Middle East, this work programme focuses on initiatives that strengthen Europe's security, reduce strategic dependencies and reinforce supply chain resilience. For instance, EUR 634 million is allocated to topics related to critical raw materials, and the programme also supports research on advanced materials and alternatives to rare earth. By investing in critical technologies – such as energy technologies, quantum and advanced manufacturing – the EU aims to safeguard its strategic autonomy while fostering economic growth and social cohesion. This work programme is a key step towards achieving the priorities outlined in the [second Horizon Europe strategic plan \(2025-2027\)](#). The actions set out in this work programme are expected to substantially contribute to the three overarching, interlinked key strategic orientations: *the green transition, the digital transition and a more resilient, competitive, inclusive and democratic Europe*. These orientations are fully aligned with the EU's main policy priorities, as set out in the [Commission's Political Guidelines for 2024-2029](#) and expanded on in the [Competitiveness Compass for the EU](#), all of which require significant contributions from R&I to meet their objectives.

Knowledge valorisation is also a key priority of this work programme. Over EUR 1 billion is allocated to valorisation topics on market, societal and policy uptake of research results. The 'Horizontal Activities' part of this work programme includes in the 'Bridging Actions 2027' call several new topics that focus on the innovation to investment journey and test new approaches, which for example shall address the challenges of SMEs to access latest knowledge to explore ideas for innovative developments. Other topics across the work programme also include valorisation elements.

Startups, in particular, stand to benefit from this work programme well beyond the dedicated support provided through the European Innovation Ecosystems part of Pillar III. The streamlined, more flexible approach taken across Pillar II – Global Challenges and European Competitiveness makes it easier for startups to take part in collaborative research and innovation alongside industrial partners, research infrastructures and public-sector end-users. The work programme also supports broad EU innovation policy objectives, notably through its continued use of innovation procurement to help bring innovative solutions developed in Europe closer to the market.

To support the [European strategy on research and technology infrastructures](#), the **Research Infrastructures** part of this work programme aims to strengthen research infrastructures so that they can support all stages of the innovation process – from basic research to real-world use in the market. This approach aims to ensure that Europe remains competitive on the global stage.

In particular, the Research Infrastructures part contributes to enriching the **European Open Science Cloud Federation** with high-quality, FAIR⁴ research data and scientific tools and services that support cross-disciplinary science cases.

R&I activities under **Cluster 1 'Health'** support healthcare resilience, leverage biotechnology and AI, and address key public health needs, – including mental health, disease prevention, pollution and climate-related health impacts, and the development of critical medicines and medical countermeasures. These efforts aim to improve health outcomes, ease the burden of disease and disability and contribute to Europe's sustainable prosperity and global competitiveness, supporting the goal of making the EU the most attractive place for life sciences by 2030, in line with the Strategy for European Life Sciences. The cluster addresses major health challenges, spanning non-communicable,

⁴ Findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable.

rare and infectious diseases, disabilities, antimicrobial resistance, and pandemic preparedness. It also supports the second phase of the co-funded **European Partnerships for Pandemic Preparedness and Rare Diseases**. In parallel, it advances healthcare innovation through clinical research, novel methodologies, advanced therapies, and the development of novel vaccines and antivirals against emerging health threats. Cluster 1 also supports research to prevent the harmful effects of digital technologies on the mental health of children and young adults, in line with the Commission's objective to protect their mental health in an increasingly digitalised world.

The mobilisation of social sciences and humanities and interdisciplinary R&I under the actions in **Cluster 2 'Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society'** helps foster a democratic culture of participation and inclusivity and promote the values of equality, freedom, respect for human dignity and human rights and respect for cultural pluralism. Research ensures that these EU values remain at the core of addressing contemporary challenges and in balancing technological progress with its societal impact to achieve a just transition. This will foster a more inclusive and equitable Europe, where innovation benefits all, particularly those at risk of being excluded or discriminated against by technological changes.

A new **European partnership on social transformations and resilience**, focusing on social sciences and humanities, is launched under Cluster 2 of the work programme. The partnership funds R&I activities in the following areas: the future of work, modernisation of social protection and essential services, education and skills development, and a fair transition towards climate neutrality. This is the last of the nine new European partnerships announced in the second Horizon Europe strategic plan (2025-2027) and it is aimed at combining national R&I efforts and increasing industry participation in Horizon Europe in key strategic areas.

Actions in **Cluster 3 'Civil Security for Society'** contribute to a safer and more secure Europe, a 'Preparedness Union' and stronger common borders, thereby protecting democracy and putting R&I at the heart of a resilient economy. This cluster aims to equip security practitioners, such as law enforcement and critical infrastructure operators, with modern tools consistent with EU values, while boosting European competitiveness and promoting innovation procurement. This cluster supports the [ProtectEU strategy](#) in addressing threats such as terrorism and cybercrime and facilitates secure border crossings for people and goods. It also contributes to the [European Preparedness Union Strategy](#) for better managing risks, developing a European Civil Defence Mechanism for crisis management, and strengthening the EU's cyber resilience through advanced protective measures and international collaboration. Overall, this cluster focuses on ensuring people's right to safety and security.

This work programme continues to support the digital transition to clean industry and autonomous access to space in a competitive, strategically autonomous Europe. In line with this, as key priorities, actions in **Cluster 4 'Digital, Industry and Space'** focus on ensuring a substantial and coordinated contribution by R&I to the Clean Industrial Deal, promoting emerging enabling technologies, such as AI in science, and achieving open strategic autonomy⁵ in space-based infrastructure, services, applications and data. In doing so, this cluster operates in alignment with the previously mentioned horizontal calls focused on the Clean Industrial Deal and AI in Science. This cluster also helps build synergies and joint activities between partnerships.

⁵ Open strategic autonomy' refers to the term 'strategic autonomy, while preserving an open economy', as reflected in the [Conclusions of the European Council of 1/2 October 2020](#).

Cluster 5 ‘Climate, Energy and Mobility’ supports R&I on decarbonising our economy and society, promoting a more sustainable approach to production and consumption, and advancing our knowledge on climate science. These actions help identify effective and efficient pathways, cross-cutting technologies, and solutions to address climate change mitigation and adaptation, energy needs and mobility challenges. Efforts focus on ensuring affordable, sustainable and secure energy supplies, the shift to more sustainable mobility options and transport modes, the decarbonisation of industry, and circularity in manufacturing and process industries. R&I also leverage digital technologies to improve productivity and help to close the skills gap, thereby improving Europe’s competitiveness.

The [Industrial Action Plan for the European automotive sector](#) is supported through multiple actions in Cluster 5, including a flagship topic on large-scale demonstration of connected, cooperative and automated mobility. Further aligning with this action plan, the European Commission has launched a strategic Memorandum of Understanding with the European co-programmed partnerships linked to the automotive sector⁶ to accelerate R&I in sustainable and smart mobility.

Cluster 6 ‘Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment’ is pivotal for sustaining our quality of life, from food security to water and nature. Actions in this cluster are expected to support the implementation of the [Common Agricultural Policy](#), the [Vision for agriculture and food](#) and the [Fertiliser action plan](#), among others. To protect our natural world, Cluster 6 is aimed at developing innovations to facilitate the effective implementation of the [Nature Restoration Regulation](#), including by addressing the main drivers of biodiversity loss. This cluster also addresses pollution and various water-related challenges in support of the [European Water Resilience Strategy](#) and helps protect and restore ocean health to deliver on the [European Ocean Pact](#). It pursues climate adaptation and mitigation by helping land- and water-based sectors to transition towards climate neutrality by 2050, as required by the European Climate Law.

Actions in Cluster 6 are expected to accelerate the transition towards a more circular, nature-positive, fair and resilient economy and bioeconomy and to foster bio-based products and value chains in support of the Competitiveness Compass, the Clean Industrial Deal, the Strategy for European Life Sciences and the [bioeconomy strategy](#).

The **European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE)** programme enhances interconnected innovation ecosystems across the EU. It contributes to boosting Europe’s innovation capabilities, notably in the deep tech sector, and improving the commercialisation of research. By fostering synergies among diverse innovation actors, the EIE programme contributes to the EU’s goals of achieving a clean and digital transition, enhancing competitiveness and fostering social cohesion. It also aims to support startups and scaleups within the EU to strengthen economic resilience and strategic autonomy.

To help European deep tech startups to scale into global champions, the **European Startup and Scaleup Hubs** initiative under the EIE programme aims to create a network connecting Europe’s leading and emerging startups. This pilot action, which is part of the [Startup and Scaleup Strategy](#), promotes a transnational network of hubs rooted in strong research and higher education systems, bringing together research facilities, companies, entrepreneurs and investors and providing dedicated support to deep tech spin offs, startups and scaleups.

⁶ These partnerships are: 2Zero (Towards zero-emission road transport), CCAM (Connected, Cooperative and Automated Driving), and BATT4EU (European Partnership for an Industrial Battery Value Chain).

As outlined in the European Research Area (ERA) [Policy Agenda 2025-2027](#), the ERA is envisaged as an integrated and competitive environment for research and innovation across the EU, driven by excellence and openness. The **‘Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area’** work programme part supports the ERA’s goals by addressing fragmentation of R&I, reducing geographical disparities between countries and enhancing R&I capacity⁷, thus helping to achieve the target of spending 3% of GDP on research and development in the EU. Notable initiatives include ERA Chairs, which attract top scientists and innovators to countries with a lower R&I performance to foster excellence and institutional reforms, thereby enhancing competitiveness and talent retention. Given the increased budget for this work programme, these actions now also include recruiting leading research managers to boost research management capacities, thereby supporting effective resource allocation and strategic planning. Additionally, under this work programme part, the ‘Talent ecosystems for attractive early research careers’ topic promotes the new European framework for research careers, contributing to better working conditions and stability for researchers, aligning with the **‘Choose Europe for Science’** initiative and enhancing the EU’s appeal to both European and international talent.

EU Missions address by definition major global challenges through ambitious, time-bound objectives rooted in transdisciplinary research and innovation. They encompass various disciplines and policies, supporting key EU priorities such as the European Clean Industrial Deal, Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan, the EU industrial strategy and the digital transition. The EU Missions work programme part fosters synergies with other Horizon Europe funding instruments and includes actions for all five EU Missions:

- **Adaptation to Climate Change:** helping at least 150 European regions and communities to become climate resilient by 2030;
- **Cancer:** improving the lives of more than 3 million people by 2030 through prevention and cure, and helping those affected by cancer, including their families, to live longer and better;
- **Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030:** protecting and restoring aquatic ecosystems, eliminating pollution, and making the blue economy circular and carbon-neutral;
- **Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities:** delivering 100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030;
- **A Soil Deal for Europe:** setting up 100 living labs and lighthouses to lead the transition towards healthy soils by 2030.

In particular, this work programme aims to enhance local and regional climate risk preparedness, provide solutions to restore EU waters, establish Climate City Contracts with 100 cities, create a unified framework for soil-health monitoring and innovative tools for land managers, and support cancer prevention through clinical trials for treatments and biomarker-guided medicines. The Commission is further launching a Mission integration award and a Mission engagement award to encourage and recognise national and regional authorities in their efforts to implement and engage with EU Missions.

⁷ Notably, Outermost Regions as well as Overseas Countries and Territories are particularly encouraged to take part in Pillar II dedicated actions to boost researcher participation, focusing on their R&I expertise in areas such as climate change, energy transition, biodiversity and ecosystems restoration, agriculture and life sciences, marine sciences, metabolic and emerging diseases, earth and space sciences, social sciences and innovation. Since 2021, the nine Outermost Regions have access to the “Widening Participation and Spreading Excellence” instrument, which supports high-quality European funding proposals through free of charge [tools](#) like pre-proposal checks. This work programme thereby aligns with the objectives of the future strategy for Outermost Regions, announced in the 2025 State of the European Union address.

As a cross-cluster issue, the [New European Bauhaus](#) Facility leverages the power of inclusion, sustainability, and arts and culture in R&I to advance the Green Deal and clean transition in neighbourhoods and their communities. More specifically, it fosters R&I solutions aimed at connecting the green transformation, social inclusion and local democracy and advancing circular and regenerative approaches to the built environment, while also developing innovative funding and new business models for the transformation of neighbourhoods. With the 2026 amendment of the work programme, the New European Bauhaus Facility also contributes to the implementation of the New European Bauhaus Academy as a core infrastructure for knowledge and research valorisation, for innovation and for skills development, in line with the Commission Communication [New European Bauhaus – from vision to implementation](#). Projects funded under the NEB Facility will generate new knowledge, evidence and innovative solutions that will support the translation of research results into capacity-building, skills development and applied innovation activities.

This work programme emphasises the crucial role of [international cooperation](#) in addressing global challenges and advancing EU policy priorities, including those under the [Global Gateway](#), particularly in the areas of climate, health and digital transition. In line with the political guidelines prioritising a global Europe that leverages its power and partnerships, this programme underscores the EU's commitment to leading the clean and digital transitions and tackling health and environmental challenges at the right level, in accordance with agreements such as the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#). By working together with international partners, the EU can more effectively address its strategic dependencies in critical sectors. The second Horizon Europe strategic plan (2025-2027) further emphasises that international cooperation remains the foundation of the EU's efforts to make Europe more resilient and stronger in the world. All sections of this work programme actively encourage international collaboration, with a particular focus on initiatives involving Africa, the Mediterranean, Latin America and the Caribbean countries, and increased collaboration with India and South-East Asian nations.

The [association of third countries](#) to Horizon Europe is a significant component of this approach. Currently, [22 countries](#) are associated to the programme. Ongoing discussions with other nations highlight the political, economic and scientific importance of association to Horizon Europe. For example, association is strategic for strengthening our partnerships in the EU's neighbouring regions and, in the case of candidate countries, paves the way for accession by helping to align R&I efforts. Several topics in this work programme contribute directly or indirectly to the reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine's R&I sector, Ukraine's integration into the European Research Area or the reconstruction and recovery of another R&I related sector. More generally, association provides a robust framework for deepening science and technology cooperation with external partners, in line with the [European Economic Security Strategy](#).

[Investing in climate action, biodiversity and the digital transition](#)

To achieve the aim of making the EU the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050, this Horizon Europe work programme continues to allocate at least 35% of its funding to **climate objectives**. Complementing this, to ensure that Horizon Europe's actions do not harm environmental policy objectives, a 'do no harm' assessment continues to be carried out. In addition, in line with increased

efforts on **biodiversity** under the second Horizon Europe strategic plan (2025-2027), Horizon Europe aims to dedicate at least 10% of its 2025-2027 budget to biodiversity-related topics.

The parts of this work programme dedicated to the six clusters falling under Pillar II ‘Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness’, together with the research infrastructures, widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area, European Innovation Ecosystems, EU Missions, New European Bauhaus Facility and Horizontal Activities parts, contribute over EUR 5 095 million⁸ to climate action, which corresponds to 47.1% of the budget for these parts of the work programme. Furthermore, these parts contribute EUR 1 893 million to biodiversity, which corresponds to 17.5% of their budget. The horizontal call ‘Transformative changes towards a nature-positive economy and society’, which is a major part of this amendment, allocates European Union budget to achieve the 10% target for biodiversity relevant spending across Horizon Europe for 2026-27.

Contributions to climate action are made by 16.6% of resources spent under Cluster 1 ‘Health’ (EUR 176 million), 10.0% spent under Cluster 2 ‘Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society’ (EUR 64 million), 28.6% spent under Cluster 3 ‘Civil Security for Society’ (EUR 96 million), 22.6% spent under Cluster 4⁹ ‘Digital, Industry and Space’ (EUR 437 million), 89.7% spent under Cluster 5 ‘Climate, Energy and Transport’ (EUR 1 644 million) and 66.1% spent under Cluster 6 ‘Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment’ (EUR 778 million). The EU Missions, New European Bauhaus and Horizontal Activities parts, including actions relating to the Clean Industrial Deal, contribute EUR 1 370 million, which corresponds to 68.3%.

Horizon Europe also continues promoting R&I with the aim of making this decade Europe’s **digital decade**. This helps empower society, including enterprises, to navigate technology-human interactions responsibly, upholding human rights and ecological limits. Therefore, at least EUR 13 billion from the Horizon Europe budget is to be allocated to developing core digital technologies over the lifetime of the framework programme. Furthermore, in line with the [AI Continent Action Plan](#)’s commitment to accelerating AI development and deployment across strategic sectors, the EU is taking a leading role by funding projects focused on developing safe and ethical AI applications. These efforts promote AI ‘made in Europe’, driving innovation from research labs to the marketplace. An estimated 35.5% of funds allocated under the six clusters, the research infrastructures, widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area, European Innovation Ecosystems, EU Missions, New European Bauhaus Facility and Horizontal Activities parts of the work programme, corresponding to EUR 3 700 million, and 33.1% of funds across all parts of Horizon Europe, contribute to the digital transition. The overall investment in topics that encourage the development of AI in 2026 and 2027 is estimated at EUR 2 060 million, augmented by projects leveraging AI-based approaches.

Investment in climate action, biodiversity and the digital transition contribute to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. By fostering research and innovation in these areas, Horizon Europe helps to create a more sustainable, digital and resilient Europe for the benefit of all.

⁸ This calculation takes into account only the ‘EU-voted budget’ and does not include contributions by associated countries. The EU-voted budget makes up 89.7% on average, varying between 79% in Cluster 1 and 91.5% in Cluster 2, as a result of earlier effective participation of UK entities in the domains of clusters that shall guide the use of UK provided funds.

⁹ Clusters 4 and 5 also finance the clean industrial deal call under the Horizontal actions.

What you will find in this work programme

Each part of this work programme, except for this general introduction and the general annexes, is designed around a series of coherent packages of impact-driven destinations, calls for proposals and topics.

Each **destination** describes the socio-economic challenges to be addressed and the expected impact of the R&I activities. In many cases, destinations correspond directly to an expected impact identified in the second Horizon Europe strategic plan (2025-2027). Together, the destinations set out in this work programme cover the 32 expected impacts identified in this strategic plan.

Each destination comprises one or more topics. Each **topic** describes the expected outcomes and the scope of the R&I activities to be funded. The **expected outcomes** are the desired effects of the project in the medium term, such as the uptake, diffusion, use and/or deployment of the project's results by direct target groups. The **scope** describes the area of research/innovation that needs to be tackled if the expected outcomes are to be successfully achieved, without prescribing how this should be done. It is therefore left to the creativity and skill of the applicants to design a project that will generate results and substantially contribute to the expected outcomes and impacts.

Each topic also sets out the general conditions, deadlines, budget and any specific conditions that may apply. The topics are grouped under calls for proposals, which is a technical term for a number of topics that open for submission of applications on the same date.