

EN

Annex X

Horizon Europe

Work Programme 2023-2024

10. European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE)

DISCLAIMER

This draft has not been adopted or endorsed by the European Commission. Any views expressed are the preliminary views of the Commission services and may not in any circumstances be regarded as stating an official position of the Commission. The information transmitted is intended only for the Member State or entity to which it is addressed for discussions and may contain confidential and/or privileged material.

Please note that:

- All elements included in this document are preliminary and only serve the purpose of discussing possible priorities, topics, and actions for the EIE WP 2023-2024.
- Not all elements may be included in EIE WP 2023-2024 and new elements may be included at a later stage.

Version 25/03/2022

Table of contents

Destination: CONNECT - Interconnected Innovation Ecosystems 4

HORIZON-EIE-202X-CONNECT: Preparatory action for setting up joint programmes among innovation ecosystems actors	6
HORIZON-EIE-202X-CONNECT: Implementing co-funded action plans for interconnection of innovation ecosystems	8
HORIZON-EIE-202X-CONNECT: Specialist Advisory Services to build capacities on innovation procurement.....	12
HORIZON-EIE-202X-CONNECT: Integration of social innovation actors in innovation ecosystems.....	14
HORIZON-EIE-202X-CONNECT: Mutual learning and common tools and resources for national/regional schemes supporting innovation projects of start-ups and SMEs.....	16
HORIZON-EIE-202X-CONNECT: The African Union-European Union Innovation Platform.....	18
[Placeholder: Action to support Ukrainian innovators/SMEs/incubators].....	19

Destination: SCALEUP - Elevating the scalability potential of European business 20

HORIZON-EIE-2023-SCALEUP: Organisation of Women TechEU 2023-2024.....	21
HORIZON-EIE-202X-SCALEUP: Expanding Academia-Enterprise Collaborations	23
HORIZON-EIE-202X-SCALEUP: Expanding Investments Ecosystems	25
HORIZON-EIE-2023-SCALEUP: Startup Europe.....	28
HORIZON-EIE-202X-SCALEUP: Strengthening Open Innovation	30
HORIZON-EIE-202X-SCALEUP: Cluster-coordinated projects for mitigating disruption in the input supply chain through innovation.....	31
[Placeholder: Action to support the setup of test beds and/or living labs].....	33

Destination: INNOVSMES – Partnership on Innovative SMEs 34

HORIZON-EIE-2023-INNOVSMES-01-01: European Partnership on Innovative SMEs .	36
---	----

Other actions not subject to calls for proposals 41

1. [Placeholder: Ensuring greater synergies between the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities the EIC].....	41
2. EU Intellectual Property Helpdesk (EU IP Helpdesk).....	41
3. Mapping of regulatory compliance advisory services and identification of gaps.....	42
4. EIC FORUM support (2023).....	43
5. Use of individual experts on assisting with the monitoring of actions (2023).....	43
6. Towards a Pilot European Startup Scoreboard	44
7. EIC FORUM support (2024).....	45

*Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2023-2024
European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE)*

8. Use of individual experts on assisting with the monitoring of actions (2024).....	45
9. Commission fee as EUREKA member (administrative costs).....	45

DRAFT

Destination: CONNECT - Interconnected Innovation Ecosystems

The urgent challenges of today are inherently complex and systemic and will not be solved by individual actors or territories in isolation. To foster enabling innovation ecosystems across Europe requires a systemic approach that is inclusive and collaborative, involves diverse actors, institutions and places, maximises the value of innovation to all and ensures equitable diffusion of its benefits.

This destination offers a holistic package of actions that:

- Foster more efficient, inclusive, gender diverse, and connected innovation ecosystems, via co-creation, co-planning and co-investments around areas of joint interest and/or European strategic priority areas to foster innovation deployment and to allow bringing ideas into the market and enable innovation to be scaled up at EU level;
- Ensure the inclusion of all key innovation players from across the quadruple helix¹, and all EU territories, including rural areas²;
- Increase innovation co-investments, fostering synergies and other funding leverages;
- Improve procurers' capacity to define their needs and identify innovative suppliers who could effectively address them and improve SMEs' response to buyers' needs;
- Improve connection of individual innovators with other ecosystem actors and innovation support services;
- Engage social innovation actors in innovation ecosystem, by ensuring their interlinking and connection with all other actors;
- Ensure openness and cross-fertilization of the innovation ecosystem within and beyond the European Union borders.

In particular, the actions under this destination should promote the creation of links:

- with all key innovation stakeholders, including the private sector, in particular between SMEs, start-ups and other innovators with investors, industry and public and/or private buyers for faster access to funds and markets and the public sector including authorities in charge of national, regional or local innovation policies and programmes and bodies responsible for smart specialisation; also between innovators with foundations, civil society organisations, citizens, and individual innovators to ensure that the innovations match the needs, values and expectations of society, thereby accelerating deployment and up-take towards tackling societal challenges and with universities and research and technology organisations (RTOs) as sources of innovation and talent;

¹A model of cooperation between industry, academia, civil society and public authorities, with a strong emphasis on citizens and their needs.

² Long-term vision for the EU's Rural areas (COM(2021)345 final, SWD(2021)166 final).

- among ‘innovation leaders’ and ‘strong innovators’ with ‘moderate’ and ‘emerging innovators’³ across the EU and Associated Countries⁴ to tackle the innovation gap⁵;
- with networks such as National Contact Points, Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), social innovation networks⁶, clusters, pan-European platforms such as Startup Europe, regional or local innovation actors, public but also private, in particular incubators and innovation hubs that could moreover be interconnected to favour partnering among innovators.

This destination is open for any thematic area and has the potential to contribute to all key strategic objectives (KSOs) and expected impact areas of the Strategic Plan 2021-2024.

This destination will also be prepared in complementarity with the European Innovation Council (EIC), the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT), including their Knowledge and Innovation Centres (KICs), and WIDERA WPs and innovative activities across Horizon Europe, the interregional innovation investments (I3) instrument (ERDF), the Digital Europe Programme, INNOSUP (H2020 “Innovation in SMEs” work programme), as well as other relevant funding and policy initiatives at EU, national, regional and local level, such as the Enterprise Europe Network and the regional smart specialisation strategies.

Expected impact

Proposals for topics under this destination should set out a credible pathway to contributing to interconnected innovation ecosystems, and more specifically to the following impact:

Interconnected, inclusive and more efficient innovation ecosystems across Europe that draw on the existing strengths of European, national, regional and local ecosystems and pulls in new, less well-represented stakeholders and less advanced in innovation territories, including rural areas, to set, undertake, and achieve collective ambitions towards challenges for the benefit of the society, including green, digital, and social transitions and advancing the European Research Area.

³ References: [Regional Innovation Scoreboard \(RIS\)](#), [European Innovation Scoreboard \(EIS\)](#), [Global Innovation Index \(GII\)](#).

⁴ Associated countries are described in General Annex B.

⁵ The work programme will act in complementarity with the “Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area” work programme.

⁶ Such as the [Social Innovation Community](#) (SIC) and the [PITCCH Network](#), funded via an INNOSUP action.

List of potential draft topics:

HORIZON-EIE-202X-CONNECT: Preparatory action for setting up joint programmes among innovation ecosystems actors

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 0.70 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR X 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: Consortia must have at least three (3) independent legal entities from different Member States or Associated Countries.
<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.

Expected Outcome:

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

- Open the dialogue, prepare the ground and facilitate the agreement among Member States, Associated Countries and EU regions, in cooperation with the private sector and research and innovation actors, towards more dynamic, inclusive, gender diverse, and connected innovation ecosystems, via co-creation, co-planning and co-investments around promising areas of joint and European interest;
- Prepare the implementation of joint long-term programme of activities (action plans) fostering collaboration and creation of common knowledge assets among EU, national, regional and/or local level innovation ecosystems' stakeholders, enhancing synergies and complementarities of their programmes and encouraging the alignment of their innovation agendas;
- Ensure the inclusion of all key innovation players from across the quadruple helix⁷, and all EU territories, including rural areas;

⁷ A model of cooperation between industry, academia, civil society and public authorities, with a strong emphasis on citizens and their needs.

Foster any other funding leverages, including national or regional public funds, to complement Horizon Europe support for innovation ecosystems.

Scope:

Target group(s): National, regional and/or local authorities together with private actors, including public-owned enterprises, and research and innovation actors.

The topic will allow national, regional and/or local authorities from Member States, Associated Countries and/or EU regions in charge of innovation policies and programmes, in cooperation with private and research and innovation actors, to prepare joint multi-annual programmes of activities (action plans) with the aim of strengthening their efficiency, capacities and interconnection and jointly tackle challenges at EU, national, regional and local level.

The topic will allow applicants to prepare and agree on a common programme of activities (action plans); the applicants are encouraged to consider a project duration of up to two years and in their proposals they should:

- identify areas and activities of cooperation, to improve the efficiency and performance of Europe's innovation ecosystems, fostering their interconnection and scale-up while tackling EU, national, regional and/or local challenges; the proposals may focus on a thematic/technological area of common interest and innovation priorities with an EU added-value, and/or around one or more EU priorities; the proposals are encouraged to contribute to one or more EU priorities and challenges, including climate action, green deal and digital transformation, the development of rural innovation ecosystems, and should pay attention to gender equality objectives;
- plan their long-term commitment; the applicants are encouraged to consider planning commitments of at least five (5) years, towards engaging in the joint cooperation activities set out in the frame of the projects;
- explain the potential for growth and competitiveness foreseen in the targeted sector and/or expected impact on EU challenge(s) through the proposed cooperation;
- ensure inclusion and diversity with the involvement of all innovation actors applicants from various geographical contexts, including individual innovators, enhance complementarities of EU, national and/or regional funds and programmes and encourage the alignment of their innovation agendas;
- provide a justification on the need for those joint activities that should be scalable at European level and demonstrate their strong EU added value;
- explain how the proposed action plans complement and reinforce their national and/or regional and/or local innovation plans, policies and/or strategies in synergy, including with their smart specialisation strategies;

- explain the process that they plan to follow, with an open, clear, realistic and impact-oriented approach, including relevant guidance mechanisms and tools;
- present what common knowledge assets are expected from the proposed action plans, and the benefit of the intended beneficiaries of the plans;
- present the targeted milestones to be achieved.

The proposals for the development of a joint long-term action plan may include the following two (2) phases:

- A first phase to foster close dialogue among key stakeholders for strategy/partnership building, mapping and analysis of existing national and/or regional and/or local innovation agendas/strategies/policies/plans/activities, the relevant active/inactive actors (including financial actors, citizens, and individual innovators) and ways to motivate actors to improve their inclusion, identification of areas of competitive advantage for sustainable economic growth mapping of gaps, needs and opportunities. Any activities are encouraged to consider existing tools, knowledge and expertise. Responsible Research and Innovation expertise may be relevant in this regard⁸;
- A second phase dedicated to the concretising, setting up and finalising the joint action plan(s) and allocation of the activities over a period of the proposed action plans.

The implementation of the proposed action plans is not part of this topic. For the implementation part, the successful proposals under the topic may seek further financial support from other programmes, including Horizon Europe programme and/or other public and/or private programmes.

HORIZON-EIE-202X-CONNECT: Implementing co-funded action plans for interconnection of innovation ecosystems

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 X million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Programme Co-fund Action
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply:

⁸ E.g. projects supported under SwafS-14-2018-2019-2020 in Horizon 2020.

	Consortia must have at least three (3) independent legal entities from different Member States or Associated Countries.
<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>The funding rate is 50% of the eligible costs as the beneficiaries will carry out the proposed activities mainly themselves and the activities will not include financial support to third parties.</p> <p>Grants award under this topic will have to submit the following deliverable(s):</p> <p>Annual work plans are subject to approval by the Commission. For the first year, the annual work plan needs to be submitted together with the respective proposal.</p>

Expected Outcome:

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

- Open⁹, efficient inclusive and interconnected innovation ecosystems across Europe, building on their diversities and complementarities, enhancing the joint definition of visions and strategies with input from across the quadruple helix¹⁰, encouraging the alignment of their innovation agendas, and strengthening of their efficiency and potential to innovate;
- Enhanced synergies, complementarities and collaboration among all European innovation ecosystems' stakeholders around promising areas and challenges of joint and European interest, creation of common knowledge assets;
- Increased innovation capacities in Member States and Associated Countries, allowing innovators to bring their ideas into the market and enable innovations to be scaled up at EU level, and facilitating the link with the private sector and research and innovator actors;
- Better links between innovation leaders and strong innovators with moderate and emerging innovators across the EU and Associated Countries;
- More innovation co-investments, fostering other funding leverages, including national or regional public funds and/or other private funds, to complement Horizon Europe support.

Scope:

⁹ The notion of “openness” can be defined as “the pooling of knowledge for innovative purposes where the contributors have access to the inputs of others and cannot exert exclusive rights over the resultant innovation” (Chesbrough, H., & Appleyard, M. 2007. [Open Innovation and Strategy](#). California Management Review, 50(1): 57–76).

¹⁰ A model of cooperation between industry, academia, civil society and public authorities, with a strong emphasis on citizens and their needs.

Target group(s): National and/or regional innovation authorities together with private actors, all relevant key stakeholders of innovation ecosystems from across the quadruple helix, including innovative SMEs, start-ups, social innovators, public-owned enterprises, academia, RTOs, technology transfer centres, investors, foundations, clusters, associations and the civil society, the Enterprise Europe Network.

The aim of this topic is to foster the creation of efficient, open, inclusive and interconnected European innovation ecosystems.

The topic will support strategic-oriented long-term programmes of activities (action plans) to enable authorities in charge of public national, regional or local innovation policies and programmes, with the participation of the private sector and research and innovation actors, to implement joint activities towards innovation deployment, while tackling challenges at EU, national, regional and local level.

The applicants are encouraged to consider a project duration of at least five (5) years and proposals should:

- present the applicants' joint strategic visions and their proposed innovation programme of activities (action plans); during the proposal submission, the participants should have already reached an agreement on what they want to achieve, in order to be able to present concrete action plans; the plans can be further detailed at annual level during the implementation of the action;
- describe the activities necessary, the process that will be followed and the assets that will be mobilised; activities should be open, clear, realistic, impact-oriented and ensure:
 - a. participation of private actors, either for the joint implementation of proposed activities, and/or their possible co-funding; for example, via links and cooperation with innovative SMEs, start-ups, industry, private entities supporting innovation and innovators, including clusters, associations, as well as investors and foundations;
 - b. inclusion and diversity by expanding to territories that are less advanced in innovation deployment (emerging and moderate innovators¹¹) and with the involvement of all innovation actors, especially those that are currently less active or missing in the innovation ecosystems (e.g. women-led startups and SMEs, investors, foundations, public and private buyers, social innovators, civil society organisations including non-governmental organisations);
 - c. complementarity and synergies with other funds (EU, public and/or private) and innovation-related strategies/policies/programmes/plans at national and/or regional level, including their smart specialisation strategies, as well as other relevant programmes (e.g. EIT/KICs, EEN); applicants should outline the scope for synergies

¹¹ References: [Regional Innovation Scoreboard \(RIS\)](#), [European Innovation Scoreboard \(EIS\)](#), [Global Innovation Index \(GII\)](#).

and/or additional funding, in particular where this makes the projects more ambitious or increases their impact and expected results.

- explain the need and the reasons for selecting the proposed programme of activities that should be scalable at European level and demonstrate their strong EU added value; the proposed plan:
 - a. should include core activities, for example: networking and coordination structures and tools to facilitate innovation development and access to and sharing of best practices, resources, talents, markets, expertise, services and knowledge, including open and collaborative knowledge bases and common knowledge assets (methods, data, processes); market analysis and development and activities towards better access to new markets and finance for innovative SMEs and start-ups; training and skills development; interconnection of open innovation infrastructures; supportive activities towards scale up, exploitation and dissemination of innovative solutions; joint public procurement initiatives; social innovators' and civil society integration, as interlocutors for society and important inputs to the development of innovations and promotion of gender diversity;
 - b. may include additional joint activities non-eligible for co-funding with Horizon Europe budget but in line with the expected outcomes of the topic; the budget of these activities however will not be considered for the final Commission contribution.
- explain the reasons for selecting the proposed strategic areas of cooperation, and how this cooperation will improve the efficiency and performance of Europe's innovation ecosystems, fostering their interconnection and scale-up; the action plans may focus on a thematic/technological area and innovation priorities of common interest, and/or may be shaped around one or more EU challenges¹² and/or priorities; the proposals are encouraged to contribute to one or more EU priorities and challenges, including climate, digital and social transitions, and should pay attention to gender equality objectives; the potential for growth and competitiveness foreseen in the targeted sector and/or expected impact in EU challenge(s) through the proposed cooperation should be clarified in the proposal;
- present how the consortium plans to implement these joint activities; the topic will not co-fund financial support to third parties, however the applicants may consider including such activities in their action plan (as additional joint activities non-eligible for co-funding), to be funded by other sources (national and/or regional and/or local or private);
- include clear targets in terms of outcomes for the measures/activities underpinned by verifiable indicators (applicants may wish to refer to the Sustainable Development Goals, the EU taxonomy on sustainable finance, or other relevant policy frameworks);

¹² It may develop the connections established among the Innosup05 Initiative from Horizon 2020 Peer learning of Innovation agencies.

- ensure their long-term commitment towards engaging in the joint cooperation activities set up in the frame of their projects.

HORIZON-EIE-202X-CONNECT: Specialist Advisory Services to build capacities on innovation procurement

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 1.0 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR X 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: Consortia must have at least three (3) independent legal entities from different Member States or Associated Countries.
<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.

Expected Outcome:

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

- Promote opportunities that innovation procurement opens for public procurers;
- Enhance the familiarity with innovation procurement processes which could lead to the establishment of long-term and sustainable innovation procurement strategies;
- Further engagement of the public procurers' community with SMEs, start-ups, incubators, accelerators and research institutions in driving innovation demand and detecting innovative solutions;
- Contribute to a cultural change in public buyers' perception for adopting risk averse innovative solutions;
- Stimulate SME's response to public buyers' needs and challenges aiming decreasing the potential uncertainties;
- Improve the procurers' capacity to communicate their needs and identify innovative suppliers who could effectively address them;

- Deploy public and private partners' collaboration in the co-design processes to match their needs and identify existing technologies that could result in procurement of innovation.

Scope:

Target group(s): Public and private procurers, public-owned enterprises, SMEs and start-ups, research and technological organisations.

Despite the legal reforms and incentives in the area of public procurement of innovative solutions, this field is still characterised by a risk-averse approach. There are Member States where the use of innovation procurement is slowly gaining pace but other administrations still resist to the use of a more innovation attuned approach, which recognises that there are different possible solutions to problems they are facing, rather than just the incumbent technology or process. The strategic potential of innovation procurement is immense, especially in supporting technological development in and by the public sector. Companies, and particularly SMEs and mid-caps that depend on sales to the public sector or just consider this opportunity can be motivated to innovate and adopt new technologies through public demand.

This action will support innovation procurement specialist advisory services that will act as the intermediary between the public procurers and innovative suppliers bridging those gaps that hamper the progress in the integration of innovative solutions in the public sector. With the innovation procurement specialist advisory services, it is expected to overcome the fragmentation and dispersion of public procurement across the EU enhancing the coordination on procuring innovative solutions within the Member States.

The innovation procurement specialist advisory services are expected to have several main competencies which will help them achieve their goals:

- Specialised knowledge on one or more market sectors and increased awareness of the national, regional or local innovative start-ups and SMEs which are active in their sector/sectors of specialisation;
- Strong awareness of market opportunities that exist in their /sectors of expertise, namely relevant competitions and calls which are open or planned at a national, regional and local level;
- Good understanding of both what public procurers demand but also what innovative suppliers could provide;
- Good technical background of their sectors being in the position to assess the technical solutions proposed and the potential implications which could emerge from the implementation of an innovative solution. This way, the innovation procurement specialist advisory services would explain to the public buyers the function of the proposed innovative solutions and clarify technical aspects which could negatively affect their risk perception;

- Thorough knowledge of the procurement procedures. Consequently, the advisory services will be able to provide clarity in the legal framework for both public buyers and suppliers and eliminate the uncertainties that could emerge;
- Strong knowledge of and good connections to innovative SMEs and startup environment, including the EIC and the EIT as well as other EU and national networks (EEN, Startup Europe).

The innovation procurement specialist advisory services are expected to facilitate the essential change of culture of the public procurers regarding the adoption of innovative solutions by diminishing their resistance to change and risk averse perceptions. To that extent, it is expected to reverse the slow uptake of innovation procurement practices for buying innovative solutions over traditional ones and spur the underpinning research and innovation activities by SMEs, start-ups and industry providers enabling innovation (R&D) services and outcomes of innovation process to enter the market. The innovation procurement specialist advisory services are expected to strengthen the interaction of public procurers with small innovative companies by providing practical knowledge and eliminating the perception that procurement is limited to a legal and administrative process.

The specialist advisory services participating in this process will also have the opportunity to set up new expert networks by sharing best practices among them regardless the MS where an initiative took place. To that extent, besides the increase of knowledge and awareness, there is good potential for creating synergies. The proposals should focus on the following activities:

- awareness-raising and enhanced knowledge on innovation procurement legal frameworks for public procurers and evaluators of innovative procurements;
- enhanced innovation knowledge and skills in procurers, raising awareness about co-design process between SMEs and procurers (public and private) that may help to discover the most up-to-date innovative technological solutions, and assist in their development and further acquisition;
- scale up best examples on the definition of needs and design of procedures and long-term strategies in the field of innovation procurement;
- create more structured cooperation between the ecosystems of procurers and financial investors for innovation procurements.

HORIZON-EIE-202X-CONNECT: Integration of social innovation actors in innovation ecosystems

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.

<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR X 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: Consortia must have at least three (3) independent legal entities from different Member States or Associated Countries.
<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.

Expected Outcome:

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

- Active participation of social innovation actors in innovation ecosystems, by ensuring their interlinking and connection with all other actors, including the SMEs and start-ups, accelerators and business incubators, industry, investors, philanthropy societies and the public sector, with the aim to ensure access to their entrepreneurial knowledge and skills required to run successful projects;
- Wider access to alternative means of financing social innovations achieved by promoting its impact and mobilising a broad range of partners;
- Tested innovation models with potential of scaling up and replicability, and that are available for widespread use, possibly through the policy actions.

Scope:

Target group(s): Social innovation actors/social entrepreneurs¹³, SMEs, start-ups, accelerators and business incubators, investors, industry, foundations and philanthropy societies, universities and RTOs public-owned enterprises.

The action aims to raise awareness and ease the access of social entrepreneurs to the resources of pan-European, national, regional and local innovation ecosystems. In addition, the action aims to have a lasting spill-over effect by bringing attention to the benefits of social innovation

¹³ Social entrepreneurship is an approach by individuals, groups, start-up companies or entrepreneurs, in which they develop, fund and implement solutions to social, cultural, or environmental issues. This concept may be applied to a wide range of organisations, which vary in size, aims, and beliefs. Social entrepreneurs are either non-profits, or they blend for-profit goals with generating a positive "return to society".

projects to the society as a whole, and to strategic priorities and objectives of the Commission in particular.

The proposals should focus on the following activities:

- the transfer of knowledge and building capacities among the innovation actors (including universities, accelerators and incubators, networks of start-ups), so that they would be better equipped to work with the social entrepreneurs; examples may include: activities aiming at creating and improving connections of social entrepreneurs to stakeholders in innovation ecosystems (e.g. gathering, production and diffusion of relevant information materials), study visits and exchange of good practices, training activities, webinars, seminars, conferences, etc., developing business support services for social entrepreneurs (e.g. toolkits, templates, manuals and other support material), awareness raising activities among the network’s members and towards the wider audience, engagement of social entrepreneurs in business and entrepreneurial skills and knowledge enforcement trainings;
- creation and/or connection of social innovation hubs/centres of excellence; integration of social innovation dimension to existing tech-oriented hubs;
- detection of possible innovation models with potential of scaling and replicability at national, regional, and local level. Although one size does not fit all, the examples of social innovator’s scaling path may help public authorities to design and implement new evidence-based policies; help in detecting the local partners (e.g. other organisation and/or individuals – micro franchisees) to deploy the model;
- creation or utilization of the already existing open platform that use digital technologies to connect a global network of social entrepreneurs to promote the best practices, alternative financing opportunities and improve their skills.

HORIZON-EIE-202X-CONNECT: Mutual learning and common tools and resources for national/regional schemes supporting innovation projects of start-ups and SMEs¹⁴

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 0.060 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 X million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

¹⁴ Potential follow up action of the Horizon 2020 pilot action under the Enhanced EIC Pilot Work Programme, experiences from the current INNOSUP05 approach will be taken into account in further designing this action.

<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.
---	---

Expected Outcome:

- Reduce the fragmentation of innovation ecosystems and the lack of connectedness among public national and regional public authorities and agencies through enhancing their cooperation;
- Create an enhancing, supporting and cooperative environment across the EU that will allow national and regional agencies to provide high-level services and support high-quality start-ups and SMEs for their innovation projects;
- Provide the opportunity to national and regional innovation support public authorities and agencies to cooperate, learn from each other and exchange knowledge by using joint tools in order to ensure that the most promising high-potential innovation proposals of start-ups / SMEs are supported at their critical early-stage of development;
- Enhance the quality of support provided at national and regional levels to the most promising innovative early stage start-ups and SMEs.

Scope:

Target group(s): national or regional innovation agencies or similar organization.

The topic will build on the outcomes of the Horizon 2020 pilot action under the enhanced EIC Pilot Work Programme “Mutual learning and common tools and resources for national/regional schemes supporting innovation projects of start-ups and SMEs”, towards bringing together public innovation authorities and agencies to increase the dialogue and networking towards the provision of advises and financial support to early stage SMEs and start-ups for the development of their innovative ideas.¹⁵

The proposals are expected to include specific activities that will allow applicants to:

- Set up open schemes and tools to share their best practices in terms of support for innovative SMEs and start-ups
- Improve the design of national and regional programmes supporting innovative SMEs;

¹⁵ The “Handbook of service design of Innovation Agencies” stemming from the H2020 Innosup programme published by EISMEA already provides a number of common methodologies developed by pan-European groups of innovation support organisations.

- Improve the efficiency of linking national programmes with the EIC plug-in mechanism with the aim to align the processes with the EIC requirements and thus improve the impact on the deployment of innovation in Europe.

HORIZON-EIE-202X-CONNECT: The African Union-European Union Innovation Platform

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.5 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 X million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome:

Strengthening Research and Innovation (R&I) cooperation between the African Union (AU) and the EU is a key priority of the EU Communication Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa¹⁶, in which the role of research and innovation is recognised as a driver for sustainable and inclusive economic growth and job generation, thereby reducing poverty and inequalities. The first R&I Ministerial meeting of the AU-EU High-Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation (HLPD on STI) agreed to focus cooperation in four priority areas: Public Health, Green transition, Innovation & Technology, and Capacities for Science, and also agreed to the development of a joint AU-EU Innovation Agenda, which is currently under preparation, and expected to be adopted at the second AU-EU R&I Ministerial in early 2023.

This topic contributes to the priority areas of action (number 9) listed in the Council Conclusions on the Future Governance of the European Research Area¹⁷ (ERA) with regard to launching a pilot initiative on the Team Europe approach for a specific world region and/or topic.

This topic is also in support of the key actions mentioned in the Council Conclusions on the Global approach to Research and Innovation - Europe's strategy for international cooperation in a changing world¹⁸, in particular at point twenty-nine related to the AU-EU Partnership, aiming at developing a joint EU-AU Research and Innovation Agenda in support of building research capacities and translating research outputs, including from the 'Africa Initiative' under the Horizon Europe Work Programmes 2021-2022, into socio-economic and environmental benefits, in line with the agreement reached at the 2020 EU-AU R&I Ministerial meeting.

¹⁶ [JOIN\(2020\) 4 final](#)

¹⁷ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14126-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

¹⁸ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12301-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

The action funded under this topic will have the objective of supporting the implementation of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda. The action is expected to bring together a mix of EU and AU innovation stakeholders, from academia and business, including higher education establishments, public and private research entities, non-governmental organisations, international finance institutions, incubators and accelerators, technology transfer and capacity building and higher learning organisations.

The aim of the topic will be to foster the links and networks between innovation stakeholders from the AU and EU innovation ecosystems, also including the social innovation dimension.

Proposals addressing this topic should in particular contribute to the following outcomes:

- Support the implementation of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda by elaborating and proposing implementation modalities of specific actions already included in the current AU-EU Innovation Agenda or by proposing additional actions that would allow to reaching its objectives.
- Communicate with and coordinate as far as possible, the various past and current innovation programmes across the two continents, including AU and EU projects and programmes of various implementing institutions.
- Enhanced coordination and communication along the innovation value chain from the generation of ideas to development and implementation, including the involvement of innovators outside the traditional R&I communities, particularly women and youth.
- Ensure systematic and inclusive interaction among all the diverse innovation stakeholders – particularly women and youth – in view of the uptake of innovation and market deployment.
- Promote the integration of the knowledge triangle concept (education, research, innovation) across strategic alliances and partnerships between existing and future AU and EU R&I cooperation programmes.
- Organisation of annual or bi-annual meetings with key innovation stakeholders from the EU and the AU should be conceptually and logistically prepared and accompanied.

Scope:

With the objective of guaranteeing a multidisciplinary approach, the selected consortium should be composed of diverse stakeholders (e.g. networks of startups, innovators, incubators, accelerators, academia, research and technology organisations, think tanks, NGOs, private and financial sectors, etc.). In order to achieve the expected outcomes, participation of an equivalent number of EU and AU entities is recommended.

Following the end of the project, this platform is expected to continue operations without funding from Horizon Europe. Therefore the development of a sustainability plan is requested.

[Placeholder: Action to support Ukrainian innovators/SMEs/incubators]

Destination: SCALEUP - Elevating the scalability potential of European business

In today's competitive landscape, innovative companies thrive through the support of an ecosystem that provides additional capabilities, data, customers and knowledge. Network connectivity within and between innovation ecosystems greatly contributes to sustainable business growth with high societal value. An ecosystem focused on meeting the concrete needs of companies helps them to stimulate their expansion at European and global level and lead to accelerated growth.

This destination aims at strengthening and expanding cooperation between innovation players to better support the next generation of innovative companies whose solutions will lead the shift towards a more competitive EU and a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient world.

The actions of this destination will help innovation ecosystems to support companies to better sustain their growth and gain new competitive advantage. Besides stronger innovation performance, increased competitive sustainability and more rapid transitions to a green and digital society, ecosystem integration can provide companies with access to new markets and customers and contribute to disruptive strategies. By being actively engaged in their local, national and European networks, companies can increase their overall growth potential.

This destination has the potential to contribute to all KSOs and expected impact areas of the Strategic Plan 2021-2024.

This destination will also be prepared in complementarity with the European Innovation Council (EIC), the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT), including their Knowledge and Innovation Centres (KICs), and WIDERA WPs and innovative activities across Horizon Europe, the interregional innovation investments (I3) instrument (ERDF), the Digital Europe Programme as well as other relevant funding and policy initiatives at EU, national, regional and local level, such as the Enterprise Europe Network and the regional smart specialisation strategies.

Expected impact

Proposals for topics under this destination should set out a credible pathway to contributing to elevating the scalability potential of businesses, and more specifically to one or several of the following impacts:

- Enhanced network connectivity within innovation ecosystems by reinforcing their capacity to support existing and emerging innovators and companies;
- Strengthened and expanded cooperation between innovation ecosystems worldwide;
- More inclusive and gender equal innovation ecosystems reducing territorial inequalities in access to innovation support;
- Improve access to finance by better connecting investors and venture capitalists to the supply side of the market in order to facilitate the uptake of new innovations.

List of potential draft topics:

HORIZON-EIE-2023-SCALEUP: Organisation of Women TechEU 2023-2024

The type of action is still under consideration (other options: PP action or RIA). The topic and its conditions will be redrafted once the choice is made.

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 15.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex A.</p> <p>The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Applicants are not required to include in their proposal a plan for the exploitation and dissemination of results.</p> <p>The page limit of the application is 10 pages. Early-stage deep tech start-ups founders must submit a short online application that includes a description of the business plan, along with a clearly defined growth strategy, and a description of the activities planned for the following five years. The proposal must also include a brief video pitch.</p>
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Participation is limited to early-stage deep tech start-ups founded, or co-founded by women, holding a top management position (CEO, CTO or equivalent) in the company at the time of submission. The applying legal entity must be registered and established in an EU Member State or a Horizon Europe Associated Country for at least six months at the time of the submission. All deep tech domains are eligible.</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>The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. Financial support provided by the participants to third parties is one of the primary activities of this action in order to be able to achieve its objectives. The EUR 60 000 threshold provided for in Article 204(a) of the Financial Regulation No 2018/1046 does not apply.</p>

	Beneficiaries must provide X grants of EUR 75 000 each, as defined in the Decision authorising the use of financing not linked to costs for the Women TechEU actions under the Horizon Europe Programme (2021-2027) .
--	--

Expected Outcome:

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

- Support deep tech innovation as a basis for a modern, knowledge-driven, resource-efficient and competitive economy;
- Promote female leadership in the deep tech industry to build fairer, more inclusive, and more prosperous innovation ecosystems in Europe.

Scope:

Women TechEU support early-stage deep tech European start-ups. The initiative complements the activities funded under the EIC, paving the way for the participation of their start-ups in future EIC calls.

Over the course of 2023 and 2024, beneficiaries of this call are expected to organise the Women TechEU scheme through:

- ensuring sound design, organisation and management of the Women TechEU scheme;
- designing and delivering mentoring and coaching support to selected applicants;
- communicating and promoting the scheme in order to secure quality applications;
- organising landmark events, building a network of Women TechEU grantees and help them to connect with the overall EIC community;
- ensure proper geographical distribution and technological areas to be covered by the scheme

Women TechEU targets highly innovative start-ups founded, or co-founded by women, holding a top management position (CEO, CTO or equivalent) in the company at the time of submission. All deep tech¹⁹ domains are eligible, with the emphasis being on overall gender balance and the position held by women in the start-up.

Support provided to eligible third parties under this initiative must be made up of the following components:

¹⁹ Deep tech is technology that is based on cutting-edge scientific advances and discoveries and is characterised by the need to stay at the technological forefront by constant interaction with new ideas and results from the lab. Deep tech is distinct from ‘high tech’ which tends to refer only to Research & Development intensity.

**Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2023-2024
European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE)**

- financial support to the company as an individual grant of EUR 75 000 supporting activities such as evaluating and refining products/services, design, user experience, upgrading the business model, updating the business plan and growth strategy, finding partners and investors, market validation, etc.;
- mentoring and coaching provided by the EIC Business Acceleration Services (BAS), under the new ‘Women Leadership Programme’, which includes dedicated networking and pitching events;
- the possibility to participate in dedicated activities organised by InvestEU and the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN).

Type and range of activities

A main activity of the beneficiary will be to run calls for proposals, organise the evaluation process, and administer the grants. Beyond providing funding to women-led deep tech startups, proposals under this topic should include a sound promotion and communication strategy of the programme (especially in underrepresented Member States), including but not limited to, through information and dissemination events, press and outreach events or roadshows.

HORIZON-EIE-202X-SCALEUP: Expanding Academia-Enterprise Collaborations

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 1 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR X 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>Consortia must have at least three (3) independent legal entities, of which at least one (1) is established in 'emerging' or 'moderate' innovator region and at least one (1) in 'strong' or 'innovation leader' innovator region. The Regional Innovation Scoreboard is taken as a reference, and in the case of entities representing national authorities, the European Innovation Scoreboard. The applicants must use as a reference the latest version of the documents mentioned above at the time of the call closure. Associated Countries which are not included in the European Innovation Scoreboard and are ranked below 25 on the</p>

	<p>Global Innovation Index 2023 are considered as ‘moderate’ or ‘emerging innovators’.. In cases of Associated Countries not included in any of the previously mentioned references, the participation rank of the country in the Horizon Europe programme (Horizon Europe country profile) will be taken as a reference and countries ranked below the average will be considered as ‘moderate’ or ‘emerging innovators’.</p> <p>The consortium must consist of at least one educational institution and at least one representative of the private sector.</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: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum.</p>

Expected Outcome:

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

- Improved flows of innovation resources between innovation ecosystems at various levels of developments;
- Improved quality of entrepreneurial education and local talents equipped with skills to support business acceleration and digitalisation²⁰;
- Enhanced entrepreneurial activity in developing innovation ecosystems and its scale up across Europe;
- Increased youth (self) employability;
- Improved integration of Higher Education Institutions, vocational schools, and similar organisations into Europe’ innovation ecosystem;
- Raised awareness of diverse business cultures and opportunities across sectors and / or geographies (e.g. urban and rural).

Scope:

Target group(s): Vocational schools, higher education establishments, public authorities in the field of education and employment, SMEs, deep tech companies, the EIC and the EIT startups and industry.

The transforming economy and rapid development of technology have changed employment conditions and the set of skills needed to grow one’s own business. More than ever, educational

²⁰ See [Entrepreneurship Competence Framework](#) for more information on entrepreneurial competences.

institutions should work hand in hand with the business sector to prepare students for a rapidly changing working environment by nurturing their entrepreneurial competences. Compared to dense areas around economic centres, the entrepreneurial skills and activity gap is bigger in peripheral and rural areas with a lower and less diverse economic activity, confirming the importance of closely interlinked ecosystems for sustaining entrepreneurial activity and employment rates.

The action should enhance entrepreneurial skills of youth in ‘emerging’ and ‘moderate’ innovation ecosystems by supporting entrepreneurial education through exchange programmes designed in close collaboration with the private sector and business acceleration entities. The proposals should leverage best practices of the private and public sector in Europe’s well performing innovation hubs and enhance collaboration between businesses with educational institutions. Only by fostering local talents, including female talents, and providing them with knowledge and opportunities to contribute to the local private sector or develop their own businesses, local innovation ecosystems can expand based on sustainable and inclusive growth. The proposals should valorise high levels of technical skills in developing innovation ecosystems with hands-on knowledge and experiences in business management and international scale-up process.

The action supports co-designed programmes of activities, of at least two (2) study years, proposed jointly by educational institutions from ‘emerging’ and ‘moderate’ innovation ecosystems and the private sector from innovation hubs (‘strong innovators’ and ‘innovation leaders’)²¹, to nurture entrepreneurial skills by activities, for example:

- engagement of business experts into the implementation of educational programmes;
- engagement of students and graduates from various disciplines and departments into the respective companies’ structures, and engagement of educational staff in companies’ business processes, both with a target of gender-balanced participation;
- organisation of co-ideation challenges, where students can propose innovative solutions in the field of partners’ expertise and are provided with resources and support to develop the product and its business development strategy.

To ensure that the impact of the action goes beyond consortium members and their respective countries, it is encouraged that the consortium works closely with innovation agencies from their respective territories and beyond, and seeks for synergies with relevant EU initiatives such as the European Institute of Technology and Innovation.

HORIZON-EIE-202X-SCALEUP: Expanding Investments Ecosystems

Specific conditions

²¹ References: [Regional Innovation Scoreboard \(RIS\)](#), [European Innovation Scoreboard \(EIS\)](#), [Global Innovation Index \(GII\)](#).

*Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2023-2024
European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE)*

<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.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR X 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: Consortia must have at least three (3) independent legal entities, of which at least one (1) is established in 'emerging' or 'moderate' innovator region and at least one (1) in 'strong' or 'innovation leader' innovator region. The Regional Innovation Scoreboard is taken as a reference, and in the case of entities representing national authorities, the European Innovation Scoreboard. The applicants must use as a reference the latest version of the documents mentioned above at the time of the call closure. Associated Countries which are not included in the European Innovation Scoreboard and are ranked below 25 on the Global Innovation Index 2023 are considered as 'moderate' or 'emerging innovators'.. In cases of Associated Countries not included in any of the previously mentioned references, the participation rank of the country in the Horizon Europe programme (Horizon Europe country profile) will be taken as a reference and countries ranked below the average will be considered as 'moderate' or 'emerging innovators'.</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.</p>

Expected Outcome:

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

- Increased access to capital and investments in less connected innovation ecosystems, enhancing their openness, competitiveness, and global potential;
- Increased venture investments and enabled late-stage growth of local start-ups in less connected and developing innovation ecosystems;
- Facilitated investors' access to the flow of local deals;

- Improved investors' knowledge on regulatory frameworks and networks to support joint cross-border ventures in new markets.

Scope:

Target group(s): Business-acceleration providers such as incubators, accelerators, company-builders, innovation agencies, business clubs and networks, public and private VCs and their networks, national and regional promotional banks.

The lack of funding is one of the most problematic aspects of business growth in less connected innovation ecosystems and there are huge disparities between company needs and the available funding. Existing interventions by public and private funders are limited and further resources are necessary to bridge the gap. The lack of funding is harmful for local start-ups' survival rate and the development of regional scale-ups, especially for women-led companies. While the established European start-up hubs attract significant money and attention, the innovation ecosystems in other areas try to keep pace with fewer resources. In the struggle for resources, many start-ups face the choice to either close their business or move elsewhere, while foreign investors struggle to enter new markets due to insufficient information about the market, its opportunities and regulatory frameworks.

The Expanding Investments Ecosystems should attract foreign investors into "emerging" and "moderate" innovation ecosystems by raising awareness of local innovation ecosystems and their start-ups, as well as the potential of the whole region, to capital providers from across Europe.

The action supports co-designed programmes of activities, of at least two (2) years, proposed by business acceleration service providers and/or investor networks and clubs, located in less connected innovation ecosystems ("emerging" and "moderate") and innovation hubs ("strong innovators" and innovation leaders")²², to facilitate the entry of funders in less connected innovation ecosystems through activities, for example:

- market orientation / introduction programmes for European investors, including establishment of central points of information for foreign investors providing them with knowledge on the ecosystem's establishment conditions, incentives, tax and legislation;
- assistance to foreign EU and international investors / Venture Capitalists, including women investors, during the whole process of investment, from the pre-entry stage until the exit, by ensuring support in administrative, legal, linguistic and cultural issues;
- organisation of European and worldwide international business forums, conferences and events to attract and connect international with local investors;
- peer-matching of investors and other networking activities to encourage joint ventures;

²² References: [Regional Innovation Scoreboard \(RIS\)](#), [European Innovation Scoreboard \(EIS\)](#), [Global Innovation Index \(GII\)](#).

- a repository of best practices of market entry facilitation for international investors;
- a list of recommendations for local authorities and European regulators to better address investors' entry challenges and facilitate cross-border deals.

To ensure that the impact of the action goes beyond consortium members and their respective countries, it is encouraged that the consortium works closely with innovation agencies from their respective territories and beyond, and seeks for synergies with relevant EU initiatives such as the Enterprise Europe Network.

HORIZON-EIE-2023-SCALEUP: Startup Europe

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 1.5-2.0 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR X million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>At least 50% of the partners in a consortium come from 'modest' or 'emerging' innovator countries.</p> <p>The European Innovation Scoreboard is taken as a reference. The applicants must use as a reference the latest version of the Scoreboard at the time of the call closure. Associated Countries which are not included in the European Innovation Scoreboard and are ranked below 25 on the Global Innovation Index 2023 are considered as 'moderate' or 'emerging innovators'. In cases of Associated Countries not included in any of the previously mentioned references, the participation rank of the country in the Horizon Europe programme (Horizon Europe country profile) will be taken as a reference and countries ranked below the average will be considered as 'moderate' or 'emerging innovators'.</p>
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The action may be implemented through financial support to third parties or directly by the consortium partners to allow startups to best benefit from the services described below.

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

- Increasing the market footprint of European Startups in strategic digital technologies and deep tech innovation notably AI, Advanced Computing, Cybersecurity, Next Generation Internet, Blockchain, IoT, Metaverse, Greentech and Fintech;
- Better connection of startups, including EIC-supported startups and Seal of Excellence holders, to relevant local and/or European ecosystems, communities, and potential new markets;
- A scaling up of capabilities in matching technology solutions developed by highly innovative EU-funded digital and deep tech startups with investment and growth opportunities including, at least two of the following (or similar programmes): the EIC, InvestEU, the Digital Europe Programme, Women TechEU, public and private buyers, investors and corporate innovation ventures.

In pursuit of the above outcomes the projects are expected to prioritise:

- a) startups that have either already achieved market-product fit or have raised at least a round of financing (seed or later); and
- b) startups established in countries in ‘moderate’ or ‘emerging’ innovator countries; or
- c) women-led startups²³.

Scope:

Target group(s): Startup ecosystem builders, business angel organisations, venture capital entities, accelerators, incubators, startup associations

This action will connect local digital and deep tech startup ecosystems and support crossborder acceleration activities for startups that have achieved market-product fit (or raised at least a seed round) to enhance transfer of technology and knowledge to support and develop their innovative solutions. Among the startups ecosystems to be connected, specific attention will be given to the inclusion of ecosystems in ‘moderate’ or ‘emerging’ innovator countries. Actions should also target startups in the Digital Europe Programme (for example from European Digital Innovation Hubs), Horizon Europe (EIC-supported companies) and national programmes targeting startups. Actions are expected to use Innovation Radar intelligence²⁴ to identify startups in Horizon Europe and European Digital Innovation Hubs. Actions should be published where relevant in the EIC Community²⁵ and other platforms, raise broad awareness of support for startups. Special attention will be given to support European digital and deep tech startups and scaleups (with a non-exclusive emphasis on startups in ‘moderate’ or ‘emerging’ innovator countries and women-led startups), wherever they are situated in Europe, to access innovation procurement opportunities (public or corporate procurers). Actions are expected to actively engage with activities and events of the Europe Startup Nations Alliance.

²³ Startups founded, or co-founded by women, holding a top management position (CEO, CTO or equivalent).

²⁴ <https://www.innoradar.eu/> (Actions can also have API access to the Innovation Radar data sets).

²⁵ <https://eic.eisma.eu/community/>

HORIZON-EIE-202X-SCALEUP: Strengthening Open Innovation

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR X million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR X million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The action may be implemented through financial support to third parties or directly by the consortium partners to allow startups to best benefit from the services described below.

Expected Outcome:

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

- Sustainable network ensuring effective matchmaking, at pan-European level, between innovative solutions from SME providers and needs/usages of (large, multinational) industries;
- Positive business impacts (e.g. increased sales) for SME providers having benefited from the brokerage services;
- For the large corporation, access to innovation stemming from SMEs
- Increased provision by SMEs of innovative solutions based on advanced technologies matching the needs of industrial users.

Scope:

Target group(s): Startup ecosystem builders, business angel organisations, venture capital entities, accelerators, incubators, startup associations.

The action could scale up the PITCCH pilot (Innosup-07-2019 - European Open Innovation Network in advanced technologies) using the most efficient business model, as developed and tested in this pilot. The latter provided a central brokerage service point, aimed at matching innovation needs/requests from large industries with innovative solutions from SME technology providers.

HORIZON-EIE-202X-SCALEUP: Cluster-coordinated projects for mitigating disruption in the input supply chain through innovation

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 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 X million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

The Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine are serious shocks for the international economy that have raised concerns on the resilience of global supply chains. Natural disasters (e.g. earthquakes, floods, hurricanes), accidents (e.g. fires, explosions), intentional disruptions (e.g. terrorist attacks, sabotage) or international crises with contagion effects may happen also in the future.

The supply chain management uses several methods to mitigate disruptions such as stockpiling, diversification of the supply provision, development of backup suppliers, and management of product demand. Equally important is capability to find substitutes for inputs in the production process through innovation. In this context, it is crucial to increase the innovation potential of SMEs with research and development focused on providing alternatives for factors of production.

EU companies need to have capabilities to respond in an effective way to supply disruption. SMEs, usually more agile than large companies and more specialised, may generate innovations that could mitigate supply chain disruptions, especially for sourcing alternative solutions to products/raw materials lacking because of supply chain disruptions.

The production of alternative supply solutions can be based on new inventions or triggered by the uptake of existing solutions in other established value chains. In these areas, clusters play an essential role for supporting SMEs. Therefore, the projects stemming from this action shall be coordinated by clusters.

Expected Outcome:

- Gaps to be tackled should include:
 - a. Increased cross-border cooperation of SMEs in the area of innovation;
 - b. Enhanced cooperation between SMEs and large corporations;
 - c. Increased cross-border cooperation of clusters in Europe;
 - d. Flexibility in changing inputs for production processes;

- e. Acceleration of tech transfer from research to companies, in particular SMEs;
- f. Increasing companies' readiness to adopt new inputs.
- Finance targeted research and development relevant for companies in need to mitigate supply disruptions;
- Finding alternatives to inputs for production;
- Valorise other project results from H2020 and Horizon Europe, in particular from the Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU).

Scope:

Target group(s): small and medium enterprises having developed (or willing to develop) alternative supply solutions.

The projects shall:

- Identify the disrupted supply chains and list the supply/products affected for which alternatives should be found. This identification shall be done based on market research, including the collection of the needs of manufacturers (including large buyers' networks) which face issues in their supply.
- Provide funding to SMEs: the funding shall be proposed to support cross-border innovations with the participation of two or more entities (SMEs, and/or University anchored TTOs, technology centres) from at least two different countries. The funding shall also help SMEs to test and to scale up their supply solutions.
- Provide additional services to SMEs in the area of international expansion (including Intellectual property, matchmaking, cooperation with large corporations).
- Link the initiative to an already existing platform (for example the European Cluster Collaboration Platform - ECCP - Supply Chain Resilience Platform, the EIC Marketplace...) enabling the promotion of the newly created supply/products and its market uptake by a large community of clients, both large corporations and SMEs. For this purpose, the projects shall provide the data entry fields for feeding the selected platform with the relevant information for the creation of an efficient marketplace, facilitating the matching between the offer and demand.
- Provide a wide communication campaign for reaching out to buyers/innovation managers/supply chain managers of large corporations. Other European Networks or platforms (EEN, ECCP) shall be targeted by this campaign for enabling the highest outreach.

This action will use financial support to third parties for funding the SME led innovation projects.

[Placeholder: Action to support the setup of test beds and/or living labs]

DRAFT

Destination: INNOVSMES – Partnership on Innovative SMEs

If the IBA option would be chosen the text will be included in the action text and the list of specific beneficiaries will be added.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) represent the backbone of the European economy. They represent 99.8% of all enterprises in the EU non-financial business sector and two thirds of employment. However, SMEs in Europe face obstacles to growth, expansion and scaling up, including lack of skills, administrative burden, and access to finance. Many lack capacity for innovation and struggle to enter international markets.

Greater cooperation with partners in Europe and beyond can help to address many of these issues. However, opportunities for bottom-up, international collaborations are limited. European SMEs can struggle to find support for their internationalisation efforts. At national level, support is often limited to collaboration among partners within the same Member State. Levels of investment to support internationalisation in European innovative SMEs vary and there is suboptimal co-ordination of national schemes. Overall, these issues weaken the resilience of the European innovation ecosystem.

The proposal for the topic under this destination should cover a specific niche that other EU, national and regional interventions do not address for the benefit of innovative SMEs in Europe: cooperation among European and/or international partners, with at least one innovative SME as the project leader. The proposed initiative would help innovative SMEs to increase their research and innovation (R&I) capacity and productivity and to become embedded in global value chains and new markets. It would achieve this by supporting innovative SMEs in developing products, processes and services through funding market-led, cross-border, R&I collaborative projects and providing accompanying measures. It would enable global collaboration and the commercialisation of new knowledge. It would thereby strengthen the overall resilience of the European innovation ecosystem.

In line with the Horizon Europe objectives²⁶ it aims to generate knowledge, support the access to and uptake of innovative solutions by SMEs (including to address global challenges), facilitate technological development, demonstration, knowledge and technology transfer, and strengthen deployment and exploitation of innovative solutions.

In line with Horizon Europe Strategic Planning, the partnership aims to contribute to global and European policies. In particular the strategic priorities of the European Commission with a special focus on the ‘European Green Deal’ and ‘An economy that works for people’ including the SME Strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe, as well actions towards tackling the COVID-19 crisis and the post-COVID era.

In line with the Global Approach to Research and Innovation²⁷ the partnership aims to facilitate the internationalisation of European SMEs by establishing win-win international innovation partnerships, such as networks of incubators and accelerators with countries that offer

²⁶ HE Regulation, Article.3.2.(b), (c).

²⁷ [COM\(2021\) 252 final](#).

reciprocal openness to entrepreneurship and investment, promoting mobility of innovators in both directions. The envisaged activities will build on tools developed and experience gained and by creating synergies with other supporting mechanisms.

Expected impact

The proposal for the topic under this destination should set out a credible pathway to contributing to the following expected impact:

To help European innovative SMEs to grow and successfully access European and international markets and to embed in global value chains by:

- Contributing to the the strategic priorities of the European Commission with a special focus on the ‘European Green Deal’ and ‘An economy that works for people’ including the SME Strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe, as well actions towards tackling the COVID-19 crisis and the post-COVID era.
- Strengthening the innovation performance, output, potential and resilience of the European innovation ecosystem;
- Addressing the productivity and internationalisation gap between innovative SMEs and large companies and aiming to improve SMEs’ global scale-up potential leading to increased employment and turnover;
- Leveraging investment for innovative SMEs.

HORIZON-EIE-2023-INNOVSMES-01-01: European Partnership on Innovative SMEs

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 71.12 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 71.12 million (from the 2023 and 2024 budgets)
<i>Type of Action</i>	Programme Co-fund Action
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The granting authority can fund a maximum of one project.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: The starting date of grants awarded under this topic may be as of the submission date of the application. Applicants 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. The funding rate is 30 % of the eligible costs. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. Financial support provided by the participants to third parties is one of the primary activities of this action in order to be able to achieve its objectives. The EUR 60 000 threshold provided for in Article 204(a) of the Financial Regulation No 2018/1046 does not apply.
<i>Total indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the partnership is up to EUR 250 million for the duration of Horizon Europe programme.

Expected Outcome:

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

- Improved knowledge transfer in the European innovative SMEs ecosystem, through increased and sustained collaboration between SMEs, public research partners and academia;
- Mitigation of difficulties in access to finance for European innovative SMEs and thus contribute to enhanced growth and expansion of European innovative SMEs;
- Improved European innovative SME access to new international markets or value chains thus leading to improved market share and sales for European innovative SMEs increasing their employment capacity;
- Increase public research and innovation funding to European innovative SMEs, to spur more high quality collaborations and more innovative solutions;
- Pull together national efforts to spur internationalisation and collaboration in European innovative SMEs, avoiding unnecessary duplication leading to a simplified offer to beneficiaries, achieving a more balanced geographic participation, ensuring complementarity and improved innovation ecosystems across Europe;
- Identify and better exploit existing or emerging opportunities in the global markets and establish win-win international innovation partnerships, such as networks of incubators and accelerators with the help of the Innowide instrument and other existing support mechanisms.

Scope:

This action is the continuation of the topic HORIZON-EIE-2021-INNOVSMES-01-01 to support the co-funded European Partnership on Innovative SMEs included in the European Innovation Ecosystems work programme 2021 – 2022.

The proposal should provide mainly two types of activities. Firstly, regular calls for proposals resulting in collaborative research and innovation activities. These activities should result in a faster time to market, de-risking investment, supporting business growth, contributing to EU and global priorities and supporting access to markets and knowledge. Secondly, through coordination and support activities, the creation of synergies between and synchronisation of national programmes, and a better cooperation and knowledge exchange between national intermediaries.

While collaborative research and innovation activities for internationalisation of European innovative SMEs exist to some extent at Member State and EU level the alignment of national programmes and more effective and efficient processes of intermediaries and funding bodies are not addressed in instruments and programmes other than the Eurostars 1 and 2 programmes, supported under previous framework programmes. The initiative should draw on the experiences, and build on the successes, of those predecessor programmes.

There is a clear added value and ‘selling point’ for the initiative to further address gaps towards a better alignment and increased focus on internationalisation. This reflects the definition of

European Partnerships in the Horizon Europe regulation²⁸ as initiatives where the union and its partners ‘commit to jointly support the development and implementation of a programme of research and innovation activities, including those related to market, regulatory or policy uptake.’

The below list of specific activities, going beyond research and innovation activities, can therefore be implemented under the partnership and are anticipated as expected outputs:

- Support transnational near-market collaborative research and innovation addressing technological and societal challenges;
- Enhance SME readiness (absorptive capacities in all participating countries),
- Attract wide range of beneficiaries by country and SME type and age;
- Create synergies among national programmes by streamlining their execution;
- Enhance cooperation and knowledge exchange at level of national intermediaries.

The proposed initiative will help innovative SMEs to increase their research and innovation capacities and productivity and to become embedded in global value chains and new markets. It will achieve this by supporting innovative SMEs in developing products, processes and services through funding market-led, cross-border, research and innovation collaborative projects and providing accompanying measures. The initiative addresses collaboration in Europe and beyond, and the commercialisation of new knowledge. Thereby it will strengthen the overall resilience of the European innovation ecosystem.

The overall objective of the initiative is to implement a Co-funded European Partnership for Innovative SMEs to stimulate economic growth and job creation by enhancing the competitiveness of innovative SMEs while contributing to deliver a positive economic, societal and environmental impact in Europe and beyond.

In order to address that objective, the initiative should:

- Enable innovative SMEs to develop all forms of innovation, including breakthrough innovation, and strengthen market deployment of innovative solutions;
- Foster the internationalisation of European innovative SMEs;
- Connect national programmes to unlock the potential of all partners.

Type and range of activities

A main activity would be to run calls for proposals, organise the evaluation process and enable collaborative cross-border research and innovation projects. Beyond providing funding to innovative SMEs for cross-border R&I collaboration, they should include further promotion of

²⁸ Definition as per Article 2(47) of the Horizon Europe Regulation.

the programme in underrepresented Member States, including but not limited to, through dissemination events, mutual learning seminars or roadshows.

The initiative should exploit synergies with cohesion policy funds and significantly support the widening aspect. In any case, links with regional smart specialisation strategies should be a priority.

Accompanying measures such as Innowwide should be included in the proposal.

Expected partner composition and geographical coverage

- National administrations and National Funding Bodies (NFBs).

The private sector and research actors would need to be mainly drawn from the activities of the national and/or regional funding organisations. The effort, networks and judgements of these organisations are key to initiate cross-border research collaborations, to help prepare applications and to fund successful participants. The success of the initiative depends largely on these organisations.

A dedicated implementation structure may notably support them through various activities and services such as to organise calls, manage funding, monitor payments and projects and implement dissemination events, roadshows, matchmaking events, webinars etc.

The initiative should have an extended geographical coverage beyond Member States and Associated Countries, and the potential to evolve towards a global programme under Horizon Europe, including through possible involvement of additional partners during the lifetime of the programme. Third countries are welcome to participate in the Partnership in line with the standard criteria related to co-funded partnerships in Horizon Europe. The initiative should promote the ambition towards more projects involving other partners than those in geographical proximity and the sufficient utilisation of the potential of the extended Eureka network.

Types and levels of contributions from partners

Proposals should mobilise the necessary financial resources from participating national (or regional) research programmes with a view to implementing joints call for transnational proposals resulting in grants to third parties.

Member States are invited to maximise the financial support provided to innovative SMEs through increased national funding during the selection process.

International dimension

Proposals should focus on supporting international, projects led by innovative SMEs. They should enable international cooperation, enabling small businesses to learn, combine and share expertise and benefit from working beyond national borders.

In line with the ambitions of the partnership to foster international collaboration and the provisions of the model grant agreement, projects involving one legal entity established in a Member State or Associated Country as beneficiary and one legal entity established in a non-

associated third country as partner may be supported in the same manner as under Eurostars 2. As per Horizon Europe rules, projects with no participants from Member States of Associated Countries are not eligible for participation in the partnership. A substantial majority of the projects supported must involve at least two beneficiaries from Member States or Associated Countries.

Synergies

Focussing on helping European innovative SMEs to grow and successfully embed in international markets and value chains by developing methodologies and technologies, the partnership is expected to collaborate closely with other relevant European Partnerships, missions and the European Innovation Council in order to ensure coherence and complementarity of activities. Proposals must describe the methodology for their collaboration and the aims the project wants to achieve with this kind of collaboration.

Proposals should include only their commitments for the grant covered by the present work programme.

Other actions not subject to calls for proposals

1. [Placeholder: Ensuring greater synergies between the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities the EIC]

Legal entities: Add relevant KICs

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 budget: EUR X million from the 2023 budget (EIT EIC Synergies)

2. EU Intellectual Property Helpdesk (EU IP Helpdesk)

In the EU, SMEs, including start-ups, individual innovators, researchers, and European micro small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) do not always have sufficient knowledge of how to best use Intellectual Property (IP)²⁹ to facilitate the exploitation of research results, and more generally to manage, disseminate and valorise technologies and other IP rights and assets. A smart use of IP will help EU creators and inventors to obtain adequate reward for their intellectual efforts. It enables also MSMEs to appropriately commercialise and take advantage of their intellectual assets in the EU. It may thus increase the chances that the scaling up and exploitation will take place in the EU. It is instrumental in securing better margins, organising technology transfers and collaboration and attracting investors. It may thus boost the resilience of the European economy.

This action supports the better use of IP by MSMEs in setting up an EU IP Helpdesk based on the experience of the previous initiatives, inspired by the activities of the existing one and possibly extending its scope. The IP Helpdesk must raise awareness on IP matters via a website, developed and conduct trainings including MOOCs as well as customised advice in relation to cross-border IP issues across Europe and developing an IP strategy. The IP Helpdesk should work seamlessly with the EIC acceleration services, as well as selected other innovation ecosystem services. It should in particular coordinate the website offering with the EUIPO, EPO and the other EU funded IP support services (namely Helpdesks and IP Scan) and implement promotional activities in coordination with the action Awareness raising on IP management for European R&I.

The IP Helpdesk must aim at the following:

²⁹ On SME challenges with IP see the EUIPO study [IP SME scoreboard 2019](#).

- Improving EU MSME's knowledge about IP showing specifically how to use IP as strategic and structuring element for business development;
- Supporting EU project applicants for IP issues that are relevant in cross-border research and commercial relationships supported by EU funds (IP rights management as to the results of common projects);
- Supporting the management, dissemination and/or valorisation of technologies and other intellectual assets. This involves the provision of guidance to enhance the capacity of SMEs (including start-ups and scale-ups) to compete internationally, the protection of their intangible assets timely and adequately, the examination of ways to leverage their intangible assets for investments and their support with proof of concept IP advice;
- Increasing the participation of the target group(s): entrepreneurs, MSMEs and start-ups (applicants, together with the universities), start-up hubs, universities (applicants), NCPs, Enterprise Europe Network partners, Chambers of commerce, professional associations, EIC coaches, Business accelerators (applicants providers) for all in particular by strengthening the linkages with local stakeholders in 'moderate' and 'emerging' innovator countries³⁰ and peripheral European countries.
- Supporting the promotion of socially responsible IP practices, identifying areas of particular societal concern where non-exclusive, royalty-free licences on the IP resulting from EU-funded research could be granted for a limited time to innovators/MSMEs;
- Supporting the identification of critical IP created through public funding and prevent it from leaving the EU without control and guarantees.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Fourth quarter of 2023

Indicative budget: EUR 3.00 million from the 2023 budget (EU IP Helpdesk)

3. Mapping of regulatory compliance advisory services and identification of gaps

Regulatory compliance oftentimes remains a hurdle for innovators and innovative enterprises to commercialize products and services, and to scale up internationally. SMEs, startups, and innovators do not always have the necessary knowledge of relevant EU, national, regional, or local rules that might affect their products or services. Despite harmonisation efforts within the Single Market, innovators and ventures frequently run into a multitude of issues including difficulties in meeting requirements to sell goods or services, insufficient information about applicable rules, fragmentation of rules for cross-border (e-)commerce, and complex administrative procedures when planning expansion to the foreign markets. Enhanced

³⁰ References: [European Innovation Scoreboard \(EIS\)](#), [Global Innovation Index \(GII\)](#).

regulatory compliance advisory services can remedy this situation and help innovators to navigate Europe's complex regulatory environment.

This action funds a study and mapping of existing regulatory compliance services across the EU, with the aim to identify existing gaps. In doing so, this action will serve as a basis for potential future actions to provide innovators, startups, and innovative enterprises with optimal support to better position and promote their products or services and to help create better connected support structures for innovators.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: First quarter of 2023

Indicative budget: EUR 0.50 million from the 2023 budget (Regulatory compliance advisory services)

4. EIC FORUM support (2023)

The EIC Forum fosters in an informal manner, enabling framework conditions and flows of information, knowledge, talent and best practices among actors of innovation ecosystems and the EIC, to fully harness the potential of innovation. The Forum acts as an interface between the sections of Pillar III of Horizon Europe, ensuring coordination between the EIC and the EIT, as well as with other relevant sections of Pillar I and II. By involving also other relevant Directorates Generals (DGs) from the Commission, the Forum aims at promoting a coherent and inclusive approach to EU innovation ecosystems, by co-creating and co-designing policies and instruments.

The action will support the work of the EIC Forum and/or its working groups. Their aim will be to gather new or more robust evidence and / or to produce analyses in support of policy discussions.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: First quarter of 2023

Indicative budget: EUR 0.50 million from the 2023 budget (EIC FORUM support)

5. Use of individual experts on assisting with the monitoring of actions (2023)

This action will support the use of appointed independent experts for the monitoring of running actions (grant agreement, grant decision, public procurement actions, financial instruments) funded under Horizon Europe and previous Framework Programmes and where appropriate include ethics checks.

A special allowance 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: First quarter of 2023

Indicative budget: EUR 0.20 million from the 2023 budget (Use of individual experts on assisting with the monitoring of actions (2023))

6. Towards a Pilot European Startup Scoreboard

There is a growing need for better data collection and analysis with regards to start-ups, scale-ups and their ecosystems. Currently, there are some existing initiatives by both public and private organisations that track the development of Europe's startup ecosystem more broadly; however, due to the use of diverging data and definitions, and a number of different methodologies, they are often incompatible and unable to provide a clear picture on the European start-up landscape.

Building on the outcomes of [insert feasibility study on startup scoreboard], this action aims at establishing a set of innovation ecosystem specific indicators supported by consistent sources of data to embrace the development of methodological approaches to track, analyse and model innovation ecosystems policies at regional, national and European level with a specific focus on startups. This action should establish a credible methodology to monitor and evaluate the quality and inclusion of startup ecosystems. It should provide policy makers with insights regarding the short, medium and longer-term effects and benefits of innovation ecosystems related policies and instruments targeting startups and pay particular attention to their efforts and contributions towards the green and the digital transition. The results should include definition of the data collection methods linked to the proposed indicators that should rely more on microdata gathering improved linking to external databases.

This action should provide a basis for a European startup scoreboard that will provide European, national and regional policymakers, innovation practitioners and all interested public with a solid, EU-wide analytical tool to help monitor, measure and benchmark the innovation performance of the European Union's startup ecosystem, including individual Member States and their regions, as well as EU's associated countries and other key international economic partners.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: First quarter of 2024

Indicative budget: EUR 0.50 million from the 2024 budget (European Startup Scoreboard)

7. EIC FORUM support (2024)

The EIC Forum will foster in an informal manner, enabling framework conditions and flows of information, knowledge, talent and best practices among actors of innovation ecosystems and the EIC, to fully harness the potential of innovation. The Forum will act as an interface between the sections of Pillar III of Horizon Europe, ensuring coordination between the EIC and the EIT, as well as with other relevant sections of Pillar I and II. By involving also other relevant Directorates Generals (DGs) from the Commission, the Forum will aim at promoting a coherent and inclusive approach to EU innovation ecosystems, by co-creating and co-designing policies and instruments.

The action will support the work of the EIC Forum and/or its working groups. Their aim will be to gather new or more robust evidence and / or to produce analyses in support of policy discussions.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: First quarter of 2024

Indicative budget: EUR 0.50 million from the 2024 budget (EIC FORUM support)

8. Use of individual experts on assisting with the monitoring of actions (2024)

This action will support the use of appointed independent experts for the monitoring of running actions (grant agreement, grant decision, public procurement actions) funded under Horizon Europe and previous Framework Programmes and where appropriate include ethics checks.

A special allowance 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: First quarter of 2024

Indicative budget: EUR 0.20 million from the 2024 budget (Monitoring)

9. Commission fee as EUREKA member (administrative costs)

This action will cover the Commission fee as a member of Eureka (administrative costs). This action will support coordination activities aimed at increasing complementarities and synergy between EUREKA and the Horizon Europe in areas of common interest.

EUREKA is an international network established in 1985 as an agreement between 18 countries to foster European competitiveness and integration and to encourage Research & Development cooperation. Since then, it expanded to include over 45 countries in Europe and beyond who share the same goals and have national funding available to organisations who apply through our programmes.

The EU is a member of EUREKA and, as such, contributes to the budget of the EUREKA Secretariat.

Type of Action: Subscription action

Indicative timetable: Second quarter of 2023 and first quarter of 2024

Indicative budget: EUR 0.50 million from the 2023 budget and EUR 0.50 million from the 2024 budget