

**EN**

**Annex 11**

**Horizon Europe**

**Work Programme 2023-2024**

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

**DISCLAIMER**

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## **Introduction**

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

Annex 11 of the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023 – 2024 addresses the key areas widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area (ERA), and elaborates on the 2021 – 2022 work programme. It includes two main components:

I: Widening participation and spreading excellence, and;

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

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

Within this context, the ERA foresees a single, borderless market for research, innovation and technology across the EU, based on excellent, competitive, open and talent driven research and researchers. It helps Member States be more effective together, by strongly aligning their research policies and programmes. The free circulation of researchers and knowledge enables better cross-border cooperation, building of critical mass and continent-wide competition. It promotes gender equality, ethics, mobility, skills and career development opportunities within the EU, as well as better access to publicly funded peer-reviewed science.

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

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

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

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

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

To improve the translation of R&I results into the economy, it is crucial to strengthen the innovation ecosystems for knowledge circulation and valorisation by establishing stronger interconnections between existing collaborative and supportive structures, engaging a diversity of stakeholders in multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral collaborations. The European Commission, in close collaboration with the European Committee of the Regions, the Member States and stakeholders, will conceptualise, pilot and launch the ERA Hubs across EU territory.

To improve EU wide access to excellence, ERA hubs will enhance the strategic capacity of Europe's public research performing organisations, with support services for the professionalisation of research management, and improved access to excellence.

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

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

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates more than ever the importance of R&I cooperation to deliver solutions to society's most demanding problems and needs. Delivering Europe's

recovery, together with the green and digital twin transitions, is paramount. To match these challenges, a new level of ambition that better links R&I with the economy, as well as with education and training, and puts the EU's scientific knowledge to work, is necessary. This new level of ambition is reflected in the ERA Policy Agenda that also calls for actions to deepen a truly functioning internal market for knowledge and increase access to R&I excellence across the EU. Future editions of the ERA Policy Agenda will further complement these actions in the long term.

To address these ambitious priorities and initiatives, this part of the work programme introduces actions aimed at reforming and enhancing the EU R&I system in line with the objectives of the Communication and the actions in the ERA Policy Agenda. Investments and reforms will be prioritised, access to excellence will be improved and R&I results will be translated into the economy. These actions will result in deepening the ERA. The principle of excellence, meaning that the best researchers with the best ideas obtain funding, remains the cornerstone for all investments under the ERA.

The goal is a Union where knowledge and a highly skilled workforce circulate freely; where research outputs are shared rapidly and efficiently; where researchers benefit from attractive careers, and gender equality is assured. Common strategic research agendas are aligned to national plans and research and innovation outcomes are understood, trusted and increasingly used, by informed citizens to the benefit of society. Envisaged activities complement the direction of the Pact for R&I and the ERA Policy Agenda.



## **Destination Improved access to Excellence**

### **Introduction**

The ERA Communication (COM(2020) 628 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0628&from=EN>) has established the need of improving access to excellence as one of the four main strategic goals. In particular striving towards more excellence requires a stronger R&I system where best practice is disseminated faster across Europe. The strategic plan for Horizon Europe aims at underpinning geographical diversity, building the necessary capacity to allow successful participation in the R&I process and promoting networking and access to excellence thus optimising the impact of Pillar 2 and contributing to the objectives of the entire programme.

This destination will address “improving access to excellence” through a portfolio of complementary actions that aim at building up R&I capacities in widening countries, also through national and regional R&I reforms and investments, to enable them to advance to the competitive edge at European and international level. This portfolio constitutes the widening dimension of a broader European Excellence Initiative that reaches out beyond this programme part and will be implemented together with ERASMUS+.

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

Capacity building will go beyond purely scientific capacities since it includes the development of management and administrative capacities for the benefit of institutions (notably in Twinning and the Strengthening Capacities for Excellence in Universities) that are eager to take over consortium leadership roles especially under Pillar 2. Teaming actions will create new or modernise existing centers of excellence by means of a very close and strategic partnership with leading institutions abroad. The impact will be amplified by the conditionality of a securing a complementary investment (especially for infrastructure, building, hardware) from the structural funds or other sources. Once established the centres will function as lighthouses with far reaching impact and role models for attracting the best talents. Further, they will demonstrate the success of modern governance and management, and, hence stimulate generalised reforms in the national R&I environment.

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

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

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

#### Expected impact

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

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

**Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2023-2024**  
**Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area**

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

| Call                          | Budgets (EUR million) |      | Deadline(s)   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------|---|
|                               | 2023                  | 2024 |   |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-01 |                       |      | 13 Apr 2023 (First Stage)<br>07 Mar 2024 (Second Stage) |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02 |                       |      | 28 Sep 2023   |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-03 |                       |      | 13 Apr 2023   |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-04 |                       |      | 28 Sep 2023   |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-05 |                       |      | 28 Sep 2023   |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-06 |                       |      | 26 Oct 2023<br>24 Oct 2024                              |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-07 |                       |      | 07 Mar 2024   |
| Overall indicative budget     |                       |      |   |

## Call - Teaming Stage 1

***HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-01***

### Conditions for the Call

#### Indicative budget(s)<sup>1</sup>

| Topics   | Type of Action | Budgets (EUR million) | Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>2</sup> | Number of projects expected to be funded |
|--|----------------|-----------------------|---|--|
|  |                | 2024                  |   |  |
| Opening: 10 Jan 2023   |                |                       |   |  |
| Deadline(s): 13 Apr 2023 (First Stage), 07 Mar 2024 (Second Stage) |                |                       |   |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-01-01-two-stage                         | CSA            |                       |   |  |
| Overall indicative budget  |                |                       |   |  |

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

<sup>1</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.  
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023 and 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

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

| <b>Specific conditions</b>                  |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Expected EU contribution per project</i> | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 8.00 and 15.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.   |
| <i>Indicative budget</i>                    | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR tbc million.   |
| <i>Type of Action</i>                       | Coordination and Support Actions  |
| <i>Eligibility conditions</i>               | <p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>In order to achieve the expected outcomes, participation as coordinators to the call is limited to legal entities established in Widening countries, as defined in the Horizon Europe regulation.</p>  |
| <i>Procedure</i>                            | <p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Seals of Excellence will be awarded to applications exceeding all of the evaluation thresholds set out in this work programme, but cannot be funded due to lack of budget available to the call.</p> <p>The following rules for dealing with ex-aequo applications apply: in the first place, ex aequo proposals will be prioritised according to geographical diversity criteria, as indicated in Point 4) of General Annexes Part F (Procedure/Evaluation procedure and ranking). The method described in its 1), 2), 3) and 5) will then be applied to the remaining equally ranking proposals in the group. This rule establishing the priority order serves to better spread the impact of the action and to strengthen the efficiency of the ‘Widening participation and spreading excellence’ programme.</p> <p>Since funding for projects funded under this topic is coming from more than one source, this action is an EU Synergy grant and the following conditions will apply:</p> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <p>The project proposal will undergo a joint evaluation of both project parts funded under Horizon Europe and under any chosen complementary funding source, such as from Cohesion policy programmes. The operations supported by a complementary source must comply with the scope of the supporting programme, and they must provide an effective contribution to the achievement of programme's specific objectives. In addition, when Cohesion policy funding is mobilised, it must be consistent with the relevant smart specialisation strategy.</p> <p>A clear description of the project part supported by a complementary funding must be included in the proposal, where relevant including the eligible category of research and development, technical specifications of infrastructure, preliminary planning for building and installations, cost-benefit analysis, etc.</p> <p>In kind contributions are not considered complementary funding.</p> |
| <i>Other conditions</i>                         | All recruitments have to follow a transparent, merit based and open recruitment procedures.  |
| <i>Eligibility and admissibility conditions</i> | <p>A Teaming project must involve at least two beneficiaries: a) the main applicant organisation (the coordinator) which will be a university or a research organisation, a national or regional authority or a research funding agency, and b) at least one leading university or research organisation established in another Member State or Associated Country as an advanced partner. Co-ordinators who have already been awarded a Teaming project under Horizon 2020 or Horizon Europe are not eligible.</p> <p>The project must have a complementary funding (e.g. national and/or regional funding, European funding, such as from Cohesion policy programmes, or private sources). Its total amount must at least equal the total requested Horizon Europe contribution.</p>   |

Expected Outcome: Disparities in R&I performance are due to, among other reasons, the insufficient critical mass of science and lack of centres of excellence having sufficient competence to engage countries and regions strategically in a path of innovative growth. Teaming is responding to this challenge establishing new centers of excellence or modernising existing ones with the help of leading European partnering institutions. This will help countries to increase their R&I intensity and to attain a competitive position in the European R&I system and globally, especially by becoming drivers of change.

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

- Increased scientific capabilities of the beneficiary institution and the host country enabling them to successfully apply for competitive funding in the EU and globally,

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

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

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

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

R&I with the aim of strengthening the European Research Area and contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals.

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

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

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

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

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

At a detailed level the full proposal should:

- Present a strategy for how the centre will develop excellence in the chosen relevant R&I domain that will put it at the competitive edge beyond the state of the art enabling future success in competitive calls,
- Demonstrate the growth potential and expected socio-economic outreach of the Centre of Excellence for the benefit of the host country or region,
- Demonstrate how the project will contribute to encouraging and supporting reforms of the R&I system at regional and or/national level,
- Elaborate on the structure of the consortium and how this will create a win-win situation,
- Demonstrate how the newly established/upgraded Centre will have full autonomy in decision-making. In particular, the Centre of Excellence should have the maximum degree of autonomy in terms of taking its own decisions, being in legal, administrative, operational, personnel and academic matters. The Centre should be able to fix and pay competitive salaries for its personnel,



- Elaborate on the steps that will be taken to ensure long-term self-sustainability after the end of the Horizon Europe grant,
- Propose a robust human resource strategy that addresses gender equality (in line with the research institutions respective gender equality plans) and international component, ensuring appropriate management capacities for the effective and efficient running of the Centre of Excellence,
- In order to assure the autonomy of the Centre of Excellence (CoE), if relevant, the project might benefit of having the CoE coordinating the project within the duration of the Grant,
- Present an investment plan including the letter(s) of commitment for complementary funding from the competent national/regional authorities or private sources to commit financial resources (e.g. resources coming from programmes co-financed by the ERDF, IPA or other sources ) for implementing the future Centre, in particular regarding investment in infrastructure and equipment. The letter(s) of commitment for complementary funding of the project will be an integral part of the evaluation of the proposal,
- The grant awarded from the Horizon Europe budget should provide substantial support for the start-up and implementation phase of the future Centre of Excellence including the recruitment of the managerial, technical and scientific personnel. It should also cover expenses related to team members of the future Centre of Excellence (e.g. their salaries, recruitment costs<sup>3</sup>, management costs, travel and subsistence costs),
- A minor research component can be accepted not exceeding 10% of the total Horizon Europe grant that may include a preparatory research project. Such small research project embedded in the Teaming action should be aligned with the objectives of the project and e.g. serve the purpose of developing and testing new methodologies and instruments and/or the integration of new scientific personnel. If preparatory research activity is planned to carry out, the outline of a respective work plan at an appropriate level of detail should be presented,
- The duration of the grant should be up to six years.

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

## **Call - Twinning**

***HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02***

## Conditions for the Call

### Indicative budget(s)<sup>4</sup>

| Topics   | Type of Action | Budgets (EUR million) | Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>5</sup> | Number of projects expected to be funded |
|--|----------------|-----------------------|---|--|
|  |                | 2023                  |   |  |
| Opening: 25 Apr 2023<br>Deadline(s): 28 Sep 2023 |                |                       |   |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01                 | CSA            |                       |   |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02                 | CSA            |                       |   |  |
| Overall indicative budget                        |                |                       |   |  |

| General conditions relating to this call                |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Admissibility conditions</i>                         | The conditions are described in General Annex A. |
| <i>Eligibility conditions</i>                           | The conditions are described in General Annex B. |
| <i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i> | The criteria are described in General Annex C.   |
| <i>Award criteria</i>                                   | The criteria are described in General Annex D.   |
| <i>Documents</i>  | The documents are described in General Annex E.  |
| <i>Procedure</i>  | The procedure is described in General Annex F.   |

<sup>4</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.  
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023 and 2024.

<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i> | The rules are described in General Annex G. |
|---|---|

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01: Twinning - Bottom up**

| <b>Specific conditions</b>                  |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Expected EU contribution per project</i> | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 0.50 and 1.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts. |
| <i>Indicative budget</i>                    | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR tbc million. <sup>6</sup>   |
| <i>Type of Action</i>                       | Coordination and Support Actions   |

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

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

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

A research component not exceeding 30% of the total Horizon Europe grant may include an exploratory research project. This will open opportunities for integrating smaller research

<sup>6</sup> This budget is shared with topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02

activities and by this strengthening the commitment and the engagement of the twinning partners.

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

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

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

The research part of the project should be presented through a dedicated work package and plan including the scientific objectives, tasks and roles of the partners.

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

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

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

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

- Improved excellence capacity and resources in Widening countries enabling to close the still apparent research and innovation gap within Europe.

- Enhanced strategic networking activities between the research institutions of the Widening countries and at least two internationally-leading counterparts at EU level.
- Raised reputation, research profile and attractiveness of the coordinating institution from the Widening country and the research profile of its staff.
- Strengthened research management capacities and administrative skills of the staff working in institutions from the Widening country.
- Improved creativity supported by development of new approaches in R&I collaboration, increased mobility (inwards and outwards) of qualified scientists.

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

| <b>Specific conditions</b>                  |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Expected EU contribution per project</i> | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 0.50 and 1.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts. |
| <i>Indicative budget</i>                    | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR tbc million. <sup>7</sup>   |
| <i>Type of Action</i>                       | Coordination and Support Actions   |

Expected Outcome: Twinning Green Deal adds in directionality to the general twinning action. In practice, all the conditions attached to the Twinning action remain exactly the same except for the choice of the research topic. It will have to be in line with one of the topics listed in the European Green Deal strategy<sup>8</sup>. Climate change is the biggest challenge and the European Green Deal considers it is an opportunity to build a new economic model. The European Green Deal set the blueprint for this transformational change. All 27 EU Member States committed to turning the EU into the first climate neutral continent by 2050. To get there, they pledged to reduce emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. This will create new opportunities for innovation and investment and jobs. It includes research and innovation actions related a.o.; to transport, industry, energy, buildings' ecological efficiency, nature and health protection, boosting global climate action.

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

- Improved excellence capacity and resources in Widening countries enabling to close the still apparent research and innovation gap within Europe.

<sup>7</sup> This budget is shared with topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01

<sup>8</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/delivering-european-green-deal\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/delivering-european-green-deal_en)

- Enhanced strategic networking activities between the research institutions of the Widening countries and at least two internationally-leading counterparts at EU level.
- Raised reputation, research profile and attractiveness of the coordinating institution from the Widening country and the research profile of its staff.
- Strengthened research management capacities and administrative skills of the staff working in institutions from the Widening country.
- Improved creativity supported by development of new approaches in R&I collaboration, increased mobility (inwards and outwards) of qualified scientists.

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

Scope: Twinning proposals should have to clearly outline the scientific strategy for stepping up and stimulating scientific excellence and innovation capacity in a defined area of research directly linked to the European Green Deal as well as the scientific quality of the partners involved in the twinning exercise. This scientific strategy should include arrangements for formulating new (or ongoing) joint research project(s) in the scientific area related to the European Green Deal and describe how Twinning will take this research to a new stage, by enlarging its scope and/or the research partnership. If relevant, any links with sustainable development objectives are to be outlined.

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

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

A research component not exceeding 30% of the total Horizon Europe grant may include an exploratory research project. This will open opportunities for integrating smaller research activities and by this strengthening the commitment and the engagement of the twinning partners.

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

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

The research part of the project should be presented through a dedicated work package and plan including the scientific objectives, tasks and roles of the partners.

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

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

### **Call - European Excellence Initiative (EEI)**

**HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-03**

### **Conditions for the Call**

#### Indicative budget(s)<sup>9</sup>

| Topics | Type of Action | Budgets (EUR million) | Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>10</sup> | Number of projects expected |
|--------|----------------|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------|
|        |                | 2023                  |  |                             |

<sup>9</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

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

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

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

<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

**Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2023-2024**  
**Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area**

|  |     |  |  |              |
|--|-----|--|--|--------------|
|  |     |  |  | to be funded |
| Opening: 10 Jan 2023<br>Deadline(s): 13 Apr 2023 |     |  |  |              |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-ACCESS-03-1                       | CSA |  |  |              |
| Overall indicative budget                        |     |  |  |              |

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

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-WIDERA-ACCESS-03-1: European Excellence Initiative**

| Specific conditions                         |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Expected EU contribution per project</i> | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 5.00 and 8.00 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 tbc million.  |
| <i>Type of Action</i>                       | Coordination and Support Actions   |



|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <i>Other conditions</i> | The following rules for dealing with ex-aequo applications apply: in the first place, ex aequo proposals will be prioritised according to geographical diversity criteria, as indicated in Point 4) of General Annexes Part F (Procedure/Evaluation procedure and ranking). The method described in its 1), 2), 3) and 5) will then be applied to the remaining equally ranking proposals in the group. This rule establishing the priority order serves to better spread the impact of the action and to strengthen the efficiency of the ‘Widening participation and spreading excellence’ programme.[Free Text] |
|-------------------------|--|

Expected Outcome: This action follows the Commission Communication on a European strategy for universities (18 January 2022), and fits into the Council Conclusions on empowering higher education cooperation for the future of Europe (adoption anticipated May 2022) in the context of the overall policy objectives of the widening component. This action also contributes to implementation of the Council Conclusions on strengthening research careers (28 May 2021). The objectives of this action are to

- Raise excellence in science and in value creation through integrated and inclusive cooperation of higher education institutions, such as European Universities alliances with a particular focus on widening countries;
- Improve global competitiveness and visibility of Europe’s universities, notably in key areas such as the green transition and Horizon Europe mission areas.

Expected Outcome:

- Successful institutional reform and upgrade of higher education institutions in the R&I dimension (empowerment to be actors of change), through integrated collaboration between institutions and with other actors in local ecosystems;
- Mainstreamed culture of excellence in science and value creation amongst higher education institutions, and particularly in laggard institutions and countries, through consolidation of geographically inclusive and sustainable cooperation networks of higher education institutions, achieving long-term collaboration;
- Accelerated institutional reform in R&I dimension and strengthened R&I capacities in higher education institutions, notably those located in widening countries, in particular;
  - o Modernised research careers in higher education sector, interoperable with other sectors;
  - o Accelerated digital transition of the R& I dimension of the higher education sector across the entire ERA;
- Increased global competitiveness of research in higher education institutions by strongly increased critical mass in terms of upskilling, knowledge creation and knowledge

circulation in the green transition and other key European policy areas such as European Missions;

- Contribution to implementation of the relevant ERA Policy Agenda actions in higher education sector.

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

Through the geographically inclusive cooperation and practice exchange in the European Universities alliances, universities from different capacities benefit and institutional changes towards increased attractiveness and access to excellence are accelerating (connected to ERA policy agenda action 16).

By developing closer cooperation with economic and industrial partners within local and regional innovation ecosystems, academic researchers and support staff will be provided the opportunity to be trained in knowledge valorisation, entrepreneurship, access to finance, at any stage of their careers (connected to ERA policy agenda action 7 and 15), and to take into account the variety of academics' activities in their career assessment (specifying ERA policy Agenda action 3 and 4).

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

Projects are expected to contribute to the implementation of ERA Policy Agenda priorities, notably:

- The strengthening of research careers in academia and beyond;
- Achieving more balanced circulation of talents;
- Reinforcing the role of universities in innovation ecosystems;
- Mainstreaming practices and tools for open sharing of knowledge and data;
- Advancements towards reform of the assessment system for research, including career assessment;
- Improved links between science and business;

- Promoting gender equality, diversity and fostering inclusiveness;
- The acceleration of society's green and digital transition;
- Integrated international cooperation with entities in third countries.

Applicants are encouraged to implement the aforementioned policy objectives and to consolidate institutional changes by means of a coherent package of activities as suggested in the following (non exhaustive) list of activities:

- sharing R&I capacities including infrastructures;
- developing joint interdisciplinary R&I agendas;
- outreach to and inspiring local/regional innovation ecosystems;
- strengthening research careers and interdisciplinary upskilling;
- reforming research assessment;
- digitisation of institutions and partners;
- engaging with citizens, cities, regions and other non academic actors;
- training and capacity building for research and innovation management including IPR;
- exchange of academic and non academic staff for sharing good practices;
- global outreach and internationalisation;
- consolidation of cooperation with partners outside EU MS/AC;
- Expenditures for research activities including equipment are limited to a maximum of 10% of the total budget,

The actions should envisage a duration appropriate to the ambition and complexity of the proposed topic, but not exceed 5 years.

### **Call - Pathways to Synergies**

***HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-04***

### **Conditions for the Call**

#### Indicative budget(s)<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

**Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2023-2024**  
**Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area**

| Topics   | Type of Action | Budgets (EUR million) | Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>12</sup> | Number of projects expected to be funded |
|--|----------------|-----------------------|--|--|
|  |                | 2023                  |  |  |
| Opening: 28 Mar 2023<br>Deadline(s): 28 Sep 2023 |                |                       |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-ACCESS-04-1                       | CSA            |                       |  |  |
| Overall indicative budget                        |                |                       |  |  |

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

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-WIDERA-ACCESS-04-1: Pathways to Synergies**

|                            |
|----------------------------|
| <b>Specific conditions</b> |
|----------------------------|

<sup>12</sup> The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023 and 2024.  
Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Expected EU contribution per project</i> | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 0.50 and 1.20 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts. |
| <i>Indicative budget</i>                    | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR tbc million.  |
| <i>Type of Action</i>                       | Coordination and Support Actions   |

Expected Outcome: Synergies between Horizon Europe and the cohesion policy programmes, notably the European Fund for Regional Development (ERDF) but also INTERREG and the Resilience and Recovery Fund (RRF), are instrumental for widening countries to catch up in their R&I performance and to reduce the innovation divide in Europe. Although such synergies are already addressed in the Teaming and Excellence Hubs actions under this work programme these instruments do not capture the full range of possible synergies and need to be complemented by a dedicated scheme. The Commission staff working document on ‘Synergies between Horizon Europe and ERDF programmes’ (SWD(2022) xxx final) presents the new opportunities for achieving operational synergies between Horizon Europe and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), including for Seal of Excellence, transfer, cumulative funding, combined funding (Co-funded and Institutionalised Partnerships), Teaming, and upstream/downstream synergies. This pilot call offers opportunities to incentivise the concrete realisation of particularly promising sequential synergies in two different pathways either supporting the upstream synergy mode (a) or downstream synergy mode (b) where the former is focussing on human resources development and internationalisation and the latter on valorisation and upscaling of research results towards marketable solutions.

The following overall outcome is expected:

- improved and more systematic synergies between Horizon Europe & 2020 and ERDF, RRF and INTERREG through internationalisation, valorisation and technology uptake;
- strengthened competitiveness of R&I actors in widening countries;
- accelerated knowledge transfer and innovation cycle for beneficiaries from ERDF and Horizon;
- strengthened innovation capacity and competitiveness of less R&I performing regions

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

- joint internationalisation strategy for R&I;
- human resources development strategy;
- improved access to excellent European R&I networks and communities;

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

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

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

Scope:

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

More specifically, consortia applying for funding under pathway a) are composed of a core group of at least three different public or private research entities from at least two different widening countries that were beneficiaries from ERDF, RRF or similar investments for R&I including infrastructure in the current or previous programming period. These applicants need to provide evidence for (e.g. contract numbers) and a short description of the investment. In addition to this core group other partners also from non-widening countries may join if their roles are duly explained and justified e.g. by providing training, coaching, strategic advice, knowledge transfer, hosting staff secondments etc. The main goal of the action is to move formerly single beneficiaries of regional funding programmes out of isolation via cross-border collaboration and to prepare them for successful participation in Horizon Europe calls by strengthening their competitiveness by means of a customised bunch of activities. Therefore, proposals need to present a coherent and strategically convincing package of activities with a particular focus on internationalisation strategies and human resources development. The latter

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

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

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

## **Call - Dissemination and Exploitation Support Facility**

***HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-05***

### **Conditions for the Call**

#### Indicative budget(s)<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

**Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2023-2024**  
**Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area**

| Topics   | Type of Action | Budgets (EUR million) | Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>14</sup> | Number of projects expected to be funded |
|--|----------------|-----------------------|--|--|
|  |                | 2023                  |  |  |
| Opening: 26 Apr 2023<br>Deadline(s): 28 Sep 2023 |                |                       |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-05                    | CSA            |                       |  |  |
| Overall indicative budget                        |                |                       |  |  |

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

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-WIDERA-ACCESS-05-1: Dissemination and Exploitation Support Facility**

Expected Outcome: Improving knowledge diffusion, technology uptake and having spill-over effects is fundamental to ensure that researchers and their institutions build on and valorise the latest available knowledge. Moreover, the exploitation of research results and the creation of

<sup>14</sup> The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023 and 2024.  
Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.



value for our economy and society, often depend on the skills and abilities of the beneficiaries as well as the intermediaries (i.e. technology/knowledge transfer officers) to present and connect to those stakeholders that can help them take the results into the next level. Especially in widening countries, R&I actors lack sufficient support and information, skills or connections to the right stakeholders and these gaps can jeopardise their ability to maximise the potential value of their results.

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

The following specific outcome is expected:

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

- Improved sustainability of ongoing widening actions;
- Identify downstream synergies with other EU programmes especially ERDF, ESF, RRF.

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

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

The following specific outcome is expected:

- Strengthened Dissemination and Exploitation capacities including through better understanding of the Commission's D&E Strategy and the opportunities it can offer to beneficiaries in need from widening actions;
- Support to beneficiaries in their dissemination and exploitation of results through a market-oriented approach;
- Improved skills and knowledge on D&E, knowledge transfer and IP management for researchers and management personnel of beneficiaries of widening actions to be able to fulfil their Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement obligations, including after the end of their project;
- Collected and shared best practices for uptake of R&I results and identify the blocking contextual elements that prevent beneficiaries from valorising further their R&I results; Address these blocking factors by proposing measures in the valorisation channels as identified in the EU valorisation policy

- Increasing the maturity level of key exploitable results produced by widening beneficiaries;
- Greater recognition of beneficiaries based in widening countries at national & regional policy level, as a result of enhanced visibility of D&E success stories;
- Enhanced synergies between beneficiaries of widening actions in view of networking opportunities and future competitive calls;
- Improved sustainability of ongoing widening actions.
- Identify downstream synergies with other EU programmes especially ERDF, ESF, RRF.

Scope: Scope:

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

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

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

commercialisation (e.g. training, networking, connection with the investors and the relevant industrial ecosystems, commercialisation support).

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

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

### **Call - Hop-on facility**

### **HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-06**

### **Conditions for the Call**

#### Indicative budget(s)<sup>15</sup>

| Topics                                | Type of Action | Budgets (EUR million) |      | Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>16</sup> | Number of projects expected to be funded |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|------|--|--|
|                                       |                | 2023                  | 2024 |  |  |
| Opening: 10 Jan 2023                  |                |                       |      |  |  |
| Deadline(s): 26 Oct 2023, 24 Oct 2024 |                |                       |      |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-ACCESS-06-1            | CSA            |                       |      |  |  |
| Overall indicative budget             |                |                       |      |  |  |

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

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

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

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

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

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

**Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2023-2024**  
**Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area**

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

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-WIDERA-ACCESS-06-1: Hop on Facility**

| <b>Specific conditions</b>                  |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Expected EU contribution per project</i> | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 0.10 and 1.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.   |
| <i>Indicative budget</i>                    | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR tbc million.  |
| <i>Type of Action</i>                       | Coordination and Support Actions   |
| <i>Eligibility conditions</i>               | <p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Legal entities established in Widening countries may join already selected actions, subject to the agreement of the respective consortium and provided that legal entities from such countries are not yet participating in it.</p>   |
| <i>Procedure</i>                            | <p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The proposal will be evaluated by independent experts focussing on the added value of the new partner and the work-package or task assigned to this institution in the context of the ongoing project. The ongoing project as such is not subject of the evaluation. In case of proposals receiving equal score in the ranking procedure, a preference will be given to those</p> |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | proposals with a particular relevance to green or digital transitions of the economy. |
|--|---|

Expected Outcome: The Hop On Facility is based on Article 20 (3) of the HE Common Understanding providing that the work programme may foresee the possibility for legal entities from low R&I performing countries to join already selected collaborative R&I actions, subject to the agreement of the respective consortium and provided that legal entities from such countries are not yet participating in it. The scheme further aims at achieving the Inclusiveness ambition of the future ERA policy by involving research institutions from widening countries under Horizon Europe Pillar 2 and EIC Pathfinder actions.

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

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

- At system level, it mobilises excellence in the Widening countries, increases visibility of the participants from the Widening countries, improves knowledge circulation, and reduces lack of participation of the Widening countries in specific thematic domains.
- At organisation level, it opens up silos of established closed consortia, improves research excellence of the Widening country's institutions in specific fields, enlarges outreach of the participants' R&I actions and provides access to new talent pools.
- At the level of the beneficiary, new competencies and skills for working in transnational projects including research management and dissemination and exploitation are acquired.

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

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

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

## Call - Excellence Hubs

### ***HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-07***

## Conditions for the Call

### Indicative budget(s)<sup>17</sup>

| Topics   | Type of Action | Budgets (EUR million) |      | Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>18</sup> | Number of projects expected to be funded |
|--|----------------|-----------------------|------|--|--|
|  |                | 2023                  | 2024 |  |  |
| Opening: 28 Sep 2023<br>Deadline(s): 07 Mar 2024 |                |                       |      |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-ACCESS-07-1                       | CSA            |                       |      |  |  |
| Overall indicative budget                        |                |                       |      |  |  |

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

<sup>17</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

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

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

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

<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-WIDERA-ACCESS-07-1: Excellence Hubs**

| <b>Specific conditions</b>                      |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>     | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.  |
| <i>Indicative budget</i>                        | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR tbc million.   |
| <i>Type of Action</i>                           | Coordination and Support Actions  |
| <i>Procedure</i>                                | <p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following rules for dealing with ex-aequo applications apply: in the first place, ex aequo proposals will be prioritised according to geographical diversity criteria, as indicated in Point 4) of General Annexes Part F (Procedure/Evaluation procedure and ranking). The method described in 1), 2), 3) and 5) will then be applied to the remaining equally ranking proposals in the group. This rule establishing the priority order serves to better spread the impact of the action and to strengthen the efficiency of the ‘Widening participation and spreading excellence’ programme.ing with ex-aequo applications apply:[insert details]as [insert text to duly justify this exception].</p> |
| <i>Total indicative budget</i>                  | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 50 million from the 2023 budget.   |
| <i>Eligibility and admissibility conditions</i> | The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  |



|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
|                          | In order to achieve the expected outcomes, participation as coordinators to the call is limited to legal entities established in Widening countries as defined in the Horizon Europe regulation.<br>[Free Text]   |
| <i>Other requirement</i> | Consortia must include at least two different place based R&I ecosystems in at least two different countries eligible to host the co-ordinator under the widening part of Horizon Europe. Each ecosystem needs to include four different categories of actors i.e. a) academic institutions (universities and/or non-university research centers or labs), b) business entities (active established firms with relevant revenues), c) public authorities or authorised agencies and d) societal actors (civil society organisations, associations, citizens, end users, media, cultural actors etc.). This quadruple helix approach needs to be presented in the proposal either by one or more umbrella organisations (e.g. clusters) or representative individual entities representing each of the four categories. At least one of the business entities needs to be an established firm (no start-up) with significant and proven operational income to be verifiable by balance sheets or business reports of at least two consecutive years. In addition, consultants and start-ups may participate if duly justified. [Free Text] |

Expected Outcome: Excellence hubs are an initiative to strengthen regional innovation excellence in place based innovation ecosystems by cross-border collaboration on a common strategy and/or alongside value adding chains. Place based innovation ecosystems are interconnected companies, research institutions, governmental bodies and societal actors that are mutually reinforcing each other in a territorial context and together raise the level of innovation excellence in their regional fabric.

Projects are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

- Excellent and sustainable place based innovation ecosystems in Widening countries and beyond in relevant domains of cutting-edge science and innovation
- Long term joint R&I strategies underpinned by concrete action plans of European relevance
- Common investment plans for R&I including infrastructures leveraging national, regional and European funds as well as private capital in a synergetic manner
- R&I pilot projects alongside a joint strategy and in line with regional and national strategies, notably regional innovation strategies for smart specialisation (RIS3)
- New competencies and skills for researchers, entrepreneurs and professionals in R&I intensive domains
- Strengthened linkages between science and business

- Poles of attraction for talents in catching up regions and countries
- Improved knowledge transfer and development of entrepreneurial skills.
- Uptake of innovative technologies
- New business opportunities especially for SMEs and new employment.

Scope: Excellence hubs are part of the European excellence initiative and complement the science oriented schemes Teaming, Twinning, ERA Chairs and the European excellence initiative for universities by a dedicated innovation component. Excellence hubs will focus on innovation by allowing innovation ecosystems in widening countries and beyond, to team up and create better linkages between academia, business, government and society. This will foster a real placed based innovation and entrepreneurial culture in widening countries based on a strategic agenda aligned with regional or national smart specialisation strategies. In this context, synergies will be sought with the programme parts on European Innovation Ecosystems and the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT).

This action is embedded into the broader European initiative on ERA hubs and will help to bridge the innovation divide in this context. It responds to the third priority in the ERA communication on translating R&I results into the economy and will especially support R&I policies aiming at boosting the resilience and competitiveness of our economies and societies. This means ensuring Europe's competitive leadership in the global race for technology based on excellence while improving the environment for business R&I investment, deployment of new technologies and enhancing the take up and visibility of research results in the economy and society as a whole. This action addresses regions as R&I actors since they are the place where the innovation and industrial ecosystems breath and develop, making the links between Horizon Europe and industry, research centres, innovation stakeholders as well as citizens. The participation of SMEs is especially encouraged. Regionally developed innovation ecosystems connected across Europe will be the driver of new European strategic value chains.

Unlike Teaming projects that are centred around a single beneficiary Excellence hubs are networks of place based innovation ecosystems in widening countries involving larger communities of actors in a regional context based on the quadruple helix principle (see below). Individual participants and ecosystems from other EU member states, associated countries and international co-operation partners may join in duly justified cases e.g. given by a specific expertise needed or the involvement in a relevant value adding chain.

Projects should be established around the following core components:

- Cross-border and transnational joint R&I strategy aligned with regional smart specialisation strategies and/or European policy priorities such as the green and digital transition
- R&I project consolidating academia business linkages and providing evidence for strategy building and investment

- Action and investment plans for implementation of the strategy
- Conceptual design and pre-planning for pilots and demonstrators (if applicable) in line with the strategy
- Accompanying measures e.g. to raise visibility, citizen engagement, technology transfer, entrepreneurship training, staff exchange, mutual learning etc.

Excellence hubs should improve access to excellence for R&I actors in widening countries and elaborate joint R&I strategies that are aligned with national, regional (notably RIS3) and/or European strategies or policy priorities (e.g. R&I Missions, Green Deal, Digital transition). These strategies will be underpinned by concrete actions plans and an investment strategy that reaches out beyond the project's lifetime and will leverage national, regional and European funds as well as private (venture) capital. Investment plans may include pertinent R&I infrastructures as well as demonstrators and pilots.

The research component should be developed by joint pilot research projects in a domain covered by the joint strategy that will facilitate long term cross border and inter-sectoral collaborative links between partners notably academia and business and advancement in science and technology development with market potential. In a particular R&I projects should serve the purpose to close knowledge gaps and develop evidence to underpin the development of the strategy and the investment plans. For example, in the R&I projects lab prototypes might be developed leading to the design of pilot plants or demonstrators (see above). However, the realisation of such pilots and demonstrators must be financed by other sources in particular programmes co-financed by the ERDF. The approach how to access such co-funding at a later stage should be sketched out in the proposal. Notably for the case of ERDF the proposal should demonstrate the alignment with the pertinent regional smart specialisation.

Accompanying measures are complementary activities that may promote knowledge and technology transfer, mutual learning and skills development especially in research and innovation management and entrepreneurship as well as citizen engagement. Mutual secondments and staff exchange within and between ecosystems will help to build trust and long term collaborative links.

Proposals should outline the nexus of collaborative links and if applicable competitive relations of commercial actors within each of the ecosystems in a conceptual model. Ecosystems or individual partners from outside the widening countries may participate in the consortium as long as they prove added value by facilitating access to excellence for the widening countries. Proposals should convincingly demonstrate the relevance of the chosen research and innovation (R&I) domain by its alignment with regional (in particular RIS3), national and/or European R&I strategies and policy priorities. Applicants may choose between a more regional orientation e.g. proven by a common denominator in their regional smart specialisation strategy and/or a more global orientation towards European policy priorities such as the green or digital transition.

The description of R&I content based on this choice should include a long-term vision beyond the state of the art of the chosen R&I domain. On top of that, proposal need to demonstrate the win-win effects of the partnership established by the consortium and the benefits for employment and post crisis recovery. For the implementation, proposals should present a coherent package of actions well proportioned in terms of strategy development, research, innovation and outreach activities.

Excellence hubs as a new action under the widening component are complementary but different to initiatives such as Digital hubs or the EIT regional innovation scheme (RIS) because of their strategic orientation, broader scope and alignment with widening eligibility criteria.

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

DRAFT

## **Destination Attracting and mobilising the best talents**

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Strand 1* recognises the importance of prioritising investments and reforms to accelerate the green and digital transformation and to increase competitiveness as well as the speed and depth of the recovery. It offers support for policy makers and addresses the need for better analysis

and evidence, including simplifying and facilitating the inter-play between national and European R&I systems.

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

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

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

Expected impact:

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

- Reform and enhancement the EU R&I system;
- Prioritisation of investments and reforms, realisation of the recovery and the twin transitions;
- Improved access to excellence;
- Greater quality of the scientific production and stronger translation of R&I results into the economy;
- Deepen the ERA;
- Coordinated national and regional R&I programmes by pooling national resources and contributing to the alignment of national research and innovation policies;
- Improved knowledge for policy making about the networking patterns of research support staff and research management;
- Synergies between research & innovation and higher education policies and programmes;
- Modernised higher education sector, benefitting from targeted transformations in higher education, research, and innovation;
- Increased number of interconnected knowledge ecosystems, strong in knowledge creation, circulation and use;

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- Researchers benefitting from attractive careers;
- Inclusive gender equality is promoted in the European research and innovation system;
- A more open and inclusive research and innovation system;
- Increased capacity in the EU R&I system to conduct open science and to set it as a *modus operandi* of modern science;
- Increased engagement of citizens with research and innovation;
- Increased alignment of strategic research with society needs, expectations and values;
- Identified synergies between second and third level education, and between education and business;
- Increased trust in science and R&I outcomes, and greater two-way communication between science and society;
- Knowledge and a highly skilled workforce circulate freely;
- Improved capacities within the EU R&I system to conduct open science;
- A more open and inclusive research and innovation system.

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

| Call                           | Budgets (EUR million) |      | Deadline(s)                |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------|----------------------------|
|                                | 2023                  | 2024 |                            |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-TALENTS-01 |                       |      | 07 Mar 2024                |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-TALENTS-02 |                       |      | 13 Sep 2023<br>12 Sep 2024 |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-TALENTS-03 |                       |      | 13 Sep 2023<br>12 Sep 2024 |
| Overall indicative budget      |                       |      |                            |

## Call - ERA Chairs

### ***HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-TALENTS-01***

## Conditions for the Call

### Indicative budget(s)<sup>19</sup>

| Topics   | Type of Action | Budgets (EUR million) |      | Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>20</sup> | Number of projects expected to be funded |
|--|----------------|-----------------------|------|--|--|
|  |                | 2023                  | 2024 |  |  |
| Opening: 28 Sep 2023<br>Deadline(s): 07 Mar 2024 |                |                       |      |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-TALENTS-01-01                | CSA            |                       |      |  |  |
| Overall indicative budget                        |                |                       |      |  |  |

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

<sup>19</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

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

<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.



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

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

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

| <b>Specific conditions</b>                  |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Expected EU contribution per project</i> | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 1.50 and 2.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.  |
| <i>Indicative budget</i>                    | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR tbc million.   |
| <i>Type of Action</i>                       | Coordination and Support Actions  |
| <i>Eligibility conditions</i>               | <p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>In order to achieve the expected outcomes, participation as coordinators to the call is limited to legal entities established in Widening countries, as defined in the Horizon Europe regulation.</p>  |
| <i>Award criteria</i>                       | <p>The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The composition, levels of remuneration and timeline of implementation of the ERA Chair holder research team should be indicated and the appointment of team members must follow an open, transparent and merit-based recruitment process with no more than 50% of the team appointees having previous contractual links with the coordinator.</p>   |
| <i>Procedure</i>                            | <p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following rules for dealing with ex-aequo applications apply: in the first place, ex aequo proposals will be prioritised according to geographical diversity criteria, as indicated in Point 4) of General Annexes Part F (Procedure/Evaluation procedure and ranking). The method described in 1), 2), 3) and 5) will then be applied to the remaining equally ranking proposals in the group. This rule establishing the priority order serves to better spread the impact of the action and to strengthen the</p> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | efficiency of the ‘Widening participation and spreading excellence’ programme. |
|--|--|

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

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

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

At system level:

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

At organisation level:

- Research excellence of the institution in the specific fields covered by the ERA Chair holder;
- Increased attractiveness of the institution for internationally excellent and mobile researchers;

- Creation of a permanent and excellent research group in the chosen scientific field with a spill-over effect on the institution;
- Improved capability to succeed in competitive research funding in the EU and globally, at least, in the fields of choice;
- Greater contribution to the knowledge-based economy and society.

Scope: Research organisations located in widening countries interested in establishing an ERA Chair shall submit a proposal with the prospective ERA Chair holder who should be an outstanding researcher and/or innovator in the chosen scientific domain. The scientific field can be any domain of research and innovation addressed under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union<sup>21</sup>.

The institution in the Widening country shall be the coordinator and can opt between a joint application with the legal entity currently employing the future ERA Chair or submitting a proposal as a single applicant. For the former, partner institutions can be located in any country (including countries outside the EU) except the country of the coordinator and ERA Chair holders can be citizens of any country in the world.

Proposals should include a CV in Europass form<sup>22</sup> of the future ERA Chair holder and detail the scientific and technical support he/she will provide to the coordinator and how the proposed activities will upgrade from the current situation. If there is a partner institution proposals should outline any additional support to be provided by it to the coordinator. Proposals should also describe any relevant investments of the coordinator in research projects, facilities and infrastructures and how those will be achieved and/or a better use of the installed research capacity (in particular of EU co-funded research infrastructures & facilities). Existing or foreseen arrangements for compliance with ERA priorities<sup>23</sup> including the European Charter for Researchers & Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers<sup>24</sup> are to be outlined in the proposal.

ERA Chair holders should be excellent researchers and/or innovators in the chosen field of research<sup>25</sup>. They should establish a research team fully integrated in the coordinator's institution to significantly improve its research performance in the scientific domain of choice and to be more successful in obtaining competitive funding. The selection of personnel to the research team is to be conducted by an international recruitment panel led by the ERA Chair and outlined in proposals. The ERA Chair holder should also have a position within the organisation/university, allowing her/him to make appropriate resource allocation decisions,

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<sup>21</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=en>

<sup>22</sup> <https://europa.eu/europass/en/create-europass-cv>

<sup>23</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2012:0392:FIN>

<sup>24</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reco/2005/251/oj>

<sup>25</sup> Corresponding to profiles R3 or R4 of researchers careers as set out in the “European Framework for Research Careers” provided at [https://cdn5.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy\\_library/towards\\_a\\_european\\_framework\\_for\\_research\\_careers\\_final.pdf](https://cdn5.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/towards_a_european_framework_for_research_careers_final.pdf)

supervise team members and freely apply for research funding. When this is compatible with the nature of the coordinator, he/she is expected to take on some teaching duties.

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

The ERA Chair holders might move on a temporary or permanent basis to the coordinator's premises. To this end, secondments or any other legal arrangements (e.g., leave without pay, sabbatical licences) are possible including part-time work and multiple stays. All contractual arrangements and the timeline of ERA Chairs stays at the coordinator should be indicated in the proposal as well as the salary, travel and daily allowances and/or other perks to be offered. If, at any stage, the preferred option is an employment contract, the future contractual arrangements with the coordinator should be detailed.

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

Grants have an expected duration of up to 5 years and cover expenses related to the ERA Chair holder and a number of team members (e.g. their salaries, recruitment costs<sup>26</sup>, administrative costs, travel and subsistence costs) and research costs up to 10% of the EU contribution. Costs to be claimed by a partner institution should be mainly linked to personnel seconded to the coordinator. The grant should also provide a contribution towards measures aimed at facilitating structural changes in the institution (e.g. costs for trainings, meetings, publications and managing Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)).

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

### **Call - ERA Fellowships**

#### ***HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-TALENTS-02***

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<sup>26</sup> That can be considered under the category of "other direct costs"

## Conditions for the Call

### Indicative budget(s)<sup>27</sup>

| Topics  | Type of Action  | Budgets<br>(EUR<br>million) |      | Expected<br>EU<br>contribution<br>per project<br>(EUR<br>million) | Number<br>of<br>projects<br>expected<br>to be<br>funded |
|---|---|-----------------------------|------|---|---|
|   |   | 2023                        | 2024 |   |   |
| Opening: 28 Feb 2023<br>Deadline(s): 13 Sep 2023, 12 Sep 2024 |   |                             |      |   |   |
| HORIZON-<br>WIDERA-2023-<br>TALENTS-02-1                      | TMA Postdoctoral<br>Fellowships - European<br>Fellowships |                             |      |   |   |
| Overall indicative<br>budget                                  |   |                             |      |   |   |

| General conditions relating to this call                |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Admissibility conditions</i>                         | The conditions are described in General Annex A. |
| <i>Eligibility conditions</i>                           | The conditions are described in General Annex B. |
| <i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i> | The criteria are described in General Annex C.   |
| <i>Award criteria</i>                                   | The criteria are described in General Annex D.   |
| <i>Documents</i>  | The documents are described in General Annex E.  |
| <i>Procedure</i>  | The procedure is described in General Annex F.   |

<sup>27</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.  
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023 and 2024.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i> | The rules are described in General Annex G. |
|---|---|

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-TALENTS-02-1: ERA Fellowships**

| <b>Specific conditions</b> |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <i>Indicative budget</i>   | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR tbc million. |
| <i>Type of Action</i>      | TMA Postdoctoral Fellowships - European Fellowships           |

Expected Outcome: This action builds on the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2021 action (HORIZON-MSCA-PF-2021). The target group are host organisations located in Widening Countries.

Project results are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

For supported ERA Fellows:

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

For participating organisations in the Widening Countries:

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

For Widening countries:

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

Scope: Fellowships should be provided to excellent researchers<sup>28</sup>, undertaking cross-border mobility either to or between EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Countries. Applications are expected to be made jointly by the researcher together with a beneficiary in the academic or non-academic sector located in a Widening Country.

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

In order to apply for the ERA Fellowships call, applicants need to submit their proposal to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowships 2021<sup>29</sup>. To be eligible to this call the host organisation must be located in an eligible widening country. The application to the (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowships 2021 will be automatically resubmitted to this call in case the proposal fails to reach an adequate place in the ranking to be funded. This simplified submission procedure to the ERA Fellowships call presents applicants moving to Widening countries with an additional funding opportunity but there is the possibility to opt out during the application stage.

The proposals submitted under the ERA Fellowships must fulfil all the admissibility and eligibility conditions of the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2021 and pass all the thresholds for that call.

ERA Fellowships will be implemented applying the award criteria, scoring and threshold for Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions. The ranking order for the ERA Fellowships call will follow the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2021 call scores and evaluation procedure and proposals will also retain the scores and comments included in the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) of this call. The MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2021 model grant agreement will be used to the ERA Fellowships.

### *Secondments*

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

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<sup>28</sup> The part of the MSCA Work Programme referring to synergies with the Euratom Research and Training Programme 2021-2025 does not apply to the ERA Fellowships.

<sup>29</sup> specifically to Topic HORIZON-MSCA-2021-PF-01-01, TMA Postdoctoral Fellowships - European Fellowships

### *Placements in the non-academic sector*

ERA Fellowships can provide an additional period of up to six months to support researchers seeking a placement at the end of the project to work on R&I projects in an organisation from the non-academic sector established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country. While this possibility is also available to fellows recruited in the non-academic sector, such a placement should be implemented at a different non-academic host organisation established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country. The request for such a placement should be an integral part of the proposal, explaining the added-value for the project and for the career development of the researcher, and will be subject to evaluation. It must be substantiated by a Letter of Commitment from the European non-academic organisation hosting the secondment<sup>30</sup>. This incentive aims at promoting career moves between sectors and organisations and thereby stimulate innovation and knowledge transfer while expanding career opportunities for researchers.

### *Training activities*

The training activities implemented under the ERA Fellowships should include training for key transferable skills<sup>31</sup>, foster innovation and entrepreneurship, (e.g. commercialisation of results, Intellectual Property Rights, communication, public engagement and citizen science) and promote Open Science practices (open access to publications and to research data, FAIR data management, etc.).

### *Career Development Plan*

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

## **Call - ERA Talents**

### ***HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-TALENTS-03***

## **Conditions for the Call**

### Indicative budget(s)<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> In the grant agreement, the non-academic host organisations must participate as associated partners.

<sup>31</sup> As an illustration, Eurodoc published a list of such transferable skills at: <http://eurodoc.net/skills-report-2018.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.



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| Topics                                | Type of Action | Budgets (EUR million) |      | Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>33</sup> | Number of projects expected to be funded |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|------|--|--|
|                                       |                | 2023                  | 2024 |  |  |
| Opening: 10 Jan 2023                  |                |                       |      |  |  |
| Deadline(s): 13 Sep 2023, 12 Sep 2024 |                |                       |      |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-TALENTS-03-1           | CSA            |                       |      |  |  |
| Overall indicative budget             |                |                       |      |  |  |

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

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-WIDERA-TALENTS-03-1: ERA Talents**

|                            |
|----------------------------|
| <b>Specific conditions</b> |
|----------------------------|

<sup>33</sup>

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023 and 2024.  
Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Expected EU contribution per project</i> | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 1.00 and 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 tbc million.  |
| <i>Type of Action</i>                       | Coordination and Support Actions   |

Expected Outcome: The ERA Talents action aims to boost interoperability of careers and employability of research and innovation talents across sectors, with a centre of gravity in widening countries.

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

- Strengthened human capital base in R&I of Widening countries, with more entrepreneurial and better-trained researchers, innovators and other R&I talents;
- A more balanced talent circulation, both geographical and cross-sectoral;
- Boosted R&I capacity and R&I support capacity, as well as contribution to increased excellence of the research-performing organisation in widening countries;
- A more structured and impactful collaboration between academia and businesses;
- Increased set of research, entrepreneurial and other transferable skills and competences;
- Improved employability and sustainable career prospects of diverse talents within academia, industry and beyond.

Scope: Experimentation. Complementary to ERA Chairs, Excellence Hubs, ERA Fellowships and MSCA Staff Exchanges, the ERA Talents scheme promotes innovative inter-sectoral collaboration in research and innovation through cross-sectoral exchange of staff, with a focus on widening countries. This call particularly encourages experimentation by diverse and heterogeneous consortia in order to develop best practices for intersectoral talent circulation at the benefit of widening countries. Grants awarded under this topic will be requested to collaborate with each other and participate in mutual learning exercises.

- *Strengthening academia/non-academia cooperation*, and reinforcing innovation ecosystems, focussing on establishment of public-private links, private sector involvement booster, activities for the transfer of researcher know-how to businesses, as well as activities that foster closer involvement of business sector staff in training of academic staff.
- *Improving training and lifelong learning* for researchers, innovators, and other research and innovation talents, characterised by opportunities for upskilling and interdisciplinary skill development. In particular, (i) training for specific in-demand skills by industry or other non-academic sectors in specific thematic areas, such as Missions and Partnerships,

greening of society, to improve employability and interoperability, and (ii) training to build R&I support capacity ('other research and innovation talents'), such as knowledge brokers, data stewards, research managers, research infrastructure operators, knowledge and technology transfer officers, etc.

- *Boosting researcher entrepreneurship*, focused on development of entrepreneurial skills (e.g. business economics, business creation, knowledge transfer, intellectual property rights and other relevant legal framework) for researchers and commercialisation or other valorisation training and support for researchers, through preparatory activities for entrepreneurship and support for researcher start-up creation.

*Participating organisations.* ERA Talents actions must involve organisations from the academic and non-academic sectors. The consortium partners contribute directly to the implementation of a joint training and mobility methodology by seconding and/or hosting eligible staff members. The collaborative approach of ERA Talents should exploit complementary competences of the participating organisations and create synergies between them.

*Seconded staff.* Support is provided for inter-sectoral mobility of R&I staff leading to knowledge transfer and increased employability between participating organisations. Costs to be claimed by beneficiaries should be mainly linked to seconded personnel in the form of salaries, training, travel, and subsistence packages. The joint training and mobility methodology presented by the applicant consortium should include an approach *to identify a diverse audience of research and innovation talents* engaging in the action, outlined in the application. The ERA talent should have a secondment term within one (or more) of the participating organisations. Supported staff members must be actively engaged in or linked to R&I activities or R&I support activities for at least 6 months (full-time equivalent) at the sending institution before the first period of secondment.

Proposers are requested to provide an estimate of the number of 'ERA talents' the action is going to provide with a mobility opportunity. Secondments are open to researchers, innovators, and other research and innovation talents – such as administrative, managerial and technical staff supporting R&I activities in their organisations – from any career stage, excluding though doctoral candidates (PhD students). For innovators and other R&I talents, emphasis needs to be put on staff at an early career stage. The consortium needs to demonstrate clear benefit of the proposed secondment methodology for widening countries, including the perspective to allocate at least 70% of the budget for secondments for the benefit of widening countries.

*Return and reintegration.* A mandatory return phase for every cross-border secondment from a widening country has to be included in the secondment methodology, equal to the duration of the secondment, but not more than 12 months. Support, excluding salaries, for such return phase on the grant is allowed for up to 12 months after the first secondment, within the duration of the grant. A return phase is not mandatory for mobility within the same country or secondment from a non-widening to a widening country.

*Strengthening careers and collaboration.* For participating staff members, the project should offer new skills acquisition and career development perspectives. Participating organisations must ensure that the seconded staff (ERA talents) are adequately mentored. Preference will be given to actions that propose secondment mechanisms offering improved and more sustainable career prospects to the ERA talents (e.g. with follow-up position at the sending organisation after the secondment duration), thus maximising the impact of the action for knowledge sharing and long-term collaboration. Specific attention should be paid to gender equality objectives, in line with the organisations' commitments through their adopted gender equality plans, and in line with ERA objectives, as far as appropriate.

Exchanges should mainly occur between academic and non-academic sector entities (or vice-versa) from different EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries. Same-country exchanges are also possible under the condition that they serve the specific purpose of maintaining or reinforcing regional innovation ecosystems.

Grants have an expected duration of up to 4 years.

## **Destination Reforming and enhancing the EU research and innovation system**

### **Introduction**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Expected impact:

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

- Reform and enhancement the EU R&I system;
- Prioritisation of investments and reforms, realisation of the recovery and the twin transitions;
- Improved access to excellence;
- Greater quality of the scientific production and stronger translation of R&I results into the economy;
- Deepen the ERA;
- Coordinated national and regional R&I programmes by pooling national resources and contributing to the alignment of national research and innovation policies;
- Improved knowledge for policy making about the networking patterns of research support staff and research management;
- Synergies between research & innovation and higher education policies and programmes;
- Modernised higher education sector, benefitting from targeted transformations in higher education, research, and innovation;

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

- Increased number of interconnected knowledge ecosystems, strong in knowledge creation, circulation and use;
- Researchers benefitting from attractive careers;
- Inclusive gender equality is promoted in the European research and innovation system;
- A more open and inclusive research and innovation system;
- Increased capacity in the EU R&I system to conduct open science and to set it as a *modus operandi* of modern science;
- Increased engagement of citizens with research and innovation;
- Increased alignment of strategic research with society needs, expectations and values;
- Identified synergies between second and third level education, and between education and business;
- Increased trust in science and R&I outcomes, and greater two-way communication between science and society;
- Knowledge and a highly skilled workforce circulate freely;
- Improved capacities within the EU R&I system to conduct open science;
- A more open and inclusive research and innovation system.

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

| Call                       | Budgets (EUR million) |      | Deadline(s) |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|------|-------------|
|                            | 2023                  | 2024 |             |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01 |                       |      | 15 Mar 2023 |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01 |                       |      | 20 Mar 2024 |
| Overall indicative budget  |                       |      |             |

## Call - Enhancing the European R&I system

***HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01***

### Conditions for the Call

Indicative budget(s)<sup>34</sup>

| Topics   | Type of Action | Budgets (EUR million) | Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>35</sup> | Number of projects expected to be funded |
|--|----------------|-----------------------|--|--|
|  |                | 2023                  |  |  |
| Opening: 14 Dec 2022<br>Deadline(s): 15 Mar 2023 |                |                       |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-01                    | CSA            |                       |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-02                    | CSA            |                       |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-03                    | CSA            |                       |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-05                    | CSA            |                       |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-07                    | CSA            |                       |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-08                    | CSA            |                       |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-11                    | CSA            |                       |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-12                    | CSA            |                       |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-13                    | CSA            |                       |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-15                    | CSA            |                       |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-16                    | CSA            |                       |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-17                    | CSA            |                       |  |  |

<sup>34</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

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

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

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

<sup>35</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.



**Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2023-2024**  
**Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area**

|                           |  |  |  |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Overall indicative budget |  |  |  |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|--|

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

## **PRIORITISING INVESTMENTS AND REFORMS**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

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

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

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

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

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

Scope: Since the introduction of the European Research Area (ERA) in 2000 and starting with FP6 and the introduction of the ERA-NET scheme, **programme level collaboration among Member States and Associated Countries and their research and innovation funding programmes has become a cornerstone of the ERA**, with annual investment from Member States of more than EUR 800 million per year. More than 250 networks among research funders have been created over time, serving different research needs but always coordinating public research investments across borders and allowing researchers to apply for calls for transnational research projects funded by the participating states.

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

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

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

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

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

Participation of legal entities from third countries and/or regions including those not automatically eligible for funding is encouraged.

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

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

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

Expected Outcome: The project is expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The objective of this action is to accelerate the development of a European R&I foresight community supporting the development of national R&I foresight communities that are well integrated in national policy systems; and can contribute not only to the design of national

reforms and policies but also to the evidence underpinning and the governance of a vibrant European Research Area, which delivers on common priorities and objectives.

The diversity of experiences with foresight can be a resource for a European foresight community, underscoring the need and being a foundation for highly beneficial networking actions, to exchange experiences, share ideas and work on topics of common interest. The consortium to carry out the CSA tasks should reflect the diversity of R&I foresight settings across Europe and involve government R&I foresight agencies and institutions from across the EU including countries associated with Horizon Europe.

This action should include:

- A stocktaking of the organisation of foresight activities informing R&I policy in the European Research Area, covering institutional, methodological, and analytical practices as well as an assessment of the main strengths and weaknesses nationally and in relation to policy needs at European level;
- Networking activities for institutions and people engaged in the R&I foresight community as well as potential users and stakeholders of foresight. This could be workshops, seminars programmes, guidelines, methodology toolboxes, training modules, annual conferences, common social media platforms, network services and infrastructures (e.g. a database of science and technology experts who are interested in futures' intelligence, which could be used for Delphi surveys, scenario building, horizon scanning etc.);
- Participatory approaches and engaging with citizens for foresight across Europe, as well as activities promoting futures literacy should play a core role in order to exploit foresight to the full;
- A network of national agencies on foresight and R&I (including foresight units in ministries and government institutions) should lie at the core of the action and at the core of Europe's R&I foresight community, covering as many member states and countries associated with Horizon Europe as possible;

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

## **TRANSLATING R&I RESULTS INTO ECONOMY**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-05: Experimentation and exchange of good practices for value creation**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Proposals should address at least one of the following challenges:

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

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

**HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-07: Development of new approaches to the macroeconomic modelling of research and innovation**

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

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

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

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

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

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



## IMPROVING ACCESS TO EXCELLENCE

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

### **HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-03: Strengthening researchers' skills for better careers – rolling out of the European Competence Framework for Researchers**

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

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

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

Scope: Skills are of utmost importance for researchers, they allow them to perform high quality research, and to make the overall R&I system in Europe competitive and challenges-proof. However, it is crucial that researchers are equipped not only with research-specific skills, but also with transversal skills that allow them to be interoperable between academia and the other sectors, including industry and business, and to be capable to establish entrepreneurial activities to turn innovative ideas into business.

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

To support inter-sectoral mobility and a broad recognition of the research profession in academia and beyond, and in line with the Skills Agenda, the Commission has developed a set

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

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

- the use of ResearchComp, so that training is provided not only on research-specific skills, but also on transversal skills that can foster better research careers in academia and beyond;
- strategic interaction with ecosystem actors, in order to have a better understanding of labour market needs, close the gap between demand and supply, and jointly develop training programmes;
- the promotion and support for networking and the exchange of best practices between Higher Education Institutions and other training providers with regard to the development of formal and targeted training opportunities for researchers that can foster inter-sectoral and inter-disciplinary mobility;
- without prejudice to the other transversal skills needed by researchers for inter-sectoral and inter-disciplinary mobility, put a specific emphasis on science communication to make researchers capable to correctly and effectively communicate to the public, and to make research careers more attractive for young talents.

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

Activities may include roadmap development, networking, sector-specific training development, seed funding for training providers (academia and beyond).

## **DEEPENING THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

### **HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-08: Building a virtual EU Info Platform on Contemporary China**

|                            |
|----------------------------|
| <b>Specific conditions</b> |
|----------------------------|

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Expected EU contribution per project</i> | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR tbc 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 tbc million.   |
| <i>Type of Action</i>                       | Coordination and Support Actions  |

**Expected Outcome:** The action funded under this topic will have the objective of networking excellent knowledge nodes supporting the advancement of independent knowledge on contemporary China from across Europe (e.g. universities, think tanks, research centres, NGOs, consulting firms, private companies, etc.) to build a virtual EU Info Platform on contemporary China that will become sustainable beyond the end of the project. The goal of the platform would be to grow into an excellent pan-European go-to source on contemporary China information while networking expertise from across Europe.

Projects are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

- Bring together knowledge nodes on contemporary China from across Europe to build and manage a virtual EU Info Platform on contemporary China. Coordinate with other initiatives and stakeholders where relevant for the action, including granted projects from topic HORIZON-CL2-2021-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-07, and evaluate the implemented activities;
- Regularly upload excellent European research materials on contemporary China, including analyses, reports, articles, policy briefs, scoping studies, interviews, podcasts, etc. Successful proposals would be expected to build into the website a section dedicated to the translation into English of key Chinese policy-documents and to create (and upload) policy briefs on said key documents;
- Organise the material gathered through the collaboration of relevant European centres of expertise into thematic sections (e.g. foreign policy, domestic politics, economics, law, human rights, science and technology, etc.) taking into account the priorities identified by the experts. A section of the platform should be specifically dedicated to understanding China's STI (science, technology, and innovation) system/policy and its implications for Europe;
- Organise virtual and physical events, such as conferences, workshops, networking activities, trainings, staff exchanges between knowledge centres, etc., to foster pan-European connections among the different EU knowledge nodes on contemporary China. Organise communication activities on the events envisaged and the digital contents produced;

- Provide the Commission with regular updates on the activities of the project, especially with regards to policy briefs, the translation of relevant policy-documents, and relevant geopolitical trends on contemporary China;
- Reach out and encourage the participation of excellent centres supporting independent knowledge on contemporary China from Eastern European Member States to enhance the visibility and impact of their work and foster the cross-fertilisation of knowledge;
- Prepare and put in place a sustainability plan for the platform to ensure the continuation of the work after the end of the action.

Scope: This topic contributes to the priority areas of action number 9 on *promoting a positive environment and level playing field for international cooperation based on reciprocity* listed in the Council Conclusions on the Future Governance of the European Research Area<sup>36</sup> (ERA). More specifically it aims to satisfy the objective of *launching a pilot initiative on the Team Europe approach for a specific world region and/or topic*.

This action seeks to bolster a stronger European understanding of contemporary China and to strengthen Europe's capacity to sustain the production of such knowledge that is key to develop excellent EU-China policy-making based on facts, independent and unbiased analyses, and foresight. In accordance with the EU-China – A Strategic Outlook Communication of 2019<sup>37</sup> and the Global Approach to Research and Innovation Communication of May 2021<sup>38</sup>, the action aims at empowering Europe to act coherently and proactively on the international stage preserving an open research and innovation ecosystem while safeguarding EU interests and values.

Today China is a key global actor and a leading scientific and technological power. This results in an increase in bilateral and multilateral engagements on a vast variety of issues. At the same time, this rise has exposed the weakness Europe faces in its capacity to better understand contemporary China in its various specificities, complexities, and goals and respond to its rapid evolution and new policy directions. Because of China's increasing relevance, Europe needs to get to know and understand it on its own terms: not through the lens of other external sources but from its own European perspective. The underlined priority for the EU to develop its own knowledge capacity to navigate China's continuous transformations is embedded in the concept of independent European knowledge, which should guide the work of successful applicants.

Following interactions with Member States, China experts, and stakeholders in the framework of the EU R&I Knowledge Network on China (EUKNOC) and following the publication of the SFIC recommendations on China in November 2021<sup>39</sup> it has emerged that at the European level

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<sup>36</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14126-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>37</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/communication-eu-china-a-strategic-outlook.pdf>

<sup>38</sup>

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research\\_and\\_innovation/strategy\\_on\\_research\\_and\\_innovation/documents/ec\\_rtd\\_com2021-252.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research_and_innovation/strategy_on_research_and_innovation/documents/ec_rtd_com2021-252.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-1204-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

NB - Such recommendations call, among others, for the EU to build a permanent EU Info Centre for policy, academic, media and business based on existing networks and expertise available on China and

expertise on contemporary China is often fragmented and difficult to access. Networking existing knowledge nodes, gathering, categorizing, and mainstreaming their work on an easily accessible public information platform would be therefore pivotal to break siloes and provide policy makers, researchers, businesses, and civil society with the tools needed to develop a deeper understanding of the different dimensions that characterize contemporary China. Doing so would also increase the circulation of information and foster the creation of new knowledge, in line with the Commission's efforts to upgrade independent knowledge on contemporary China in Europe started in the 2021-2022 Horizon Europe work programme<sup>40</sup>. Building synergies with granted projects from topic HORIZON-CL2-2021-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-07, would be therefore strongly encouraged.

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

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

#### OPEN SCIENCE

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-11: Support to reforms of research assessment in the European Research Area**

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

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to establish links between stakeholders from academia, public and private sector to create a network of China related actors and work on China in a concerted way.

<sup>40</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/horizon-cl2-2021-transformations-01-07> -

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Eligibility conditions</i>                             | <p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action.</p>   |
| <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 rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties.</p> <p>The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants.</p> <p>The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60.000. The respective options of the Model Grant Agreement will be applied. Beneficiaries should refer to General Annex B of the Work Programme for further information and guidance.</p> |

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

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

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

- Research proposals and researchers evaluated in an unbiased manner on their intrinsic merits and performance rather than on the number of publications and where these are published;
- Researchers evaluated based on a broader range of research outputs and tasks (including open science practices);

- Researchers benefit from attractive careers, regardless of gender or other social characteristics;
- Modernised higher education sector, benefitting from targeted transformations in research and innovation.

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

Several institutions including research funders and universities, in Europe and beyond, are currently reforming the assessment system of their research and researchers. At a global level, the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment<sup>41</sup> (DORA) aims at improving how the output of scientific research is evaluated. The Recommendation on Open Science<sup>42</sup> adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in November 2021 calls for a review of research assessment systems to align them with the principles of open science. The Global Research Council (GRC) held a conference<sup>43</sup> in 2020 on “Responsible Research Assessment” and established a dedicated working group in 2021. The European Research Area ERA Policy Agenda for 2022-2024<sup>44</sup>, adopted by the Council of the European Union on 26 November 2021, includes a priority action for reforming the assessment system for research, researchers and institutions to improve their quality, performance and impact. Accordingly, the European Commission is taking steps to facilitate an agreement between research funders, research performing organisations, national/regional evaluation agencies or authorities, and other stakeholders like learned societies, to reform research assessment criteria and processes in willing organisations, along commonly agreed principles and actions. In 2021, consultation of stakeholders<sup>45</sup> identified convergence on 10 principles expected to guide the reform of research assessment<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> <https://sfdora.org/>

<sup>42</sup> <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379949.locale=en>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.globalresearchcouncil.org/news/responsible-research-assessment/>

<sup>44</sup> Annex to the Council Conclusions on the future governance of the European Research Area of 26 November 2021 <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14308-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>45</sup> Scoping report “Towards a reform of the research assessment system”:  
<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/707440>

<sup>46</sup> The 10 principles identified during the stakeholders consultation and listed in the scoping report are: Ethics and integrity; Freedom of scientific research; Autonomy of research organisations; Independence and transparency of the data, infrastructure and criteria; Quality; Contribution to advancing knowledge and the (potential) impact of research results; Diversity of research activities, practices, outputs; Variety of scientific disciplines, research approaches, research career stages; Diversity in research roles and careers, and team science; and Gender equality, equal opportunities and inclusiveness

The establishment of a coalition of committed organisations is expected to accelerate changes towards a research assessment system that promotes qualitative judgement with unbiased peer-review, supported by a more responsible use of quantitative indicators. The reformed research assessment system should consider a more diverse set of research cultures and outputs, by valuing not only publications but also other research outputs such as data sets, software, models, workflows, methods, etc., and proper conduct including integrity and gender equality, equal opportunities and inclusiveness. The reformed system is expected to reward open collaboration as well as early knowledge and data sharing, as these practices enable good science<sup>47</sup>. It should also reward the diversity of tasks of researchers, and consider the different contributions to the work of teams.

This action consists of three parts, all of which must be addressed:

- The first part aims at supporting the operation of the coalition. This includes support to the sharing of information, mutual learning and awareness raising, across individual organisations, umbrella organisations, and initiatives, involved in the coalition and beyond. The action is expected to support workshops, working groups and other tools to: raise awareness, exchange experience and disseminate information on institutional changes, contribute to the development and piloting of metrics needed for research assessment; identify, monitor and showcase case studies, including good practices and lessons learnt, and develop and share guidance and recommendations for research organisations and policy makers, across Europe;
- The second part involves financial support to third parties, by launching ‘cascading grant’ call(s) to support institutions from across the ERA, notably those engaged in the coalition approach, to implement sustainable institutional changes to reform and improve research assessment criteria and processes. This may require consultancy or other kinds of support services to be developed and provided by the action to the beneficiary third party organisations. The ‘cascading grant’ mechanism is expected to contribute to institutional changes in a significant number of organisations (e.g. 40-50 individual organisations involved, of different types and across different geographical areas). As such, a significant proportion of the funding should be allocated to this mechanism, and one or more call(s) for proposals should be launched;
- The third part aims at international cooperation on research assessment. The action will envisage international cooperation with entities outside the EU Member States and associated countries. The action will promote internationally the European efforts, will support exchange of information and explore opportunities for aligning policies, and will seek to attract non-European organisations to join the European coalition.

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<sup>47</sup> Open science practices include: early and open sharing of research (for example through preregistration, registered reports, pre-prints, or crowd-sourcing); research output management; measures to ensure reproducibility of research outputs; providing open access to research outputs (such as publications, data, software, models, algorithms, and workflows); participation in open peer-review; and involving all relevant knowledge actors including citizens, civil society and end users in the co creation of R&I agendas and contents (such as citizen science).



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

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

#### CITIZEN SCIENCE

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-12: Laying the groundwork towards Europe-wide citizen science campaigns**

| <b>Specific conditions</b>                  |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Expected EU contribution per project</i> | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR tbc 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 tbc 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 conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action.</p> |

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

- Identification of citizen science initiatives with high potential impact if upscaled to ERA level;
- Establishment of broad societal coalitions/networks of quadruple helix actors organised around promising citizen science initiatives;

- Protocols and working modalities for use of open transnational data repositories and infrastructure;
- Proposals and commitments for mobilising diverse sources of funding to ensure sustainability of citizen science initiatives.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Europe-wide citizen science campaigns should aim to cover a majority, – and potentially all – ERA countries; involve citizens at different stages of the research cycle (e.g. development of methods, data collection, data analysis, evidence-based advocacy processes, testing and evaluation); be inclusive and make particular efforts to involve those from lower socio-economic groups; and deliver a range of additional benefits such as increased scientific literacy, improved trust in science, improved social inclusion and employability, and improved capacity within the scientific workforce to engage with society.

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

#### GENDER

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-13: Policy support to facilitate the implementation of a zero-tolerance approach towards gender-based violence in the ERA**

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

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

- Support to various national R&I entities, including national administrations, with adopting a zero-tolerance approach towards gender-based violence (GBV), including sexual harassment at higher education institutions and research organisations, in line with the ERA Policy Agenda action 5;

- Cooperation between national R&I actors from Member States and Associated Countries, including with less advanced organisations, to facilitate the exchange of information, mutual learning, and best practice sharing on the implementation of measures to tackle GBV;
- Training and awareness-raising activities for research funding and performing organisations, and other research and innovation actors on how to best implement a zero-tolerance approach towards GBV at their organisation;
- Data collection and monitoring on the implementation of GBV measures at higher education institutions and other research organisations.

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

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

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

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

under the ERA policy agenda, action 5<sup>48</sup>, and support the implementation of EU Presidencies priorities.

During its lifetime, the action should:

- Support the sharing of information, mutual learning, best practice sharing, training, and awareness raising on tackling GBV in academia across Member States, Associated Countries, RPOs and RFOs. Providing support and advancing the knowledge of R&I actors in widening countries is thereby of particular importance. The action should build on the zero-tolerance policy established by the Communities of Practice, under call topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-81;
- Facilitate the implementation of a code of conduct on zero-tolerance towards GBV, including sexual harassment, at a wide range of RPOs, including higher education institutions, RFOs and other research organisations in Member States and Associated Countries;
- Particular attention should be given to protection mechanisms for internationally mobile students and researchers, as well as early-career stage researchers in precarious positions;
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation process of the code of conduct on zero-tolerance of GBV at a wide range of higher education institutions, RPOs, RFOs, and other research organisations.

The action should develop close cooperation with relevant R&I stakeholders, including umbrella organisations, share knowledge and evidence, and build on the outputs and recommendations of Horizon 2020-SwafS funded UniSAFE<sup>49</sup> project, the GEAR tool<sup>50</sup>, as well as on other key initiatives at national level<sup>51</sup> and institutional level from gender equality plan (GEP) implementing projects. Proposals should also build on the results of projects funded under earlier Framework Programme actions. Notably, applicants are expected to cooperate with relevant projects funded under call topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-81 and call topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ERA-01-81 of Horizon Europe, to ensure synergies and complementarity of outcomes.

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<sup>48</sup> [ERA Policy Agenda Action 5 outcome](#): “Strategy to counteract gender-based violence including sexual harassment in the European R&I system and to assure gender equality in working environments through institutional change in any research funding or performing organisation”

<sup>49</sup> <https://unisafe-gbv.eu/>

<sup>50</sup> EIGE’s Gender Equality in Academia and Research tool: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/action-toolbox>

<sup>51</sup> See e.g. ERAC 1205/1/20 REV 1, by former ERAC Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation (SWG GRI): [Sexual Harassment in the Research and Higher Education Sector: National Policies and Measures in EU Member States and Associated Countries](#)

**HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-15: Support to the implementation of an EU Manifesto for STE(A)M education and research and innovation career paths to tackle gender inequalities in the ERA**

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

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

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

Scope: Persisting gender gaps, particularly in STEM fields, are hindering the potential of the European Research Area (ERA) to meet pressing challenges like the green and digital transition. According to She Figures 2021, women outnumber men at Bachelor and Master levels overall, but are still underrepresented as doctoral graduates in STEM fields, including physical sciences (38%), ICT (20.8%), engineering (27%), and mathematics (32.5%).<sup>52</sup> In order to increase the uptake in scientific careers, feed the talent pipeline, and improve women's underrepresentation, a STEAM approach, featuring creative thinking, applied arts (the "A" in STEAM), and the teaching of science in political, environmental, socio-economic and cultural contexts, can prove particularly useful. By highlighting the social impact and market relevance of research and innovation, the STEAM approach would also strengthen the appeal of scientific careers.

<sup>52</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, She Figures 2021 : gender in research and innovation : statistics and indicators, Publications Office, 2021, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/06090>

In line with the European Strategy for Universities and the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027<sup>53</sup>, this action aims to support the cooperation between STEM-oriented businesses, secondary and higher education institutions, research organisations, as well as informal science education establishments, NGOs, and civil society organisations, committed to fostering gender-inclusive career paths in the STEM fields through a STEAM<sup>54</sup> approach.

More specifically, the action should ensure the implementation of an EU Manifesto for STEAM education and career paths to tackle gender inequalities among relevant R&I actors, through the adoption of common principles and actions on gender-inclusive STEAM education, research and innovation. The implementation of this manifesto should build on the STE(A)M roadmap(s) for science education, developed by projects under the call topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-70, and seek synergies with the ERA Talent Platform initiative and the Digital Education Hubs.

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

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

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

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<sup>53</sup> Digital Education Action Plan 2021 -2027, Action 13: Women participation in STEM, <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital/education-action-plan>

<sup>54</sup> Science, technology, engineering, (the arts) and mathematics (STEAM) is a multidisciplinary set of approaches to education removing traditional barriers between subjects and disciplines to connect STEM and ICT education with the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

Proposals are expected to seek collaboration with the living labs for gender-responsive innovation, funded under the call HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ERA-01-80, and build on the outcomes of projects funded under call topic Horizon SwafS-26-2020 ‘Innovators of the future: bridging the gender gap’<sup>55</sup>, as well as gender equality plan implementing projects. Proposals should also take into account project results, funded under earlier Framework Programmes (e.g. HYPATIA, SPARKS and Scientix 4)<sup>56</sup>.

## ETHICS

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

### **HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-16: Research ethics for environmental and climate technologies**

| <b>Specific conditions</b>                                |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>               | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR tbc 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 tbc 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 conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action.</p> <p>Due to the scope of this topic, in addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the General Annexes, proposals must include at least two participants from Japan, China, Korea and/or African countries non-associated to Horizon Europe. Participants from countries, which are not eligible for funding according to the General Annexes, may take part in the project as associated partners.</p> |
| <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 rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p>   |

<sup>55</sup> [Shemakes.EU](https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/665566) and [EQUALS-EU](https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101000063)

<sup>56</sup> [https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/665566;](https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/665566)  
<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101000063>

[https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/665825;](https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/665825)



|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>Beneficiaries will be subject to the following additional dissemination obligations:</p> <p>Proposals must include structured cooperation with the e-platform Embassy of Good Science<sup>57</sup>. The output material of the action must be made available on this e-platform.</p> |
|--|---|

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

- Design an operational ethics and integrity framework, which preserves the key ethics principles while supporting a rapid and effective green transition in the EU.
- Promote awareness, ethics education and training about climate and environmental aspects of research activities, as well as insight in ethical aspects of the development of related knowledge and applications (e.g. new agricultural techniques, environmental protection).

Scope: Becoming the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050 is the greatest challenge and opportunity of our times. For this reason, the European Commission adopted the European Green Deal, the most ambitious package of measures that should enable European citizens and businesses to benefit from sustainable green transition.

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

There is a growing awareness that biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation at local, regional and global scale pose direct and existential threats to human life and wellbeing<sup>58</sup>. At the same time, actively pursuing the preservation of the environment can, in some cases, lead to some tensions between the pure environmental objective and the protection of human rights. This is the case in particular when the implementation of anthropomorphic models gives to natural elements the same status as human beings.

An important aspect that characterises global challenges is that they, by nature, go beyond the well-being of persons and touch the whole society notably in terms of solidarity and social justice. Mid and long-term socio-economic consequences are also more prominent in these complex research contexts, not only those affecting vulnerable populations exposed to environmental degradation, but also those caused by a green transition depending social and geographic circumstances<sup>59</sup>.

<sup>57</sup> [www.embassy.science](http://www.embassy.science)

<sup>58</sup> Council Conclusions on Biodiversity – the need for urgent action, 11829/20, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11829-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>59</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-green-deal-communication\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-green-deal-communication_en.pdf)

Some research topics intrinsically also have a complex environmental and ecological ethics dimension including for example research and innovation in the area of electro-magnetic fields and the high frequency communication systems that are necessary to achieve a European gigabit society, or the digital innovation and biotechnology in food production practices that shall not only remain safe for human health and the environment, but also allow a fair and sustainable system<sup>60</sup>.

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

1. What characterises the different dimensions and concepts associated with climate and environmental ethics in the context of research and development
2. Identify the ethics and integrity challenges related to the production and use of scientific knowledge in designing and implementing novel technologies and approaches to the global environmental challenge facing the EU and the Planet.
3. Develop strategies to uphold the integrity of scientific research in addressing climate change issues.<sup>61</sup>

Elements to tackle by this action should encompass the issues related to the role of ethics and integrity experts (as advisors, for example), informed consent of communities and individuals<sup>62</sup>, undue inducement and opt out approach, as well as equitable sharing of benefits arising from research<sup>63</sup>.

The action should clearly highlight what cannot be accepted or neglected in the name of addressing environmental issues. This notably includes the need to always conduct, prior to the start of a research, an independent ethical review, which remains a necessary safeguard for the individuals involved and enhances the trust from the impacted communities and the society as a whole, in the name of the ‘do no harm’ principle<sup>64</sup>. Environmental concerns justify immediate actions and should not lower ethics and integrity standards.

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

The action should result in:

- Producing an operational (“how-to”) guidelines to support the work of research teams’ ethics committee members and integrity experts, taking into account the concept of intergenerational justice. The guidelines should include, among others, clear guidance for

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<sup>60</sup> Council Conclusions on the Farm to Fork Strategy, 12099/20, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12099-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>61</sup> UNESCO Declaration of Ethical Principles in Relation to Climate Change (2017), <https://en.unesco.org/themes/ethics-science-and-technology/ethical-principles>.

<sup>62</sup> As also highlighted in the Council Conclusions on Biodiversity – the need for urgent action, 11829/20, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11829-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Also reaffirmed in the Council Conclusions on Biodiversity – the need for urgent action, 11829/20, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11829-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

addressing ethical challenges related to the development of novel technologies and approaches to address climate change (e.g. in relation to technologies encouraging behavioural change, geo-engineering) and the application of the precautionary approach in different fields of research and innovation.

- Assessing the need to complement the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity<sup>65</sup> with specific guidelines and if relevant propose short documents complementing the Code, focusing on the need to ensure an “inclusive and just transition that leaves no one behind”<sup>66</sup>
- An effective incorporation of the objectives of the “Do No Significant Harm” Principle<sup>67</sup>
- Developing traditional and online training material (reflecting the guidelines) for students, early career and experienced researchers. The material has to be made available on the e-platform Embassy of Good Science<sup>68</sup>. The priorities of the EU Digital Education Plan must be taken into account
- The action should in this context foresee the training of 400-450 Horizon Europe ethics appraisal scheme experts, paying close attention to gender balance, as well as to gender equality and diversity related ethical aspects, and make use of their feedback to improve the trainings.

Overall, the work should be based on existing know how and have a bottom-up approach, involving all relevant stakeholders (e.g. researchers, research funders, policy-makers, publishers, citizens, civil society organisations) through the organisation of participatory events (workshops, consultations, ‘town hall’ meetings). The activities should propose ways and means to encourage changes in the research culture, and promote openness, communication, dialogue and stronger links among stakeholders. This should involve relevant ethics and integrity networks such as ENERI (European Network of Research Ethics Committees and Research Integrity Offices)<sup>69</sup> and ENRIO<sup>70</sup>

It is essential to ensure that the publicly available results from relevant EU funded research projects<sup>71</sup> (e.g. SOP4RI, Integrity, TRUST, Path2Integrity, TechEthos) are taken into account. Structured cooperation and budgeted cooperation with Embassy of Good Science should be foreseen.

In order to achieve the expected outcomes, cooperation with actors from Japan, China, Korea and/or African countries non-associated to Horizon Europe is required.

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<sup>65</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020-ethics\\_code-of-conduct\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020-ethics_code-of-conduct_en.pdf)

<sup>66</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-green-deal-communication\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-green-deal-communication_en.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/programme-guide\\_horizon\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/programme-guide_horizon_en.pdf)

<sup>68</sup> [www.embassy.science](http://www.embassy.science)

<sup>69</sup> <http://eneri.eu/>

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.enrio.eu/>

<sup>71</sup> Detailed information of the mentioned EU funded projects can be found on CORDIS web site (<https://cordis.europa.eu/>)

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

**HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-17: The future of research ethics review in the changing research environments**

| <b>Specific conditions</b>                                |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>               | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR tbc 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 tbc million.   |
| <i>Type of Action</i>                                     | Coordination and Support Actions  |
| <i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i> | <p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Beneficiaries will be subject to the following additional dissemination obligations:</p> <p>Proposals must include structured cooperation with the e-platform Embassy of Good Science<sup>72</sup>, and the European Networks ENERI (European Network of Research Ethics Committees and Research Integrity Offices)<sup>73</sup>.</p> <p>The output material of the action must be made available on the e-platform Embassy of Good Science.</p> |

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

- Evaluate the effectiveness of current approaches to the ethics reviews in ensuring the embeddedness of human rights in the development of digital technologies and promoting adherence to ‘digital rights’ and ‘digital principles’ in the context of research and related international cooperation and partnership.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>72</sup> [www.embassy.science](http://www.embassy.science)

<sup>73</sup> <http://eneri.eu/>

<sup>74</sup> Communication From the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: 2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade, COM(2021) 118 final, Brussels, 9.3.2021, <https://eur->

- Develop new approaches to ethics reviews and assessments. This should focus on developing systems and procedures that promote an ethics by design culture fostering innovation, while supporting the research community to operationalise and embed new and upcoming EU human rights driven legal frameworks in research proposals, in line with the ethics by design approach.
- Enable the ethics processes to better inform policy choices about the uses of new and emerging technologies and support the researchers in incorporating ethical considerations into their research, thereby contributing to the protection of human rights and the promotion of EU values. For example, the GDPR, since its adoption has inspired the adoption and reform of privacy and data protection frameworks globally, resulting in a so-called ‘Brussels effect.’<sup>75</sup>

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

At the same time, ethics shall focus on the adherence to values and principles and not be a legal compliance mechanism. It is also necessary to prevent that ethics reviews and assessments would become a red-tape mechanism, especially as the ex-ante-model of traditional ethics oversight might not be apt to deal with new challenges for example stemming from various forms of data re-use and the often unpredictable and tentative nature of big data research and unforeseeable risks.<sup>76</sup>

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

In addition, a broader variety of actors, often in an international setting, is frequently involved in such research activities, including but not limited to universities, corporations, public and private foundations, civil society organizations, online service providers, open exchange and collaboration initiatives and platforms, and other formal and informal associations.

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

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[lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:12e835e2-81af-11eb-9ac9-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:12e835e2-81af-11eb-9ac9-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF)

<sup>75</sup> Floridi, L. The European Legislation on AI: a Brief Analysis of its Philosophical Approach. *Philos. Technol.* 34, 215–222 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-021-00460-9>.

<sup>76</sup> Ferretti, A., Ienca, M., Sheehan, M. *et al.* Ethics review of big data research: What should stay and what should be reformed?. *BMC Med Ethics* 22,51 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12910-021-00616-4>.

such as the proposals for a Digital Services Act, a Digital Markets Act, a European Data Act, and the European Health Data Space. Meanwhile, in the context of the regulation of new and emerging technologies, and more specific digital technologies, that have profoundly affected society as a whole as well as the conduct of science, the EU has been a frontrunner in the formulation of normative frameworks that aim at safeguarding human rights and freedoms in the context of digital innovation, and the Commission has indicated a clear willingness to move further ahead with the adoption of the proposed Artificial Intelligence Act.

In this context, the proposed actions must:

- (A) Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the current approaches to ethics review in their capacity to address the challenges above (new technologies, new actors forms of collaboration and partnerships, new human rights related framework, etc.). On this basis, propose concrete ways of adapting ethics committees (working methodologies, composition, etc.) in view of matching the new challenges. The overall objective is to identify gaps in practice and formulate proposals to enhance the capabilities of the existing ‘ethics infrastructure’ in Europe. As regards the role of the bodies it is important not to limit the scope to the review prior to the start of the research concerned but to also cover the monitoring during the implementation of the research and innovation activities. Practical ways to support the work of relevant stakeholders, notably research funders should also be identified. The applicability of the proposed approaches should also be tested via the use of specific case-studies (involving non-EU partners where appropriate).
- (B) Organize stakeholder consultations and interdisciplinary mutual learning initiatives, to enable the identification of best practices for the ethics oversight of new modes or research. As cutting-edge research is of cross-border character, thus this action should involve institutions that engage in research ethics review and relevant related activities, including at the international level.
- (C) Develop guidelines and corresponding training and education materials to enable ethics experts involved in ethics reviews to assess compliance with the new ethics standards resulting from the new challenges addressed under (A).
- (D) Train Horizon Europe ethics appraisal scheme experts (250-300). Close attention should be paid to gender balance, as well as to gender equality and diversity related ethical aspects. Feedback of the trainees should be used to improve the trainings. In addition, this action should produce traditional and innovative training material (reflecting the developed approaches and guidelines) for research administrators and managers (to support the professionalization of research management in the area of research ethics) as well as for students, early career and experienced researchers. The material has to be made available on the e-platform Embassy of Good Science<sup>77</sup>. The priorities of the EU Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027)<sup>78</sup> must be taken into account.

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<sup>77</sup> <https://embassy.science/>

<sup>78</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/digital-education-action-plan\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/digital-education-action-plan_en)



It is essential to ensure that the publicly available results from relevant EU funded research projects<sup>79</sup> (e.g. SOPs4RI, SHERPA, SIENNA, TechEthos, RoSie) are used/incorporated, notably the guidelines that they have produced. Structured cooperation and budgeted cooperation with Embassy of Good Science, existing European Networks, such as ENERI<sup>80</sup> and others with clear attribution of research ethics responsibilities are necessary.

In addition, in order to improve the impact of the expected output (such as effectiveness of training courses, guidelines, tool boxes etc.) cooperation with research management offices and ethics officers in Research Performing Organizations is highly recommended.

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

### **Call - Enhancing the European R&I system**

**HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01**

#### **Conditions for the Call**

##### Indicative budget(s)<sup>81</sup>

| Topics   | Type of Action | Budgets (EUR million) | Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>82</sup> | Number of projects expected to be funded |
|--|----------------|-----------------------|--|--|
|  |                | 2024                  |  |  |
| Opening: 13 Dec 2023<br>Deadline(s): 20 Mar 2024 |                |                       |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-01                    | CSA            |                       |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-02                    | CSA            |                       |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-03                    | CSA            |                       |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-04                    | CSA            |                       |  |  |

<sup>79</sup> Detailed information of the mentioned EU-funded projects can be found on CORDIS website (<https://cordis.europa.eu/>)

<sup>80</sup> <http://eneri.eu/>

<sup>81</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

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

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

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

<sup>82</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

**Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2023-2024**  
**Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area**

|                               |     |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------|-----|--|--|--|
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-05 | CSA |  |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-06 | CSA |  |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-07 | CSA |  |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-09 | CSA |  |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-10 | CSA |  |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-12 | CSA |  |  |  |
| HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-14 | CSA |  |  |  |
| Overall indicative budget     |     |  |  |  |

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

## **PRIORITISING INVESTMENTS AND REFORMS**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

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

|                            |
|----------------------------|
| <b>Specific conditions</b> |
|----------------------------|



|   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Expected EU contribution per project</i> | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR tbc and tbc 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 tbc million.  |
| <i>Type of Action</i>                       | Coordination and Support Actions   |

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

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

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

Scope: Since the introduction of the European Research Area (ERA) in 2000 and starting with FP6 and the introduction of the ERA-NET scheme, **programme level collaboration among Member States and Associated Countries and their research and innovation funding programmes has become a cornerstone of the ERA**, with annual investment from Member States of more than EUR 800 million per year. More than 250 networks among research funders have been created over time, serving different research needs but always coordinating public research investments across borders and allowing researchers to apply for calls for transnational research projects funded by the participating states.

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

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

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

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

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

Participation of legal entities from third countries and/or regions including those not automatically eligible for funding is encouraged.

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

#### **HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-14: Emerging needs of the ERA Policy Agenda**

| <b>Specific conditions</b>                  |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Expected EU contribution per project</i> | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR N/A 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 tbc million.   |
| <i>Type of Action</i>                       | Coordination and Support Actions  |

Expected Outcome: The new ERA governance, with the ERA Forum, and the ERA Policy agenda and its currently 20 actions, provide an important part of the policy framework for the destination 3 of the WIDERA work programme part. Following a suggestions from the WIDERA Programme Committee this topics will be developed in light of the discussion and first experience in implementing the ERA Policy Agenda and its actions, to address emerging needs and identified gaps in order to maximise the contribution to achieving the objectives of the New ERA.

#### **IMPROVING ACCESS TO EXCELLENCE**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

## **HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-02: Support services for professionalisation of research management**

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

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

- Involve a large number of public research performing and research funding organisations and their research management staff in the training and networking programmes.
- Improve training, skills and career development of research management staff in the participating organisations.
- Contribute to professionalization, including through certification of training programmes.
- Increase recognition of the research management profession in Member States and the important role of research managers for the across the ERA.

Strengthen research management capacity and support for a Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) approach across the entire ERA, including in laggard regions.

**Scope:** Research management takes various shapes across the ERA (and beyond), and therefore its definition/scope is multi-dimensional, including but not limited to the following functions/roles: research policy advice, evidence-based policy making, foresight and strategy development; research coordination, research development, research project and funding management, financial support; evaluation and assessment support; research and complementary training programme management; data-based research support, such as data stewards and data analysts, exploitation of research data, data protection; specialised research infrastructure operation; scientific integrity and ethics expertise, legal support; science communication support; knowledge transfer and innovation support, knowledge brokering, incubator coordination and business development.

There is a strong need for creating sustained pan-European research management training – both in virtual and in non-virtual curricula. This would help to create solid networks of early career managers that will last throughout their careers, in the various dimensions of research management for which such opportunities do not yet exist. Secondly, research performing and

funding entities, local ecosystems, and regions who are proven strong in knowledge creation and circulation usually rely on a strong community of research managers. An important challenge for the European R&I system in this respect is the uneven distribution of research management communities and expertise across the ERA. Laggard countries, regions, institutions often lack such communities, or do not have sufficient access to expertise. Thirdly, the need for new skills is constantly evolving, and upskilling of staff requires readily access to training and practice exchange platforms and across ERA. Fourthly, there seems to be a lack of recognition of the profession of research managers or research support staff, as compared to other policy sectors. Similarly, accreditation of training and career development programmes for research managers in the diverse specialisations is lacking.

This call intends to support initiatives towards non-linear careers for research managers and career diversification of PhD talents towards research management profiles. Actions should create joint virtual and non-virtual training programmes and curricula for research managers and prepare the road to certification and accreditation.

Support for virtual and non-virtual networks of research managers from public research performing and funding organisations at national level, as well as cross-border European operational networks (existing or new). Support at European level for a staff exchange programme for all career stages and in particular early career research managers, complementing and coordinating existing national initiatives and national funding (e.g. salaries by host country, travel & subsistence by EU level), to support networking and training through virtual and physical exchange of practices. Focus could be put on access for staff to such networks and exchanges, in order to help build capacity in laggard regions and institutions through collaboration with stakeholders from advanced Member States.

## **TRANSLATING R&I RESULTS INTO ECONOMY**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

### **HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-12: Experimentation and exchange of good practices for value creation**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Proposals should address at least one of the following challenges:

- a. Innovative ways to strengthen channels of valorising knowledge and research results, in particular targeting activities in the field of academia–society collaboration. Within the scope of the topic are schemes and incentives for researchers to engage with society that promote the uptake of research results. This can include means to incentivise researchers to engage with society, contributing to a stronger translation of research results to the economy and society through better adaptation to citizens’ needs and collaboration with industry. The experimentation will highlight what works well and under what conditions and what are the barriers and opportunities in the academia-society interaction;
- b. Transfer of best practices in knowledge valorisation, in the area of ‘academia-industry/SME linkages’ or ‘quadruple helix-based innovation’, i.e. involving academia/research; industry/SMEs; public administration/policy makers and society/citizens in an ecosystem approach. Consortia are expected to involve partners that

implement one or several best practices and partners that plan to introduce a new practice or reform an existing one. The action will lead to tangible change in some or all participating entities, be it at strategic and/or investment level and/or through the implementation of new or adapted instruments, tools, guidelines, trainings etc. The action can also help develop and prepare knowledge valorisation projects and investments that receive support from the European cohesion policy or the Recovery and Resilience Facility. Inspiration for best practices can be found in the repository on the [EU Knowledge Valorisation Platform](#).

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

## **DEEPENING THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA**

### **RESEARCHERS CAREERS, INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND MOBILITY**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-03: European Excellence Initiative: Acceleration services in support of universities**

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

Expected Outcome: Projects are expected to contribute to the following outcomes in relation to acceleration services in support of the institutional transformation of higher education institutions (HEI):

- Access for higher education institutions to a range of tailor-made coaching services, expertise, (virtual) meeting platforms or tools, and seed funding at any stage of development of institutional change.
- Enabled connection of higher education institutions with peers and other ecosystem actors, as well as with investors and public funders.
- Progress of the user groups of the acceleration services in institutional change, measured through a monitoring mechanism;

- Policy feedback to the European Commission and Member States on the acceleration services, and widespread dissemination of the pilot results to other target groups.

Scope: The overall aim of the Higher Education Institutions acceleration services is to help institutions to make progress in institutional change in areas of own choice, such as strengthening research careers, gender equality plans and reform of career assessment, mainstreaming of open science, institutional strategy development in R&I, etc. The accelerations services will support institutions in these efforts, by creating a shared knowledge base, coaching service and virtual meeting place to enable the connection with peers, as well by providing seed funding to users. The acceleration services should involve large user groups (either individual HEI, networks or alliances of universities and surrounding ecosystem actors, or umbrella organisations of HEI), and progress of the users in the implementation of the chosen areas of the European strategy for universities should be measured.

A portfolio of complementary projects covering various areas of expertise will be selected. Projects will need alignment with assessment tools such as HEInnovate and HRS4R. Complementarity with existing similar tools, such as those funded under WIDERA 2021-2022 and EIT's HEI Initiative of the EIT Raw Materials KIC will be taken into account. Experts, tools and platforms generated by previous projects, such as under Horizon 2020 Science with and for Society, need to be taken into account.

This action depends on the assessment of the acceleration services pilot call under WIDERA 2021-2022 and the EIT HEI initiative, and the call text will be updated and completed in time.

#### **HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-04: ERA Talent Platform - International dimensions**

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

Expected Outcome: Projects are expected to contribute to the following outcomes in relation to the international dimension of ERA Talent Platform

- The international arm of the ERA Talent Platform links Europe to the rest of the world and to promote international collaboration of researchers, mobility and career development;
- Promotes the attractiveness of Europe to non-EU researchers and R&I institutions;

- Development of a portfolio of support services and associated tools, designed to create transnational ties with researchers and scientific communities within the global R&I ecosystem;
- A physical and virtual networking, knowledge-sharing and advocacy platform of services and tools that will serve as a diplomacy asset internationally and promoting instrument of European R&I landscape.

Scope: Consolidation of the Talent Platform, broadening the Euraxess services for institutions and researchers, network and portals (continuation of 2022 action); building a partnership with research performing organisations' international offices, in support of global objectives of the ERA.

EURAXESS is one of the key initiatives enhancing researcher careers and, as such, is one of the operational instruments of the European Research Area (ERA). It particularly contributes to removing the barriers to mobility and making Europe more attractive to researchers. As an ERA implementation measure, and an important instrument under the ERA Policy Agenda action 4, the EURAXESS portal and instruments under its umbrella are expanded towards a comprehensive recruitment, career development and social networking web-platform, dedicated to researchers and institutions seeking R&I talent or willing to improve their institutional talent management policies and practices.

The new ERA Communication outlines that EURAXESS services, network and portals will be broadened into an ERA Talent Platform, an online one-stop-shop, with improved structure and governance, exploiting links to Europass, the EU platform for people to manage their learning and careers and the EURES network of European public employment services. The Council Conclusions on the Future of the ERA calls on the Commission and Member States to develop EURAXESS as the ERA pilot action to foster “inclusiveness” within the ERA into an ERA Talent Platform fit to address existing barriers to unbalanced mobility pattern by supporting researchers in their career development within the ERA, connecting researchers and institutions and improving employability and talent absorption and mobility schemes.

The scope of this action is to complement the ERA Talent Platform with an additional dimension and module addressing international and European researchers living and working outside of Europe. It is expected to consist of the development of a portfolio of support services and associated tools, designed to create transnational ties with researchers and scientific communities within the global R&I ecosystem.

This action will build on the work done in the the past by the EURAXESS Worldwide structure of international hubs and it is expected to be a physical and virtual networking, knowledge-sharing and advocacy platform of services and tools that will serve as a diplomacy asset internationally and promoting instrument of European R&I landscape, attracting international talent and European researchers back home.

This action should be in strong connection with the European dimension of the Talent Platform. Collaboration is foreseen between the international dimension and EURAXESS Bridgehead



Organisations/ National Coordinators and centers across Europe. It is expected to bridge researchers working outside of Europe to their peers in the home countries, also to activate scientific communities and connect them with business and professional associations, as well as R&I employers and funders.

The international dimension of the ERA Talent Platform should also be fostered through networking events, information sessions or trainings, as well as online instruments and tools, with a mission, inter alia to: (i) promote the European values and R&I landscape as a favourable environment for excellent research, (ii) facilitate knowledge and skills transfer, scientific collaboration and recruiting processes, while lifting obstacles to return, (iii) strengthen S&T links with home countries through policy feedback tools and dialogues, as well as (iv) improve data to a better understanding of European researchers living and working outside of Europe, as well as on mobility and research careers policy in general.

#### OPEN SCIENCE

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-05: Capacity building on intellectual property (IP) management to support open science**

| <b>Specific conditions</b>                                |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>               | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR tbc 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 tbc million.  |
| <i>Type of Action</i>                                     | Coordination and Support Actions   |
| <i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i> | <p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Beneficiaries will be subject to the following additional obligations regarding open science practices: Beneficiaries must ensure early and open sharing of the outputs deriving from their activities under a Creative Commons Attribution –CC BY- or equivalent license, including training and educational materials. Beneficiaries must acknowledge and incorporate these obligations in the proposal, outlining the efforts they will make towards meeting them and in Annex I to the Grant Agreement.</p> |

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

- Analysis of how adequate IP management enables and boosts open science and how both open science and IP management are complementary in achieving a better dissemination and valorisation of knowledge.
- Specific training materials, modules or courses on Intellectual Property assets and open science, including how to manage IP assets to enable open access to scientific publications and to ensure scientific results are Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable (“FAIR principles”); the open licenses applied to the outputs deriving from this call will allow for their reusability by the wider R&I community; resulting training materials, modules or courses are expected to reuse or build on existing materials, updating them when necessary;
- High-quality training on the diverse aspects of IP management and how an adequate IP management enables open science delivered to research performing organisations’ professional and managerial staff and/or academic staff (“train the trainers”);
- Support the trainers in acting as multipliers of the acquired knowledge, in particular, by embedding the training materials, modules and courses resulting from the projects into the curricula/learning or research support material of research performing organisations;
- Gather experiences and share good practices for the further development of programmes and specialised courses on the topic; the project is expected to deposit the resulting good practices in the Knowledge Valorisation Platform<sup>83</sup> repository of best practices under IP management;
- Awareness-raising campaign on how an adequate management of IP enables and fosters open science; such a campaign is expected to be built on the previous awareness raising campaigns on IP management organised by the European Commission (Directorate General for Research and Innovation), with the European Patent Office (EPO), the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) and the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA).

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

- Support to research performing organisations and researchers in practising open science by providing them with relevant training materials, sharing best practices and raising awareness on the importance of adequate IP management;
- Increased understanding among the research community of IP assets and the role their adequate management plays in enabling open science;
- Better management of IP in line with the Code of practice for the smart use of IP to be developed in 2022, including better IP management to facilitate open science;

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<sup>83</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/research-area/industrial-research-and-innovation/eu-valorisation-policy/knowledge-valorisation-platform\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/research-area/industrial-research-and-innovation/eu-valorisation-policy/knowledge-valorisation-platform_en)

- Improved overall capacities within the EU R&I system to conduct open science and implement it as a *modus operandi* of modern science for researchers and research organisations (e.g. by integrating the expected outcomes into their open science and IP policies).

Scope: Open science is an approach based on open cooperative work and systematic sharing of knowledge and tools as early and widely as possible in the scientific process. Adequate management of IPR over research results is necessary for such cooperative work and systematic sharing to happen. However, a lack of awareness and understanding of IPR -in particular given the complexity of the relevant legal and regulatory landscape- sometimes leads to mismanagement of IP and the consequent difficulty of researchers and institutions to determine how their research is disseminated.

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

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

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

In contributing to the above-mentioned outputs, projects are expected to take into account the existing IP service delivery landscape and the existing training and capacity building efforts and materials offered by European Commission service contracts (i.e. IP Helpdesk<sup>84</sup>, IP Scan<sup>85</sup>, IP Booster<sup>86</sup>) and the work of EUIPO on copyright and trademarks and EPO's work on patents. The projects are also expected to build on the European Commission code of practice for the smart use of IP (expected to be delivered in 2022) and further strengthen the relationship with open science.

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

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<sup>84</sup> [https://intellectual-property-helpdesk.ec.europa.eu/regional-helpdesks/european-ip-helpdesk\\_en](https://intellectual-property-helpdesk.ec.europa.eu/regional-helpdesks/european-ip-helpdesk_en)

<sup>85</sup> [https://intellectual-property-helpdesk.ec.europa.eu/horizon-ip-scan\\_en](https://intellectual-property-helpdesk.ec.europa.eu/horizon-ip-scan_en)

<sup>86</sup> <https://ipbooster.meta-group.com/>

**HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-06: Global cooperation in not-for-profit open access publishing**

| <b>Specific conditions</b>                  |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Expected EU contribution per project</i> | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR tbc 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 tbc 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 conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action.</p> |

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

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

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

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

Scope: A significant increase in open access publishing activities based on not-for-profit business models can be observed in Europe and across the world, which in principle do not

charge authors for publishing. They are the result of technological advancements leading to shifting roles of actors involved in scholarly communication. Their offering is presented as an alternative to commercially-oriented publishing, or is a continuation of long-term traditions of institutional and mission-oriented publishing in a new digitally enabled context. Such services enable inclusivity for all authors, regardless of affiliation and funding, and support a healthy diversification in the scholarly publishing ecosystem. Research institutions and their libraries are often involved in their operation. In some countries, they operate at the national level and are frequently supported by national funding agencies. In many cases, such initiatives have evolved into robust and reliable services which enjoy the trust of researchers.

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

The call will fund activities that will:

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

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

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

**HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-07: Support to the development and implementation of policies and practices for reproducibility of scientific results**

| Specific conditions                         |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Expected EU contribution per project</i> | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR tbc 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 tbc 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 conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action.</p> |

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

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

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

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

Scope: Increasing the reproducibility of scientific results, i.e. the possibility for scientists and the scientific community to obtain the same results as the originators, contributes to higher quality and more efficient research processes, more trustworthy results, increasing reuse by other researchers, more effective translation into innovations, and higher return on investments in research (see the scoping report “*Reproducibility of scientific results in the EU*”<sup>87</sup>).

The aim of this topic is to facilitate the development and implementation of policies and practices, by research performing organisations, research funding organisations, learned societies and publishers that enhance reproducibility of scientific results. The action will

<sup>87</sup> <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/341654>

support the mutual learning and dissemination of good practices between organisations across Europe, as well as with relevant organisations outside Europe, with broad disciplinary representation. It will build expertise and will support research organisations to develop and implement policies and interventions, and will coordinate efforts between stakeholders, notably between existing national reproducibility networks in Europe. The action may facilitate the development of national networks in additional European countries. The action will support the development of training materials and training programmes, the mutual learning and exchange of practices and tools, and awareness raising, for researchers, reviewers and research organisations. The action will also put in place mechanisms to monitor the effects of policies and practices implemented, thus enabling future adaptations based on evidence gathered.

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

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

#### CITIZEN SCIENCE

#### GENDER

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-09: Policy coordination to support all aspects of inclusive Gender Equality Plans and policies in the ERA**

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

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

- Advanced and sustainable policy coordination support on ERA objectives on gender equality and inclusiveness among Member States and Associated Countries and through stakeholder and citizen engagement;

- Improved career paths and working conditions in European research and innovation organisations, including in the private sector, through enhanced policy dialogue on inclusive gender equality plans and policies;
- Increased research quality and societal responsibility and relevance of knowledge and innovations, through the integration of the gender and intersectional dimension in research and innovation content;
- Increased geographical inclusiveness by targeting less experienced countries and regions in terms of inclusive gender equality policies in research and innovation;
- Increased inclusion of underrepresented and socially disadvantaged persons in European research and innovation, through an intersectional lens on gender equality plans and policies.

Scope: As the new package adopted on 26 November 2021 on the European Research Area (ERA) framework<sup>88</sup> reaffirms, there is a need for policy coordination to advance the implementation of the ERA gender equality and inclusiveness objectives within Member States, Associated Countries and among other ERA stakeholders, building on the commitment expressed through the Ljubljana Declaration on gender equality in research and innovation<sup>89</sup>.

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

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

During its lifetime, the action should:

- Develop knowledge and build capacities, competences and expertise on inclusive gender equality and mainstreaming in R&I with a variety of European and national stakeholders. Special consideration will be given to mutual learning exercises to enhance the

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<sup>88</sup> [Council Recommendation on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe](#), and [ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024](#) annexed to the Council Conclusions on the future governance of the ERA

<sup>89</sup> [Ljubljana-Declaration-on-Gender-Equality-in-Research-and-Innovation-\\_endorsed\\_final.pdf \(gov.si\)](#)



competence of national gender equality representatives, including helping less experienced national gender equality representatives to acquire expertise;

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

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

The action should also develop close cooperation with relevant ERA stakeholders, including umbrella organisations, sharing knowledge and evidence, and build as well on the outputs and recommendations of related initiatives funded under Horizon 2020-SwafS, such as GENDERACTION, ACT, GE Academy and the GEAR Tool.

#### **HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-10: Support to the implementation of inclusive gender equality plans**

| <b>Specific conditions</b>                  |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Expected EU contribution per project</i> | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR tbc and tbc 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 tbc 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 conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p>  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The scheme must involve at least one leading higher education institution, research organisation, or public body (e.g. ministry, funding agency) in terms of gender equality and inclusiveness, and at least three less advanced higher education institutions, research organisations or public bodies (e.g. ministry, funding agency) from Widening Member States or Associated Countries.</p> |
|--|--|

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

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

Scope: The institutional change strategy implemented through gender equality plans (GEPs) has had very positive impacts in many R&I organisations and been a catalyser at national and EU level, as attested by several reports<sup>90</sup>. The introduction of a GEP eligibility criterion in Horizon Europe, for public bodies, research organisations and higher education institutions from Member States and Associated Countries, has increased the level of uptake of gender equality activities. However, there remains a heterogeneity in the implementation of GEPs across the EU, particularly in the widening countries. Furthermore, the new ERA framework established through the Council Recommendation and Council Conclusions adopted on 26 November 2021<sup>91</sup>, sets the implementation of inclusive GEPs as a core objective for the promotion of gender equality and inclusiveness.

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

Actions should clearly outline the approach for boosting gender equality strategies by addressing new areas, such as intersectionality and diversity, gender budgeting, or gender and innovation, among others.

Proposals are expected to address the following:

- Methods for exchanging and implementing good practices and materials, tailored to individual organisations' needs for the development of inclusive GEPs;

<sup>90</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-1202-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>91</sup> [Council Recommendation on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe](#), and [ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024](#) annexed to the Council Conclusions on the future governance of the ERA

- Support for reinforcing their networking in the area of gender equality and inclusiveness, especially with already existing Communities of Practice;
- Activities such as on-site visits, on-site or virtual training; workshops; dissemination and outreach and capacity building activities;
- Implementation of specific actions in the less advanced institutions specifically addressing the opening to intersectionality and diversity, targeting other underrepresented or socially disadvantaged groups, and including the integration of intersectional sex and gender analysis into R&I content.

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

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

## **OTHER ACTIONS NOT SUBJECT TO CALLS FOR PROPOSALS GRANTS TO IDENTIFIED BENEFICIARIES**

### **PRIZES**

#### **1. Horizon Impact Award**

##### Expected Outcomes:

- To celebrate the successful uptake and use of EU funded project results, thus boosting and promoting their achieved impact.
- To showcase best practices, create role models and inspire R&I beneficiaries to use their research results to create value for the society at large.

The Commission will award on an annual basis a recognition prize to reward beneficiaries that have successfully used their research results to create value for society. The beneficiaries must be able to show proof of effective exploitation and uptake of their research results. This action aims to illustrate the wider socio-economic benefits of the EU investment in R&I and to encourage project beneficiaries to best manage and use their research results.

In particular, six winners will be selected, by an evaluation jury, for their achievements. The prizes are monetary and each of the six winners will receive EUR 25.000.

Total of six prizes of EUR 0.025 each: EUR 0.15 million from the 2023 budget, and EUR 0.15 million from the 2024 budget.

All applicants are required to submit letter(s) of support coming from the user community that can provide testimony on achieved impact.

Essential award criteria: The prize will be awarded, after closure of the contest, to the contestant(s) who in the opinion of the jury best addresses the following cumulative criteria:

### **1. Pathway from results to societal benefits:**

Applicants will need to detail how the R&I results were directly or indirectly exploited after the lifetime of the project. They will need to describe the activities that were done to ensure that the R&I results lead to societal benefits. They will need to describe the scale and the sustainability of their actions.

### **2. Achieved impact:**

Applicants will need to demonstrate the already existing impact and created societal benefits. They will need to detail concrete examples of how their research results have benefitted society and who are the user communities that have profited from it. The achieved impact must be already materialised. The letter of support will serve as a testimony of the described impact.

Applicants that have already received an EU or Euratom prize cannot receive a second prize for the same activities

For the common Rules of Contest for Prizes please see the [Funding and Tenders Portal](#).

The specific Rules of Contest will be published in 2023 and in 2024 by the European Commission, which will directly launch and manage the contest and award the prizes based on the judgement of independent experts.

Form of Funding: Prizes

Type of Action: Recognition Prize

Indicative timetable: Q3 2023 and Q4 2023

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

## **2. EU Award for Gender Equality Champions**

Expected Outcomes:

- Enable the creation of a European community of academic and research champions in institutional transformation towards inclusive gender equality.
- Strengthening of the inclusiveness and connectivity objectives under the new European Research Area.

Award and certification schemes implemented in different countries, in the EU and beyond, have been shown to be useful tools for advancing gender equality in academic, research and

innovation organisations, with some awarding schemes effectively being used as drivers for competition in attracting students and researchers and/or as prerequisite for having access to funding. The annual Award scheme established in 2022 is continued. The “EU Award for Gender Equality Champions” is meant as a booster and complement to the requirement for higher education and research organisations applying to Horizon Europe to have in place a Gender Equality Plan (GEP), and as an enabler for the transformation agenda of universities, set in the new European Research Area in synergy with the European Education Area. The Award will be awarded annually to up to four academic or research organisations, i.e. two awardees for each of the following two categories:

- Organisations that have demonstrated the most progress in the implementation of their GEP and its achieved results;
- Organisations that have developed the most innovative inclusive GEP addressing intersections with other social categories such as ethnicity, social origin, sexual orientation and gender identity (LGBTI+) or disability.

Two prizes of EUR 0.1 million each for each category: EUR 0.4 million from the 2023 budget, and EUR 0.4 million from the 2024 budget.

The contestant will have to provide proof of eligibility and a written presentation of their achievements, as well as support their applications with a link to a video. The submission consists of a complete application.

Essential award criteria: Eligible applications will be evaluated by a Jury consisting of a group of independent experts, with expertise on gender equality plan implementation and intersectional approaches in research and higher education institutions, appointed by the Commission.

The prize will be awarded, after closure of the contest, to the contestants who in the opinion of the jury best address as set of cumulative criteria set for each of the two prize categories.

Eligibility criteria: The contestant must be a university, higher education institution, or research organisation (public or private) located in an EU Member State or a country associated to Horizon Europe<sup>92</sup>.

Applicants that have already received an EU or Euratom prize cannot receive a second prize for the same activities.

The specific rules of the contest will be published each year by the European Commission (on the [Funding & Tenders Portal](#) but also actively publicised elsewhere to maximise participation),

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<sup>92</sup> In accordance with the Horizon Europe Rules for participation, due to the specific policy requirements, to the nature and objectives of the action, the type of legal entity and the place of establishment are limited to research performing organisations among legal entities falling under the eligibility criterion on the requirement to have a Gender Equality Plan in place (see General Annexes to the Horizon Europe Work Programme).

which will directly launch and manage the contest and award the prize based on the judgement of independent experts.

Expected results: The prizes will boost public awareness of the importance of addressing gender equality in academic and research organisations through institutional change, incentivise a high degree of commitment to the implementation of inclusive GEPs, and create a community of champions inspiring other academic and research organisations into become gender equality champions themselves.

Form of Funding: Prizes

Type of Action: Recognition Prize

Indicative timetable: Q4 2023 and Q4 2024

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

## **GRANTS TO IDENTIFIED BENEFICIARIES**

### **1. European Science in the City next generation**

Expected Outcomes:

- Bring together more than 5000 delegates from more than 50 countries within and outside Europe;
- Showcase latest developments in research and innovation and offer open forum for lively discussion and debate on the future of European science, policy and innovation;
- Encompass three interconnected programmes: scientific research and innovation, science-to-business and scientific careers;
- Parallel Science in the City festival targets local citizens to extend and enhance dialog and exchange on science and its role in society.

Scope: In addition to the ESOF conference, the host city of ESOF 2024, should include following two initiatives:

- A festival: “European Science in the City” to be organised in close collaboration with the European Commission. The goal of the new event, associated with the more general “Science in the City” festival of ESOF, will be to showcase for the general public and European citizens the results of R&I projects supported by the European Commission, including the Horizon Europe programme. The “European Science in the City” festival will be promoted together with the ESOF conference.
- A year of events: the European City of Science (ECS) - a true all-year programme with various events and activities programmed by the host city in the spirit of the European Capital of Culture or the European Green Capital. In this perspective, the yearlong

programme of the European City of Science will target a wide population of European citizens beyond simple local or regional impact.

Support offered to the organisers of ESOF2024 and its associated events, notably the European City of Science (ECS) to ensure that a structured and expanded dialogue among all societal actors (researchers, citizens, policy makers, business and third sector organisations, including all social groups) will be developed. In this context, special emphasis is placed on exploring and supporting citizen science as an important dimension of open science and as a way to promote further Responsible Research and Innovation through outreach activities, science education and various forms of public engagement with science. Moreover, as part of ESOF conference, a talent fair should be organised.

An inclusive and integrated combination of seminars, workshops, debates and round table discussions using new interactive and engaging formats is included and centred on Horizon Europe key societal challenges.

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: Q4/2023

Indicative budget: EUR tbc million from the 2023 budget

## **2. Support to the further operation of cOAlition S**

cOAlition S is an international consortium of research funding and performing organisations that are committed to making full and immediate open access to research publications a reality. cOAlition S has developed Plan S whereby research funders mandate that access to research publications generated through their research grants must be free to access on the day of publication.

The objective of supporting the further operation of cOAlition S is to monitor the impact of Plan S and explore future activities in support of open access to scientific publications.

This grant will support the further operation of cOAlition S by supporting activities aimed at:

1. Monitoring the impact of Plan S;
2. Providing recommendations on how to build on the achievements of Plan S;
3. Supporting cOAlition S work on open access to books and monographs by contributing to the upgrade of the OAPEN infrastructure.

The duration of this action is 24 months.

Legal entities:

European Science Foundation (ESF), 1, quai Lezay-Marnésia - BP 90015 67080 Strasbourg Cedex - France

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e)  
- Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: Q3 2023

Indicative budget: EUR tbc million from the 2023 budget

### **3. European Union Contest for Young Scientists (EUCYS) 2023**

The European Union Contest for Young Scientists is a science competition for 14 to 20 year olds. It brings together first prize winners of national science contests for pre-Higher Education Institution school science projects to compete for prizes and awards. The contestants are judged by a jury of eminent scientists selected by the European Commission. The jury award 1st, 2nd and 3rd monetary prizes as well as other prestigious prizes donated to the contest by international research organisations and other similar bodies. The EU Contest takes place each year in a different location. This Contest provides additional stimulus to young people who have already demonstrated that they are applying science to solve problems. Many go on to become successful scientists. It attracts a considerable level of co-funding in the host country, and high levels of international media attention. The organisation of the contest is based on the General Guidelines on the organisation of the European Union Contest for Young Scientists and its Annex 1 – Rules of the contest. These are updated annually by the European Commission. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/eucys\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/eucys_en).

This action allows for the provision of financial support to third parties in the form of prizes. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants or prizes. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Legal entities:

TBC

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals



Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e)  
- Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: Q1 2023

Indicative budget: EUR tbc million from the 2023 budget

#### **4. Presidency conferences with a European regional dimension - WIRE**

A two-day conference (WIRE) will be organised under the EU French Presidency (Presidency Conference) in 2023. The event will gather actors active in the innovation and education ecosystem with the aim of improving science-based competitiveness.

The conference will debate knowledge based regional development and will offer potential solutions of streamlining resources aimed for this. Representatives of education organizations, research organizations, start-ups, clusters, policy makers and other related interested parties will exchange views and best practices that could lead to a higher impact of innovation across users and society at large. Best practices, trends and visions will be considered.

Legal entities:

TBC

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e)  
- Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: 1st Quarter 2023

Indicative budget: EUR tbc million from the 2023 budget

#### **5. Support to Retirement Savings Vehicle for European Research Institutions and research performing individuals (RESAVER)**

As asserted in Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality. Nevertheless social security in most member states is under pressure and mobile employees, researchers in particular, experience additional obstacles in

accumulating an adequate amount of pension provisions. Most prominent issues experienced by mobile researchers in relation to accumulation of occupational pensions (second pillar) are the vesting period, transferability of assets and administrative burden during accumulation phase and at retirement. Moreover, this action contributes to the implementation of Policy Agenda action 4 on 'Promoting attractive and sustainable research careers, balanced talent circulation and international, transdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility across the ERA'.

RESAVER Pension Fund has been created with the ambition to tackle the issues listed above by facilitating free circulation of researchers and removing pension as an obstacle to mobility which corresponds to the strategic objectives of the Union policy as stipulated in Article 179 TFEU on the establishment of a European Research Area.

RESAVER Occupational fund became operational in May 2017 and since then the fund has welcomed research organisations from Hungary, Austria, Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, Cyprus, Spain and France. In parallel with geographical expansion, RESAVER should engage in mutually beneficial collaborations with local occupational pension funds for the benefit of mobile employees. In order to answer to the needs of mobile researchers that do not receive occupational pension employee benefits, or receive an insufficient level of contributions, RESAVER should provide a personal pension solution to mobile researchers. In addition, investment strategy should be fine-tuned continuously in order to correspond to the specific needs of researchers and research performing organisations and should be aligned with the objectives with European Research Area and ERA Policy Agenda.

In this context, the pension fund is expected to perform the following tasks: pension fund management, implementation of additional countries and organisations in the pension fund, providing advice to the board concerning the legal framework, coordinate the development and distribution of a third pillar solution, support the project in ad hoc tasks, contribute to the establishment of partnerships with local pension funds and coordination of investment strategy adjustments, actively engage with relevant stakeholders to create a wide support to promote pan-European solutions that benefit researchers in general, and mobile researchers in particular.

Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties such as RESAVER Consortium. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60.000. The respective options of the Model Grant Agreement will be applied. Beneficiaries should refer to General Annex B of the Work Programme for further information and guidance.

Legal entities:

'RESAVER Pension Fund OFF' (Retirement Savings Vehicle for European Research Institutions), 22, Rue de Pascale, 1040 Brussels. Belgium

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e)  
- Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: 3rd Quarter 2023

Indicative budget: EUR tbc million from the 2023 budget

## **6. European Union Contest for early-career researchers 2023**

In order to attract more early-career researchers to a career in science and promote the opportunities not only in academia, but also industry and starting up own business, a special event for early-career researchers has been piloted as part of Leiden 2022 European City of Science. The event has a clear European dimension, and the 2023 edition should build on the work already done as part of Leiden 2022 European City of Science.

The event will bring together early career researchers from across Europe, divided in small teams, and mentors from academia, industry and SMEs in a competition to find scientific solutions to a set of challenges. Specific challenges are determined through a consultation with stakeholders in that particular field and are based on broader policy priorities.

Legal entities:

TBC

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e)  
- Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: Q1/2023

Indicative budget: EUR tbc million from the 2023 budget

## **7. European Union Contest for Young Scientists (EUCYS) 2024**

The European Union Contest for Young Scientists is a science competition for 14 to 20 year olds. It brings together first prize winners of national science contests for pre-Higher Education Institution school science projects to compete for prizes and awards. The contestants are judged by a jury of eminent scientists selected by the European Commission. The jury award 1st, 2nd and 3rd monetary prizes as well as other prestigious prizes donated to the contest by international research organisations and other similar bodies. The EU Contest takes place each year in a different location. This Contest provides additional stimulus to young people who have already demonstrated that they are applying science to solve problems. Many go on to

become successful scientists. It attracts a considerable level of co-funding in the host country, and high levels of international media attention. The organisation of the contest is based on the General Guidelines on the organisation of the European Union Contest for Young Scientists and its Annex 1 – Rules of the contest. These are updated annually by the European Commission. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/eucys\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/eucys_en).

This action allows for the provision of financial support to third parties in the form of prizes. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants or prizes. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Legal entities:

TBC

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e)  
- Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: Q1 2024

Indicative budget: EUR tbc million from the 2024 budget

## **8. Implementation of COST actions - Specific Grant under Framework Partnership Agreement**

The EC funds almost the entire programme under a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) with underlying Specific Grant Agreements (SGAs). In the FPA and the SGAs the beneficiary COST Association commits to a mandatory conditionality to spend at least 50% of the budget at the benefit of researchers from widening countries and to run 80% of the activities with a significant widening dimension. This specific grant agreement covers the expenditures for a duration of two years. The primary purpose of this grant is the implementation of the COST networking actions. Other services may be implemented as far as complementary and appropriate. The personnel costs operations incurred by the COST Association as the implementing structure are eligible as direct cost up to a maximum of 14,7 million Euro as far as they are necessary for the implementation of the COST networking actions and related other support activities. For the same purpose cost for other goods and services and subcontracting are eligible up to a cumulated maximum of 2,3 million Euro. COST networking actions will be implemented by third party grant holders using financial support to third parties.

The beneficiary may provide financial support to third parties in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party must be necessary to meet the objectives of the SGA and will be fixed in the grant agreement in line with the COST Vademecum. It will be used for the implementation of networking tools defined in a closed list that is fixed in the description of the action.

The COST Association will organise competitive open calls and an independent evaluation and selection procedure according to its own rules in agreement with the European Commission. At proposal stage at least 50% of the participants must be located in widening countries.

Legal entities:

COST Association, Avenue du Boulevard - Bolwerklaan 21, 1210 Brussels

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e)  
- Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative budget: EUR tbc million from the 2024 budget

## **9. Presidency conferences with a European regional dimension - WIRE**

A two-day conference (WIRE) will be organised under the EU French Presidency (Presidency Conference) in 2024. The event will gather actors active in the innovation and education ecosystem with the aim of improving science-based competitiveness.

The conference will debate knowledge based regional development and will offer potential solutions of streamlining resources aimed for this. Representatives of education organizations, research organizations, start-ups, clusters, policy makers and other related interested parties will exchange views and best practices that could lead to a higher impact of innovation across users and society at large. Best practices, trends and visions will be considered.

Legal entities:

TBC

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e)  
- Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: 1st Quarter 2024

Indicative budget: EUR tbc million from the 2024 budget

## **EXPERT CONTRACT ACTIONS**

### **1. Use of individual experts in support of the new ERA's objectives**

This action will support the provision of independent expertise to improve the evidence base and collect advice on various aspects related to the Reforming and Enhancing the EU Research and Innovation System and the pursued of the revitalised European Research Area. Individual experts will work in the following domains:

- Experts to contribute to monitoring of progress of the realisation of ERA's objectives;
- Experts on Human Resources and researchers' careers, experts on skills, experts on services for researchers such as those of the EURAXESS services network including the Charter & Code and HRS4R assessment process, social security and remuneration experts, experts in legal matters related to research careers and employment-related aspects, and experts in legal matters related to cross-border institutional cooperation, notably higher education institutions and public research organisations;
- Experts to contribute to the analysis of the expected impacts of the ERA Policy Agenda actions, to the development of these actions, and to the analysis of potential barriers;

The ERA Scoreboard will provide internationally comparable quantitative data and indicators to monitor progress on the realisation of the new ERA at EU and national level, revise priorities and actions in the ERA Roadmap and provide evidence and analysis for the European Semester. The Scoreboard will be issued on an annual basis.

For the European Framework for Research Careers and all areas linked to it, including reinforcing the human resources and skills dimensions in RPOs, an encompassing approach covering multiple expertise is expected to enable, among others, the current EURAXESS, HRS4R and RESAVER as well as any initiative covered by Framework for Research Careers, to tap into the competences and the resources of a single expert pool, thus avoiding unnecessary multiplication of roles and dispersion of financial and organisational resources. In addition, experts in cross-border institutional cooperation and mobility of R&I talents should allow gathering evidence and advice to facilitate cross-border cooperation between higher education institutions and between higher education institutions and other actors of the ecosystem, as well as facilitate circulation of talents.

Text will be updated in accordance with the expertise needed.

A special allowance of EUR 450/day will be paid to the experts appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest.

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

Indicative timetable: Q3 2023 and Q3 2024

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

## **2. External expertise for ad hoc tasks related to the implementation of the HE Ethics Appraisal**

This action will support the use of independent experts to advise on or assist with the implementation of the Horizon Europe Ethics Appraisal scheme in view of ensuring and maintaining its quality and effectiveness.

Since the above tasks requires specialised knowledge in research ethics/integrity and the related national and European legal framework (e.g. Data protection and privacy, Informed Consent, Artificial Intelligence and Emerging technologies, Benefit sharing, etc.) a special allowance of EUR 450/day will be paid to the experts appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest.

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

Indicative timetable: Q2 2023 and Q2 2024

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

## **3. External expertise for monitoring of Widening and ERA actions**

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

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

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

## **4. Monitoring experts for Horizon 2020 legacy**

This action is for financing external experts in charge of reviewing legacy projects from Horizon 2020 related to SEWP and Swafs.

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

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

## **PUBLIC PROCUREMENT**

### **1. Development of the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) and the Regional Innovation Scoreboard (RIS)**

#### **Scope**

This action will assure the continuation and further development of the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) which is already produced annually for almost two decades, as well as of the biennial Regional Innovation Scoreboard (RIS). The scoreboards provide European, national and regional policy-makers, innovation practitioners and all interested public with a solid, European Union-wide analytical tool to help measure, monitor, and benchmark the innovation performance of the European Union (EU), individual Member States and their regions as well as associated countries and other key international economic partners. The scoreboards identify the relative strengths and weaknesses of the research and innovation systems, and help the Member States to assess areas in which they need to concentrate their efforts in order to boost their innovation performance.

In addition, the action will explore further methodological advancements and R&I related topics not yet addressed to strengthen the analytical capacity of the tool and increase its robustness, usability and outreach.

The outcomes of the project are expected to provide a solid evidence base for tailored innovation policies aiming at supporting competitiveness, value creation, employment and prosperity in the European Union.

#### **Expected outcomes**

The services under this action cover the production of the EIS annually and of the RIS every two years for the period 2024-2027, as well as their underlying data and relating documents, such as the methodology report and the country profiles. The services will also cover methodological advancements of the analytical frameworks and the overall methodology, and exploratory research studies to address new challenges and priorities related to the innovation systems, not covered by the scoreboards.

Finally, the services will cover communication and dissemination activities, which will increase the uptake and visibility of the tools, including the maintenance, update and further development of the interactive tool, which allows customised visual comparisons of the innovation performance between countries and regions



A new framework contract will be concluded for a duration of 4 years, covering the EIS 2024 – 2027 including the above described services and reports with the maximum global amount of EUR 2 million over the whole duration of the framework contract.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q1 2023

Indicative budget: EUR tbc million from the 2023 budget

## **2. Analytics and expertise in support of the framework for attractive research careers**

This action aims at creating a pool of external experts to provide analytics, expertise and evidence for the development of the European Framework for Research Careers and all areas linked to it (implementing action 4 of the ERA Policy Agenda), including reinforcing the human resources and skills dimensions in RPOs, and the competences and needs of research managers (implementing action 17 of the ERA Policy Agenda).

This should notably include experts on Human Resources and researchers' careers, experts on skills, experts on services for researchers such as those of the EURAXESS services network including the Charter & Code and HRS4R assessment process, social security and remuneration experts, experts in legal matters related to research careers and employment-related aspects, and experts in legal matters related to cross-border institutional cooperation, notably higher education institutions and public research organisations.

Work will also be performed in support of the Research Management Initiative, performing (i) a consultation on the needs in terms of competences and skills for research management careers, (ii) supporting an expert group to design career profiles (organisations of meetings and covering travel and subsistence), (iii) establish a methodology for quality assurance and certification of training programmes for research managers, and (iv) analyse best practices and prepare mutual sharing methodologies.

Such an encompassing approach is expected to enable, among others, the current EURAXESS, HRS4R and RESAVER as well as any initiative covered by Framework for Research Careers and the Research Management Initiative, to tap into the competences and the resources of a single expert pool, thus avoiding unnecessary multiplication of roles and dispersion of financial and organisational resources. In addition, experts in cross-border institutional cooperation and mobility of R&I talents (researchers, innovators, and other R&I talents such as research managers) should allow gathering evidence and advice to facilitate cross-border cooperation between higher education institutions and between higher education institutions and other actors of the ecosystem, as well as facilitate circulation of talents.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q2/2023

Indicative budget: EUR tbc million from the 2023 budget

### **3. EU data for R&I policy**

The initiative allows MS and the European Commission to share microdata related to R&I projects, and the progressive integration of R&I project data with other sources of related data, are fundamental to strengthen ERA and reinforce our research and innovation systems by informing better evidence based policy making. The main tasks are: (1) Data sharing and interoperability of different sources of competitive or non-competitive Research and Innovation funding in Europe, and integration with relevant external data sources; (2) Digital enabling infrastructure; (3) Data analysis and visualisation tools (The EU Dashboard); (4) Capacity building. These activities will be complemented with other data activities aimed at acquiring, interlinking and visualising R&I related data.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q1 2023

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

### **4. Broad exploitation and valorisation of results relevant for the ERA Policy Agenda**

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

The action will build on the ERA Policy Platform in order to avoid additional IT developments, and will be further discussed with the ERA Forum and the Programme Committee to finalise the description.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative budget: EUR tbc million from the 2023 budget

## **5. Development, maintenance and promotion of ERA Talent Platform and associated websites and tools + IS Coordinators**

EURAXESS is one of the key initiatives enhancing researcher careers and, as such, is one of the operational instruments of the European Research Area (ERA). It particularly contributes to removing the barriers to mobility and making Europe more attractive to researchers. As an ERA implementation measure, and an important instrument under ERA Policy Agenda action 4, the EURAXESS portal and instruments under its umbrella are expanded towards a comprehensive recruitment, career development and social networking web-platform, dedicated to researchers and institutions seeking for R&I talent or willing to improve their institutional talent management policies and practices.

This action will build on the work under the previous Work Programme ‘Science with and for Society’, in particular the Study on ERA Priority 3 and ERA TOP IV Extension, as well as on the current Work Programme, more specifically action on ERA Talent Platform.

The portal is supporting institutional transformations on recruitment, working conditions and career development of researchers, and it is aligned to the reviewed European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, as well as the updated Skills Agenda. It is also interoperable with other European websites and platforms such as EURES and the new Europass, and has adopted new functionalities required in line with the European Skills, Competences Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO), the enhanced framework of research careers, etc.

Different activities will be undertaken to increase the capacity and ensure the user-friendliness of the EURAXESS portal and associated websites and tools (among which EURAXESS, HRS4R, RESAVER). They also include technical maintenance, architectural developments, and graphical and functional enhancements related to the most recent political developments. These activities will also encompass services by external information system providers who, on the basis of inputs provided by the responsible Commission services, guarantee the smooth running of the EURAXESS portal and associated websites and tools.

The promotion activities will increase awareness about ERA and its priorities. The promotion activities, among which stakeholder dialogues, events, workshops or conferences, such as the EURAXESS Conference or HR Strategy Mutual Learning seminars, will also address topics concerning the barriers to the mobility of researchers across borders, sectors and disciplines, with a focus on creating and stimulating conditions for open, transparent and merit-based recruitment, as well as attractive career options for researchers across Europe and beyond.

The newly designed EURAXESS website should be seen as an interface that facilitates matching between researchers and employers, candidates and jobs, beneficiaries and benefits, research and funding. The action will also further develop activities to sections of the website and the instruments under its umbrella, *inter alia* additional modules for RESAVER and the upgrade of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) e-tool based on the Charter and Code future revisions and developments. The ERA Talent Platform is also expected to integrate an additional online instrument - a portal gathering EU and national programmes and

schemes for intersectoral mobility, which should provide easy access for individuals who want to engage into intersectoral mobility or want to be employed as intermediate between academic and non-academic sector, notably businesses.

The newly designed website will improve automatized data gathering in order to allow the Commission to produce high quality data and evidence in support of future ERA policy developments, relevant legislation and actions.

This action requires collaboration with a large group of stakeholders, including EURAXESS Bridgehead Organisations/National Coordinators, national portal administrators, EURAXESS Worldwide and other relevant stakeholders. Activities should also include services by external information system provider(s) who, on the basis of inputs provided by the responsible Commission services, guarantee the smooth running of the platform.

Web communication and online promotion activities with stakeholders related to the rollout of the newly designed platform and the portals and tools under its umbrella should also be foreseen as part of this action.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q1/2023

Indicative budget: EUR tbc million from the 2023 budget

## **6. Consolidation of the Research Careers Observatory**

To monitor the implementation of the European Framework for Research Careers and to provide evidence on effectiveness of measures aiming at balanced talent circulation and strengthening research careers, DG RTD is establishing a Research Careers Observatory, enabling tracking of researchers in terms of mobility, careers, skills, and working conditions. Anticipated outcomes are: ability to monitor the implementation of the Framework for Research Careers and system reform; shared understanding on support data needs of Member States and research performing organisations; increased attractiveness of Europe's research performing organisations for the best talents through accessible data.

The objective of this action is to put in place a European Research Careers Observatory that combines the best of the current EU data tools and capacities in one single place, while further enhancing their use and relevance for policy makers, organisations, and researchers. Cooperation with EUROSTAT, JRC, and where relevant also with OECD are crucial. The aim is also to fill the gaps in data related to certain focus areas of the Framework, such as digital and green skills, in order to provide relevant evidence for policy making at European and national level.

Conceptually, the observatory is proposed to monitor three levels of research careers: (i) skills and training, (ii) research jobs, and (iii) mobility and exchange. The Observatory has been built under Horizon Europe WIDERA 2022 work programme and will be accessible via the ERA

Talent Platform. The current action should consolidate this work. The work should provide indicators on the attractiveness across the EU territory for research careers and talents, taking into account national schemes for observatory and monitoring. It should enable real-time monitoring of national systems of remuneration and employment conditions, social security policies, portability of grants and pensions, as well as research mobility patterns of researchers, both geographically and intersectoral mobility.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q1 2024

Indicative budget: EUR tbc million from the 2024 budget

## **7. Monitoring gender equality in Research and Innovation - Development, implementation and dissemination of indicators (She Figures)**

Gender equality as a priority has been strengthened progressively in the EU. In Research and Innovation (R&I), there is a need to better capture progress made towards the individual European Research Area (ERA) priorities and inform evidence-based policy-making. In cooperation with the Member States, the European Commission will continue collecting comparable sex-disaggregated data and monitoring, with appropriate indicators, the implementation of gender policies and actions at different levels - institutional, national, EU and, where available, world level. The study will update data and propose new indicators to show the progress towards gender equality in R&I, following the chronological journey of researchers from graduating from doctoral studies to participating in the labour market and acquiring decision-making roles, while exploring differences in women's and men's working conditions and research and innovation output.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q2 / 2024

Indicative budget: EUR tbc million from the 2024 budget

## **8. Eurobarometer on European citizens' knowledge and attitudes towards science and technology**

Fostering science and innovation is a central priority for the European Union (EU). EU support for research and innovation (R&I) aims to improve the quality and quantity of research and innovation conducted, ensure that the processes and outcomes of research and innovation align with the needs, values and expectations of society, and that it addresses the many pressing issues that face us as individuals, as society, and as a planet.

Increasing expectations are placed on R&I to develop social and technological solutions to pressing problems, for instance in the fields of public health, climate change and biodiversity loss, as R&I undergoes transformation of its modus operandi towards open and responsible research and innovation. Yet ethical, research integrity, and other issues continue to damage the standing of science and scientific practice, innovations continue to be developed that are questioned or even rejected by society, and scientific knowledge – and support for research and innovation – is highly unequally distributed across Europe and its population.

Up-to-date and robust evidence is needed to understand societal trends, improve interactions and the relationship between science and society, and to inform the continued development of policy responses at different levels of governance.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: 3rd Quarter 2024

Indicative budget: EUR tbc million from the 2024 budget

## **9. Studies and communication**

Activities should support the Pact for Research and Innovation and the implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda and may include studies, support and communication activities that are needed to analyse and enhance the EU R&I environment, for example

- collection of project feedback, in particular with respect to key exploitable results;
- organisational support for consulting the R&I stakeholders community on R&I needs;
- production and dissemination of communication material and the organisation of events related the ERA, synergies with the EEA, European R&I agendas and Horizon Europe;
- support to Member States ensuring coherent communication activities on the implementation of the ERA policy agenda across target groups;
- analysis of the expected impacts of the ERA Policy Agenda actions, and of potential barriers to their development.

Activities are expected to include surveys as appropriate implemented through public procurement, and/or appointing (groups of) independent experts. These limited numbers of contracts may be implemented on the basis of framework contracts, in order to further ensure that the Commission is provided with appropriate and timely analyses, which in turn should facilitate the proper integration of policy studies into the preparation of new policy initiatives.

Cooperation with the presidencies of the Council of the European Union and stakeholders is envisaged and could include direct support to ERA-related presidency events.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q3 2023 and Q3 2024

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

## **10. Implementation of the ERA Monitoring Mechanism**

The Council Conclusions on the Future Governance of the European Research Area (ERA) calls on the Commission and Member States to develop a new **ERA online policy platform** with the aim to have a consistent, robust and quality tested national reporting system, taking into account current instruments. Furthermore, the Council recommendation on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe (Pact for R&I), defines that the platform should inform on (i) the implementation of the ERA policy agenda at Union and national level; and on (ii) other relevant investments, reforms and activities supporting the principles and ERA priority areas set out in the Pact for R&I. The Commission and the Member States should share information through the ERA policy online platform on their current and planned policies and programmes that contribute to implementing the ERA policy agenda, and more broadly contribute to the principles and priorities set out by the Pact for R&I. In that sense, the online platform could serve as a kind of “hub” for sharing information around the new ERA and ease exchange between all actors.

Considering this, the online policy platform should be structured around the various elements that ensure the future monitoring of and reporting on the ERA implementation, including a scoreboard and dashboard and a tool for reporting from the Member States and the Commission on the implementation of the ERA policy agenda (e.g. annual reports to the Member States). Moreover, it should provide for easy access to and information on the priorities areas of the Pact for R&I, the ERA policy agenda, including its list of joint actions and their state of implementation, and on Member States. A clear structure should ensure compatibility and comparability of information per country and per action.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Q3 2024

Indicative budget: EUR tbc million from the 2024 budget