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Annex XIV

Horizon Europe

Work Programme 2026-2027

14. Horizontal Activities



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Calls for proposals

Call - R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal

HORIZON-CID-2026-01

Overview of this call¹

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ²	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2026		
Opening: 18 Dec 2025 Deadline(s): 15 Sep 2026				
Horizontal call - R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal				
HORIZON-CID-2026-01-01: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal: Decarbonisation of energy intensive industries (IA) (Processes4Planet and Clean Steel partnerships)	IA	125.00	15.00 to 25.00	8
HORIZON-CID-2026-01-02: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal: Clean Technologies for Climate Action	IA	150.00	15.00 to 25.00	8
Overall indicative budget		275.00		
General conditions relating to this call				
Admissibility conditions	The conditions are described in General			

¹ 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 2026 and 2027.

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

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

	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.

Call - R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal

HORIZON-CID-2027-01

Overview of this call³

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ⁴	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2027		
Opening: 12 Jan 2027 Deadline(s): 15 Sep 2027				
Horizontal call - R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal				

³ 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 2026 and 2027.

⁴ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

HORIZON-CID-2027-01-01: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal: Decarbonisation of energy intensive industries (IA) (Processes4Planet and Clean Steel partnerships)	IA	125.00	15.00 to 25.00	8
HORIZON-CID-2027-01-02: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal: Clean Technologies for Climate Action	IA	140.00	15.00 to 25.00	8
Overall indicative budget		265.00		

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

Call - AI in Science

HORIZON-RAISE-2026-01

Overview of this call⁵

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

⁵ 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 2026 and 2027.

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ⁶	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2026		
Opening: 06 Jan 2026 Deadline(s): 21 Apr 2026				
Horizontal call - AI in science				
HORIZON-RAISE-2026-01-01: Thematic Networks of Excellence for AI in Science (RAISE pilot) (RIA)	RIA	15.00	Around 15.00	1
HORIZON-RAISE-2026-01-02: Thematic Networks of Excellence for AI in Science – Agriculture and Environmental Pollution (RAISE pilot)	RIA	12.80	Around 12.80	1
Overall indicative budget		27.80		

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

⁶ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

<i>Agreements</i>	
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Call - AI in Science

HORIZON-RAISE-2027-01

Overview of this call⁷

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ⁸	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2027		
Opening: 13 Oct 2026 Deadline(s): 02 Feb 2027				
Horizontal call - AI in science				
HORIZON-RAISE-2027-01-01: Automated Scientific Discovery - Materials Science (RAISE pilot) (RIA)	RIA	26.50	Around 9.00	3
HORIZON-RAISE-2027-01-02: Automated Scientific Discovery – Food (RAISE pilot)	RIA	3.00	Around 3.00	1
HORIZON-RAISE-2027-01-04: Developing a model for a Data Lab for Science linking with EOSC and RAISE (RAISE pilot) (CSA)	CSA	1.00	Around 1.00	1
Overall indicative budget		30.50		

General conditions relating to this call

<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General
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⁷ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027.

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

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

	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.

Call - RAISE Doctoral Networks for AI in Science

HORIZON-RAISE-2026-01-MSCA

Overview of this call⁹

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million)	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2026		
Opening: 28 May 2026 Deadline(s): 24 Nov 2026				
Horizontal call - AI in science				
HORIZON-RAISE-2026-01-03: RAISE Doctoral Networks for	TMA Doctoral	30.00		Not

⁹ 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 2026 and 2027.

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

AI in Science (RAISE pilot)	Networks			relevant
HORIZON-RAISE-2026-01-03: RAISE Doctoral Networks for AI in Science (RAISE pilot)	TMA Doctoral Networks - Industrial Doctorates			Not relevant
HORIZON-RAISE-2026-01-03: RAISE Doctoral Networks for AI in Science (RAISE pilot)	TMA Doctoral Networks - Joint Doctorates			Not relevant
Overall indicative budget		30.00		

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

Call - Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society

HORIZON-NATURE-2027-01

Overview of this call¹⁰

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ¹¹	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2026		
Opening: 13 Oct 2026 Deadline(s): 14 Jan 2027				
Horizontal call - Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society				
HORIZON-NATURE-2027-01-01: Understanding the nature and the extent of the effects of PFAS on biodiversity and ecosystem services	RIA	11.45	Around 5.70	2
HORIZON-NATURE-2027-01-02: Better understanding, anticipating and addressing the biodiversity benefits and impacts of the clean and digital industries	RIA	18.00	Around 6.00	3
HORIZON-NATURE-2027-01-03: Systemic approaches to accelerate transformative change for biodiversity	RIA	12.00	Around 4.00	3
Overall indicative budget		41.45		

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

¹⁰ 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 2026 and 2027.

¹¹ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

	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.

Call - Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society

HORIZON-NATURE-2027-02

Overview of this call¹²

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ¹³	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2027		
Opening: 13 Oct 2026 Deadline(s): 14 Jan 2027				
Horizontal call - Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society				
HORIZON-NATURE-2027-02-01: Assessing direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity	RIA	15.00	Around 7.50	2

¹² 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 2026 and 2027.

¹³ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

decline of invertebrates				
HORIZON-NATURE-2027-02-02: Living labs co-creating solutions for the restoration of ecosystems addressing implementation bottlenecks and improving resilience to risks	RIA	60.00	Around 10.00	6
HORIZON-NATURE-2027-02-03: Networking to scale up living labs for nature restoration solutions and to address bottlenecks to implementation	CSA	4.00	Around 4.00	1
HORIZON-NATURE-2027-02-04: Innovative solutions to fight wildlife trafficking and to reduce invasion of invasive alien species	IA	13.00	Around 13.00	1
HORIZON-NATURE-2027-02-05: Cost-effective biodiversity monitoring for EU policies	RIA	16.00	5.00 to 6.00	3
Overall indicative budget		108.00		

General conditions relating to this call

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

Call - Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society

HORIZON-NATURE-2027-03

Overview of this call¹⁴

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ¹⁵	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2027		
Opening: 03 Jun 2027 Deadline(s): 16 Sep 2027				
Horizontal call - Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society				
HORIZON-NATURE-2027-03-01: Advancing interdisciplinary, data-driven research at the biodiversity- health interface under a One Health approach	RIA	20.00	Around 20.00	1
Overall indicative budget		20.00		

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

¹⁴ 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 2026 and 2027.

¹⁵ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

	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.

Call - Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society

HORIZON-NATURE-2027-04

Overview of this call¹⁶

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ¹⁷	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2026		
Opening: 06 Oct 2026 Deadline(s): 16 Feb 2027				
Horizontal call - Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society				
HORIZON-NATURE-2027-04-01: A stronger Global Ocean Observing System to enhance Europe’s strategic autonomy, climate resilience and biodiversity conservation	IA	50.00	Around 50.00	1
Overall indicative budget		50.00		

¹⁶ 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 2026 and 2027.

¹⁷ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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.

Call - Bridging actions 2027

HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01

Overview of this call¹⁸

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ¹⁹	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2027		
Opening: 20 Oct 2026				

¹⁸ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027.

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

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

Deadline(s): 16 Feb 2027				
Horizontal call - Bridging actions				
HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-09: EU AI Media Platform – modular multilingual public-interest infrastructure for European news and audiovisual media (IA) - Apply AI	IA	10.00	Around 10.00	1
HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-10: Autonomous Drive Ambition Cities (IA) - Apply AI	IA	15.00	Around 15.00	1
HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-12: Large-Scale piloting of next-generation AI-driven digital platforms for a more affordable, secure and sustainable European energy system (IA) - Apply AI	IA	15.00	Around 15.00	1
HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-13: EU Frontier AI Initiative: Advanced Scaling Frameworks for High-Performance AI Models (RIA) - Apply AI	RIA	15.00	Around 15.00	1
Overall indicative budget		55.00		

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

<i>Agreements</i>	
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Call - Bridging actions 2027

HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-02

Overview of this call²⁰

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ²¹	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2027		
Opening: 20 Oct 2026 Deadline(s): 28 Jan 2027				
Horizontal call - Bridging actions				
HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-02-05: Advancing promising results from Pillar II collaborative research through the innovation journey	IA	32.50	0.00 to 2.50	13
Overall indicative budget		32.50		

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</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex

²⁰ 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 2026 and 2027.

²¹ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

<i>exclusion</i>	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.

Call - Bridging actions 2027

HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-03

Overview of this call²²

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ²³	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2027		
Opening: 09 Mar 2027 Deadline(s): 15 Jun 2027				
Horizontal call - Bridging actions				
HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-03-04: Supporting the long-term resilience and European sovereignty of critical research data and knowledge repositories and scientific	RIA	8.00	Around 8.00	1

²² 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 2026 and 2027.

²³ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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services for the life sciences				
HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-03-06: Access to research infrastructure services to enable R&I addressing industry needs in priority areas	RIA	15.00	Around 5.00	3
HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-03-07: Europe's world class research and technology infrastructures as strategic assets for talent to Choose Europe	CSA	7.50	Around 1.50	5
Overall indicative budget		30.50		

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.

Call - Bridging actions 2027

HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-04

Overview of this call²⁴

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ²⁵	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2026		
Opening: 06 Oct 2026 Deadline(s): 16 Feb 2027				
Horizontal call - Bridging actions				
HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-04-03: Bringing innovative climate preparedness and resilience solutions closer to the market	CSA	20.00	Around 20.00	1
HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-04-08: Sustainability and resilience of climate projections and related data records for European and global science and policy	CSA	5.00	Around 5.00	1
HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-04-11: Detection, monitoring, modelling, and attribution capabilities for Solar Radiation Modification (SRM) activities and assessing their impacts on Earth's climate and ecosystems	RIA	10.00	Around 10.00	1
Overall indicative budget		35.00		

General conditions relating to this call

<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
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²⁴ 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 2026 and 2027.

²⁵ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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

Call - Bridging actions 2027

HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-05

Overview of this call²⁶

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ²⁷	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2027		
Opening: 01 Dec 2026 Deadline(s): 03 Mar 2027				
Horizontal call - Bridging actions				
HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-05-01: Skills for	CSA	30.00	Around	1

²⁶ 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 2026 and 2027.

²⁷ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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innovative SMEs			30.00	
Overall indicative budget		30.00		

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

Call - Bridging Actions 2027

HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-06

Overview of this call²⁸

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project	Indicative number of projects
		2027		

²⁸ 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 2026 and 2027.

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

			(EUR million) ²⁹	expected to be funded
Opening: 20 Oct 2026 Deadline(s): 16 Feb 2027				
Horizontal call - Bridging actions				
HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-06-02: Valorising Horizon project results via innovation ecosystems	RIA	20.00	2.50 to 4.00	5
Overall indicative budget		20.00		

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

²⁹ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

Horizontal calls

Horizontal call - R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal

Europe is maintaining the course set by the **European Green Deal**, including the goal to be the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, as well as reaching the 2030 climate target of reducing net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 55% relative to 1990 level. This also includes the intermediate 2040 target of reducing net GHG emissions by 90%.

Rapidly increasing energy prices and growing geopolitical tensions threatening the security of supply of Europe's energy challenge our competitiveness vis-a-vis other global economies. There is a need to mobilise investments to expand the generation of clean resources, strengthen and secure the competitiveness and resilience of clean tech industries, and decarbonise energy-intensive industries, as well as to modernise electricity grids, transport networks and storage infrastructure to better connect and improve the performance of Europe's clean energy systems. At the same time, circularity remains a priority and is key to making the most of the EU's limited resources, reducing dependencies, and contributing to the reduction of CO2 emissions.

The [Competitiveness Compass](#)³⁰ sets a path for Europe to become the place where future technologies, services, and clean products are invented, manufactured, and put on the market, whilst being the first continent to become climate neutral. The [Draghi Report](#)³¹ identifies three transformational imperatives to boost Europe's competitiveness and resilience, and the Competitiveness Compass sets out an approach and a selection of flagship measures to translate each of these imperatives into reality: 1) Closing the innovation gap; 2) A joint roadmap for decarbonisation and competitiveness; and 3) Reducing excessive dependencies and increasing security.

Research and innovation are key enablers of this industrial and economic transformation. This is highlighted in the European Commission's new political guidelines for 2024-2029, which put "**research and innovation at the heart of Europe's economy**".

In this vein, the [Clean Industrial Deal](#)³², as a follow-up to the Competitiveness Compass, aims to direct investment towards infrastructure and industry in order to support the EU's industrial decarbonisation, resilience, growth, and competitiveness.

The Clean Industrial Deal confirms Europe's dedication to its decarbonisation goals by offering clear business incentives. It will help **create lead markets** to boost supply and demand in **clean tech and energy-intensive industries** (such as chemicals, cement, steel and metal), enabling the decarbonisation and industrial competitiveness of Europe at the same time. An integral focus is to **support the acceleration of the roll-out of clean energy and**

³⁰ COM(2025) 30 final

³¹ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-competitiveness/draghi-report_en

³² COM(2025) 85 final

industry decarbonisation solutions, to develop sectoral transition pathways and to reinforce a circular economy.

The Clean Industrial Deal Communication states that “Research and Innovation (R&I) is a key enabler for promoting the next generation of clean tech, clean energy and decarbonised manufacturing in the EU. The flagship Horizon Europe call with an indicative budget of EUR 600 million under the 2026-2027 work programme supports fit-for-deployment projects. This will aim at fostering synergies between the Framework Programme for R&I and the Innovation Fund, creating a pipeline of projects from R&I to deployment.”

The main aim of this call is to **support the development of a new generation of demonstrators in clean tech and decarbonised industry that combine technological excellence with market readiness with a view to accelerating their market deployment.**

The call will follow a **bottom-up and industry-led approach** to maximise the impact on competitiveness and decarbonisation across EU industrial sectors (e.g. decarbonised industries, energy and transport), allowing for **cross-sectorial system integration** and a market-driven R&I response to industry needs. Accordingly, the call will consist of **two large open topics** focusing on: 1) Clean Tech for Climate; and 2) Decarbonisation of Energy-Intensive Industries. A complementary call of EUR 50 million in support of the Clean Industrial Deal is included in the Research Fund for Coal and Steel.

In this sense, this call supporting the Clean Industrial Deal introduces a new approach to reinforce the activities of the largest component of the Horizon Europe programme, Pillar II (‘Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness’), which supports projects related to societal challenges striving to reinforce technological and industrial capacities. It will be complemented by a number of specific sectorial actions within Cluster 4 (“Digital, Space, and Industry”) and Cluster 5 (“Climate, Energy, and Mobility”), including the Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking as part of an overall coordinated portfolio management approach.

The expected output of the call will be projects that are **“Fit for deployment”** in terms of technological feasibility, but importantly also in terms of having a realistic business plan and a sound market-readiness strategy in the dissemination and exploitation plan. This will **support the EU innovation value chain** to supply the deployment pipeline with suitable R&I solutions ready for deployment in the market through private/public investment (including relevant EU deployment programmes, such as the Innovation Fund).

Proposals submitted under this call are expected to set out a credible pathway to contribute to the Clean Industrial Deal’s core objectives, and more specifically to several of the following **expected impacts**:

- **Accelerating roll-out and deployment.** Accelerate the roll-out and deployment of European decarbonised and clean tech solutions across EU industrial sectors (e.g. decarbonised industries, energy and transport).

- **Promoting competitiveness.** Support the European competitiveness of next generation of clean tech and decarbonised industry in the EU.
- **Resilience and Strategic Autonomy.** Support the expansion of the manufacturing capacity in Europe for industry decarbonisation and clean tech solutions and strengthen sustainable and resilient value chains in Europe to reduce dependencies.
- **Leveraging Investments.** Facilitate the mobilisation and alignment of public and private financing and investment for innovative clean energy and industry decarbonisation technologies, assets, grids, and processes in the EU.
- **Lowering Energy Prices.** Reduce the energy price gap in Europe via the deployment of competitive clean tech and industrial decarbonisation solutions.

Instructions for the *Business Plan* and the *Market-Readiness Strategy*

A business plan and a credible initial market-readiness strategy are essential components in the ultimate success of an industry-based project, as well as its prospects to attract further investments for deployment. They will both be decisive factors under the impact criterion, and proposers are requested to present a carefully considered business plan and market-readiness strategy, backed by the management of the companies involved. These two elements are mandatory for all proposals, as part of their dissemination and exploitation activities (and the correspondingly applicable rules), and will be further developed and updated during the implementation period through a yearly deliverable and a final report in order to ensure fit for deployment at the end of the project.

The ***business plan*** is expected to demonstrate the expected outcomes of the proposal in terms of enhanced competitiveness and market opportunities for the participants and deployment in the EU, in the short to medium term. It should describe the targeted market(s); estimated total addressable market size in the EU and globally, including the competitive landscape; financial projections (e.g. including revenue, profitability, investment, and cash flow forecasts); user and customer needs and demonstrate that the solutions are fit for matching the market and user needs in a cost-effective manner; and describe the expected market position and any possible competitive advantage.

The ***market-readiness strategy*** is expected to identify obstacles, requirements and necessary actions for becoming ready for market deployment, for example: securing the required investment commitment for the next phase, including through possible synergies with other programmes; complying with relevant regulatory constraints; securing conditions for permitting; developing necessary standards; accessing and recruiting the required skills; enhancing product robustness; securing industrial integrators; securing the necessary intellectual property rights, and securing user acceptance at large. The market-readiness strategy must include a comprehensive risk assessment analysis.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CID-2026-01-01: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal: Decarbonisation of energy intensive industries (IA) (Processes4Planet and Clean Steel partnerships)

Call: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 15.00 and 25.00 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 125.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply: In order to include a business plan and market-readiness strategy (as part of the dissemination and exploitation activities), as outlined in the introduction to this Destination, the page limit in part B of the General Annexes is exceptionally extended to a total maximum of 60 pages
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to start at TRL 6 and achieve TRL 7 to 8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: To contribute to a balanced portfolio covering the three technology areas described in the scope below, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking, but also at least to one (1) application that is the highest ranked for each area according to the main area selected in the application, provided that the applications attain all thresholds.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: The granting authority may, up to 4 years after the end of the action,

	object to a transfer of ownership or to the exclusive licensing of results, as set out in the specific provision of Annex 5.
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Expected Outcome: Proposals are expected to contribute to **all** the following expected outcomes:

- Accelerate the use of innovative technologies to decarbonise industrial processes and bring to the market more cost-effective clean products to strengthen the competitiveness, sustainability (including biodiversity), and resilience of EU industries;
- Create new innovative first-of-a-kind operational demonstrators and/or optimise newly installed industrial decarbonisation solutions in Europe; and
- Demonstrate the market readiness of the envisaged future clean products and their innovative processes via a credible business plan and an exploitation strategy for industrialisation, including market-tested use cases.

Scope: The **Clean Industrial Deal** aims to secure the EU as an attractive location for manufacturing, including for energy-intensive industries, and to promote clean tech and new circular business models in order to meet Europe's ambitious decarbonisation and climate neutrality targets. It focuses primarily on the competitive decarbonisation of EU industry and on the production of clean technologies in the EU.

The following three technology areas on energy intensive industries having a strong and promising growth potential in Europe are in scope of this call:

- Managing of carbon cycle (CCU and/or CCUS): further optimization and demonstration of solutions for the capture, utilization or storage of CO₂ and/or CO from installations of the energy intensive industries, with significant reduction of energy input (per ton of CO₂/CO) related to capture rate and purity compared to current available technologies (target figure 30% reduction), and potential of commercialization of the decarbonized products with respect to LCA (compared to state of the art), market size, and cost.
- Clean energy usage in production (electrification of the processes, decarbonated production, integration of alternative clean energy carriers – e.g. hydrogen – and technologies, on-site renewable energy storage solutions, usage and upgrade of waste heat): supporting major improvements of clean energy usage in the energy intensive industries until 2035.
- Circularity and resource efficiency (material, energy, water) of production processes: improvement by 30% until 2035 compared to current industrial value, with technological solutions which are commercially viable; and significant reduction of the overall raw material consumption, energy input, freshwater intake, impact on ecosystems and emissions, through circular value networks that convert industrial side-streams and/or end-of-use waste to new feedstock for which no low-CO₂-technologies currently exist.

Solutions must have an overall positive LCA and remain commercially viable under the expected regulatory and framework conditions at the end of the project.

Proposals should **explicitly select one main area** but can also address in an integrated way a combination of these three areas within an industrial sector, provided that it is innovative and can lead to low carbon solutions. The choice of the specific technologies addressed in the proposal is left to the project applicants who should include a thorough justification of the choices both in technological and business terms. Use of advanced, and safe and sustainable materials and processes could be also addressed as part of the selected proposals.

Proposals are expected to:

- demonstrate an **adequate integration of relevant technologies** in support of the Clean Industrial Deal. The integration can either be demonstrated in a direct (e.g. reduction of greenhouse emissions of a process) or an indirect (e.g. production of a new green/clean product) manner. Reduction or avoidance of harmful pollutants and impact on biodiversity may also be considered, as relevant.³³ The use of relevant results of R&I projects previously or ongoing funded at EU, national or regional level is encouraged.
- show **industrial leadership** in the deployment after the project. To ensure market readiness and effective collaboration amongst relevant stakeholders, the consortium should be industry driven and composed of a preferably small and manageable number of participants, and its size should be justified. The participation of SMEs is encouraged.

The draft dissemination, exploitation and communication plan is expected to include a sound and convincing **business plan** and **market-readiness strategy** (cf. intro). These should address how to prepare and support the deployment of the proposed tech solution across relevant EU industrial sectors, and/or how to ensure a high potential for market uptake through further private/public investment (including relevant EU deployment programmes, such as the Innovation Fund). They should include a comprehensive analysis of the critical barriers (technological and non-technological) for the successful market deployment and the corresponding plan to tackle them before 2030.

Proposals are expected to include a clear **go/no go moment** ahead of the contracting and demonstration phase. Before this go/no-go moment, the project is expected to deliver detailed engineering plans, a techno-economic assessment, all needed permits for the demonstrator, a complete business plan and market-readiness strategy, identifying clearly the industrial partner(s) that will lead the deployment. Proposals are also expected to provide a clear and credible pathway to obtaining all needed permits for the demonstration phase of the project.

Taking into account that the Clean Industrial Deal focuses on clean tech and decarbonisation of energy-intensive industry, projects funded under this topic will be encouraged to develop synergies and coordinate on similar funded projects under the topics *HORIZON-CID-2026-01-02: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal: Clean Technologies for Climate Action*

³³ For instance, biodiversity could be a priority in specific areas with significant impact on flora or fauna

and HORIZON- HORIZON-CID-2027-01-02: *R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal: Clean Technologies for Climate Action* under this call, as well as with related projects funded under the Processes4Planet, and Clean Steel and other European Partnerships.

This topic implements the co-programmed European partnerships Processes4Planet and Clean Steel.

HORIZON-CID-2026-01-02: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal: Clean Technologies for Climate Action

Call: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 15.00 and 25.00 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 150.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply: In order to include a business plan and market-readiness strategy (as part of the dissemination and exploitation activities), as outlined in the introduction to this Destination, the page limit in part B of the General Annexes is exceptionally extended to a total maximum of 60 pages
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to start at TRL 6 and achieve TRL 8 by the end of the project.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: To contribute to a balanced portfolio covering the three technology areas described in the scope below, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking, but also at least to one (1) application that is the highest ranked for each area according to the

	main area selected in the application, provided that the applications attain all thresholds.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: The granting authority may, up to 4 years after the end of the action, object to a transfer of ownership or to the exclusive licensing of results, as set out in the specific provision of Annex 5.

Expected Outcome: Proposals are expected to contribute to **all** the following expected outcomes:

- Strengthen the competitiveness, sustainability (including biodiversity) and resilience of an innovative clean tech solution by clearly demonstrating the capability to, significantly:
 - o increase its circular material use rate, based on a sound and realistic baseline;
 - o reduce the levelized cost of energy (LCOE) delivered to end-users - including, where relevant, production, distribution, and storage costs, based on a sound and realistic baseline and considering different geographic scenarios; and
 - o contribute to Europe's industrial leadership and competitiveness, in line with the objectives of Net-Zero Industry Act (NZIA)³⁴ for the EU manufacturing capacity of net-zero technologies^{35,36}.
- Bring this innovative clean tech solution to full technological maturity and close to market-readiness with a view to accelerating its market deployment and/or integration in key industrial sectors in Europe (e.g. manufacturing, energy and transport).

Scope: The **Clean Industrial Deal** aims to secure the EU as an attractive location for manufacturing, including for energy-intensive industries, and to promote clean tech and new circular business models in order to meet Europe's ambitious decarbonisation and climate neutrality and biodiversity preservation targets. It focuses primarily on the competitive decarbonisation of EU industry and on the production of clean technologies in the EU. This requires notably a considerable increase in electrification of EU energy systems and in all end-use sectors of the European economy (either directly, or via enabling intermediate technologies).

³⁴ Net-Zero Industry Act: [resource.html](#)

³⁵ This should apply to each main specific component of the project for which, under the NZIA, it is established that more than 50% of Union's supply originates from a third country. In such cases, at least 50% of these components should be sourced from the EU or other Horizon Europe Associated Countries. In cases where a strong dependency would compromise the viability of the project, beneficiaries may aim at a lower percentage providing an adequate justification in the proposal.

³⁶ [860c257b-16db-429e-91c1-a30bea57e7ce_en](#)

The following three clean tech areas have a strong and promising growth potential in Europe. Proposals are expected to address one or several of these areas:

- Integrated net-zero emissions energy systems (e.g. including energy grids, networks and systems)
- Enhanced zero-emission power technologies (e.g. including renewable electricity, heat and energy technologies)
- Storage technologies, renewable fuels, and carbon capture and utilisation (CCU) (e.g. including batteries and other energy storage solutions, renewable hydrogen³⁷, advanced biofuels and synthetic renewable fuels) enabling climate neutrality

Proposals should explicitly select one main area but can also address in an integrated way a combination of these three areas. Applicants are **free to decide on the specific value chain they wish to strengthen** in the above clean tech areas.

As part of bringing innovative clean tech solutions closer to the market, proposals may also address step-change in relevant network and infrastructure deployment to facilitate scale up across the trans-European energy and transport networks – e.g. electricity, heat, gas, hydrogen, CO₂, batteries, and refuelling networks, etc. Application of advanced innovative materials development, connected process engineering and scale-up, resource efficiency, circularity and recycling may also be addressed as part of the selected value chain, as relevant. Attention should be paid to avoid technologies which may have a negative impact on biodiversity and ecosystems.

Proposals are expected to:

- ensure the development of innovative technological solutions **along a specific clean tech value chain**. For this, they need to involve an adequate combination of clean tech suppliers, energy users (e.g. manufacturing, energy and transport) and other relevant stakeholders, in order to support a sound business case, taking into account a gender-sensitive and intersectional approach.
- demonstrate an **adequate integration of relevant technological solutions including** clean tech and industrial decarbonisation solutions in support of the Clean Industrial Deal, and to ensure a clear and quantifiable impact on competitiveness and reduction of GHG emissions. Reduction or avoidance of harmful pollutants and impact on biodiversity may also be considered, as relevant³⁸. The integration can either be demonstrated in a direct (e.g. energy to an industrial/transport sector) or an indirect (e.g. energy to grid to an industrial/transport sector) manner. The use of relevant results of R&I projects previously or currently funded at EU or national level is encouraged.

³⁷ Projects need to ensure complementarities with the activities under the Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking

³⁸ For instance, biodiversity could be a priority in specific areas with significant impact on flora or fauna.

- show **industrial leadership** in view of the deployment after the project. To ensure market readiness and effective collaboration amongst relevant stakeholders along a specific clean tech value chain, the consortium should be industry driven and composed of a manageable number of participants (indicatively, not more than ten participants). The consortium size should be justified based on the extent of the value chain covered. The participation of SMEs is encouraged.
- seek coherence with the work of the Strategic Energy Technology (SET) Plan and relevant industrial initiatives.

The draft dissemination, exploitation and communication plan is expected to include a sound and convincing **business plan** and **market-readiness strategy** (cf. intro). They should address how to prepare and support the deployment of the proposed clean tech solution across relevant EU industrial sectors (e.g. energy, transport, manufacturing) and/or how to ensure a high potential for market uptake through further private/public investment (including relevant EU deployment programmes, such as the Innovation Fund). They should include a comprehensive analysis of the critical barriers (technological and non-technological) for the successful market deployment and the corresponding plan to address them.

Proposals are expected to include a clear **go/no go moment** ahead of the contracting and demonstration phase. Before this go/no-go moment, the project is expected to deliver detailed engineering plans, a techno-economic assessment, all needed permits for the demonstrator, a complete business plan and market-readiness strategy, identifying clearly the industrial partner(s) that will lead the deployment. Proposals are also expected to provide a clear and credible pathway to obtaining all needed permits for the demonstration phase of the project.

Taking into account that the Clean Industrial Deal focuses on clean tech and energy-intensive industry decarbonisation, projects funded under this topic will be encouraged to develop synergies and coordinate with similar or complementary projects funded under the topics *HORIZON-CID-2026-01-02: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal: Decarbonisation of Energy Intensive Industries* and *HORIZON-CID-2027-01-02: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal: Decarbonisation of Energy Intensive Industries* under this call, as well as with relevant projects funded under relevant European Partnerships (including e.g. the Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking and the Clean Energy Transition Partnership).

HORIZON-CID-2027-01-01: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal: Decarbonisation of energy intensive industries (IA) (Processes4Planet and Clean Steel partnerships)

Call: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 15.00 and 25.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and

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Horizontal Activities

	selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 125.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply: In order to include a business plan and market-readiness strategy (as part of the dissemination and exploitation activities), as outlined in the introduction to this Destination, the page limit in part B of the General Annexes is exceptionally extended to a total maximum of 60 pages.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: In line with the “<i>restriction on control in innovation actions in critical technology areas</i>” delineated in General Annex B of the General Annexes, entities established in an eligible country but which are directly or indirectly controlled by China or by a legal entity established in China are not eligible to participate in the action. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to start at TRL 6 and achieve TRL 7 to 8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: To contribute to a balanced portfolio covering the three technology areas described in the scope below, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking, but also at least to one (1) application that is the highest ranked for each area according to the main area selected in the application, provided that the applications attain all thresholds.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: The granting authority may, up to 4 years after the end of the action, object to a transfer of ownership or to the exclusive licensing of results, as set out in the specific provision of Annex 5.

Expected Outcome: Proposals are expected to contribute to **all** the following expected outcomes:

- Accelerate the use of innovative technologies to decarbonise industrial processes and bring to the market more cost-effective clean products to strengthen the competitiveness, sustainability (including biodiversity), and resilience of EU industries;
- Create new innovative first-of-a-kind operational demonstrators and/or optimise newly installed industrial decarbonisation solutions in Europe; and
- Demonstrate the market readiness of the envisaged future clean products and their innovative processes via a credible business plan and an exploitation strategy for industrialisation, including market-tested use cases.

Scope: The **Clean Industrial Deal** aims to secure the EU as an attractive location for manufacturing, including for energy-intensive industries, and to promote clean tech and new circular business models in order to meet Europe's ambitious decarbonisation and climate neutrality targets. It focuses primarily on the competitive decarbonisation of EU industry and on the production of clean technologies in the EU.

The following three technology areas on energy intensive industries having a strong and promising growth potential in Europe are in scope of this call:

- Managing of carbon cycle (CCU and/or CCUS): further optimization and demonstration of solutions for the capture, utilization or storage of CO₂ and/or CO from installations of the energy intensive industries, with significant reduction of energy input (per ton of CO₂/CO) related to capture rate and purity compared to current available technologies (target figure 30% reduction), and potential of commercialization of the decarbonized products with respect to LCA (compared to state of the art), market size, and cost.
- Clean energy usage in production (electrification of the processes, decarbonated production, integration of alternative clean energy carriers – e.g. hydrogen, biobased feedstock and processes – and technologies, on-site renewable energy storage solutions, usage and upgrade of waste heat): supporting major improvements of clean energy usage in the energy intensive industries until 2035.
- Circularity and resource efficiency (material, energy, water) of production processes: improvement by 30% until 2035 compared to current industrial value, with technological solutions which are commercially viable; and significant reduction of the overall raw material consumption, energy input, freshwater intake, impact on ecosystems and emissions, through circular value networks that convert industrial side-streams and/or end-of-use waste to new feedstock for which no low-CO₂-technologies currently exist. Solutions must have an overall positive LCA and remain commercially viable under the expected regulatory and framework conditions at the end of the project.

Proposals should **explicitly select one main area** but can also address in an integrated way a combination of these three areas within an industrial sector, provided that it is innovative and

can lead to low carbon solutions, including for example **bio-based solutions** as a decarbonisation lever for hard-to-abate sectors.³⁹

The choice of the specific technologies addressed in the proposal is left to the project applicants who should include a thorough justification of the choices both in technological and business terms. Use of advanced, and safe and sustainable materials and processes could be also addressed as part of the selected proposals.

Proposals are expected to:

- demonstrate an **adequate integration of relevant technologies** in support of the Clean Industrial Deal. The integration can either be demonstrated in a direct (e.g. reduction of greenhouse emissions of a process) or an indirect (e.g. production of a new green/clean product) manner. Reduction or avoidance of harmful pollutants and impact on biodiversity may also be considered, as relevant.⁴⁰ The use of relevant results of R&I projects previously or ongoing funded at EU, national or regional level is encouraged.
- show **industrial leadership** in the deployment after the project. To ensure market readiness and effective collaboration amongst relevant stakeholders, the consortium should be industry driven and composed of a preferably small and manageable number of participants, and its size should be justified. The participation of SMEs is encouraged.

The draft dissemination, exploitation and communication plan is expected to include a sound and convincing **business plan** and **market-readiness strategy** (cf. intro). These should address how to prepare and support the deployment of the proposed tech solution across relevant EU industrial sectors, and/or how to ensure a high potential for market uptake through further private/public investment (including relevant EU deployment programmes, such as the Innovation Fund). They should include a comprehensive analysis of the critical barriers (technological and non-technological) for the successful market deployment and the corresponding plan to tackle them before 2030.

Proposals are expected to include a clear **go/no go moment** ahead of the contracting and demonstration phase. Before this go/no-go moment, the project is expected to deliver detailed engineering plans, a techno-economic assessment, all needed permits for the demonstrator, a complete business plan and market-readiness strategy, identifying clearly the industrial partner(s) that will lead the deployment. Proposals are also expected to provide a clear and credible pathway to obtaining all needed permits for the demonstration phase of the project.

Taking into account that the Clean Industrial Deal focuses on clean tech and decarbonisation of energy-intensive industry, projects funded under this topic will be encouraged to develop synergies and coordinate on similar funded projects under the topics *HORIZON-CID-2026-01-02: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal: Clean Technologies for Climate Action* and *HORIZON- HORIZON-CID-2027-01-02: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal:*

³⁹ This topic contributes to the objectives of the Competitiveness Coordination Tool project on biobased industries. More information is available on the European Commission's website: [Biobased industry](#).

⁴⁰ For instance, biodiversity could be a priority in specific areas with significant impact on flora or fauna

Clean Technologies for Climate Action under this call, as well as with related projects funded under the Processes4Planet, and Clean Steel and other European Partnerships.

This topic implements the co-programmed European partnerships Processes4Planet and Clean Steel.

HORIZON-CID-2027-01-02: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal: Clean Technologies for Climate Action

Call: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 15.00 and 25.00 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 140.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply: In order to include a business plan and market-readiness strategy (as part of the dissemination and exploitation activities), as outlined in the introduction to this Destination, the page limit in part B of the General Annexes is exceptionally extended to a total maximum of 60 pages.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: In line with the “<i>restriction on control in innovation actions in critical technology areas</i>” delineated in General Annex B of the General Annexes, entities established in an eligible country but which are directly or indirectly controlled by China or by a legal entity established in China are not eligible to participate in the action. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to start at TRL 6 and achieve TRL 8 by the end of the projec.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:

	To contribute to a balanced portfolio covering the three technology areas described in the scope below, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking, but also at least to one (1) application that is the highest ranked for each area according to the main area selected in the application, provided that the applications attain all thresholds.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: The granting authority may, up to 4 years after the end of the action, object to a transfer of ownership or to the exclusive licensing of results, as set out in the specific provision of Annex 5.

Expected Outcome: Proposals are expected to contribute to **all** the following expected outcomes:

- Strengthen the competitiveness, sustainability (including biodiversity) and resilience of an innovative clean tech solution by clearly demonstrating the capability to, significantly:
 - o increase its circular material use rate, based on a sound and realistic baseline;
 - o reduce the levelized cost of energy (LCOE) delivered to end-users - including, where relevant, production, distribution, and storage costs, based on a sound and realistic baseline and considering different geographic scenarios; and
 - o contribute to Europe's industrial leadership and competitiveness, in line with the objectives of Net-Zero Industry Act (NZIA)⁴¹ for the EU manufacturing capacity of net-zero technologies^{42,43}.
- Bring this innovative clean tech solution to full technological maturity and close to market-readiness with a view to accelerating its market deployment and/or integration in key industrial sectors in Europe (e.g. manufacturing, energy and transport).

Scope: The **Clean Industrial Deal** aims to secure the EU as an attractive location for manufacturing, including for energy-intensive industries, and to promote clean tech and new circular business models in order to meet Europe's ambitious decarbonisation and climate neutrality and biodiversity preservation targets. It focuses primarily on the competitive decarbonisation of EU industry and on the production of clean technologies in the EU. This requires notably a considerable increase in electrification of EU energy systems and in all

⁴¹ Net-Zero Industry Act: [resource.html](#)

⁴² This should apply to each main specific component of the project for which, under the NZIA, it is established that more than 50% of Union's supply originates from a third country. In such cases, at least 50% of these components should be sourced from the EU or other Horizon Europe Associated Countries. In cases where a strong dependency would compromise the viability of the project, beneficiaries may aim at a lower percentage providing an adequate justification in the proposal.

⁴³ [860c257b-16db-429e-91c1-a30bea57e7ce_en](#)

end-use sectors of the European economy (either directly, or via enabling intermediate technologies).

The following three clean tech areas have a strong and promising growth potential in Europe. Proposals are expected to address one or several of these areas:

- Integrated net-zero emissions energy systems (e.g. including energy grids, networks and systems)
- Enhanced zero-emission power technologies (e.g. including renewable electricity, heat and energy technologies)
- Storage technologies, renewable fuels, and carbon capture and utilisation (CCU) (e.g. including batteries and other energy storage solutions, renewable hydrogen⁴⁴, advanced biofuels and synthetic renewable fuels) enabling climate neutrality

Proposals should explicitly select one main area but can also address in an integrated way a combination of these three areas. Applicants are **free to decide on the specific value chain they wish to strengthen** in the above clean tech areas.

As part of bringing innovative clean tech solutions closer to the market, proposals may also address step-change in relevant network and infrastructure deployment to facilitate scale up across the trans-European energy and transport networks – e.g. electricity, heat, gas, hydrogen, CO₂, batteries, and refuelling networks, etc. Application of advanced innovative materials development, connected process engineering and scale-up, resource efficiency, circularity and recycling may also be addressed as part of the selected value chain, as relevant. Attention should be paid to avoid technologies which may have a negative impact on biodiversity and ecosystems.

Proposals are expected to:

- ensure the development of innovative technological solutions **along a specific clean tech value chain**. For this, they need to involve an adequate combination of clean tech suppliers, energy users (e.g. manufacturing, energy and transport) and other relevant stakeholders, in order to support a sound business case, taking into account a gender-sensitive and intersectional approach.
- demonstrate an **adequate integration of relevant technological solutions including** clean tech and industrial decarbonisation solutions in support of the Clean Industrial Deal, and to ensure a clear and quantifiable impact on competitiveness and reduction of GHG emissions. Reduction or avoidance of harmful pollutants and impact on biodiversity may also be considered, as relevant⁴⁵. The integration can either be demonstrated in a direct (e.g. energy to an industrial/transport sector) or an indirect (e.g.

⁴⁴ Projects need to ensure complementarities with the activities under the Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking

⁴⁵ For instance, biodiversity could be a priority in specific areas with significant impact on flora or fauna.

energy to grid to an industrial/transport sector) manner. The use of relevant results of R&I projects previously or currently funded at EU or national level is encouraged.

- show **industrial leadership** in view of the deployment after the project. To ensure market readiness and effective collaboration amongst relevant stakeholders along a specific clean tech value chain, the consortium should be industry driven and composed of a manageable number of participants (indicatively, not more than ten participants). The consortium size should be justified based on the extent of the value chain covered. The participation of SMEs is encouraged.
- seek coherence with the work of the Strategic Energy Technology (SET) Plan and relevant industrial initiatives.

The draft dissemination, exploitation and communication plan is expected to include a sound and convincing **business plan** and **market-readiness strategy** (cf. intro). They should address how to prepare and support the deployment of the proposed clean tech solution across relevant EU industrial sectors (e.g. energy, transport, manufacturing) and/or how to ensure a high potential for market uptake through further private/public investment (including relevant EU deployment programmes, such as the Innovation Fund). They should include a comprehensive analysis of the critical barriers (technological and non-technological) for the successful market deployment and the corresponding plan to address them.

Proposals are expected to include a clear **go/no go moment** ahead of the contracting and demonstration phase. Before this go/no-go moment, the project is expected to deliver detailed engineering plans, a techno-economic assessment, all needed permits for the demonstrator, a complete business plan and market-readiness strategy, identifying clearly the industrial partner(s) that will lead the deployment. Proposals are also expected to provide a clear and credible pathway to obtaining all needed permits for the demonstration phase of the project.

Taking into account that the Clean Industrial Deal focuses on clean tech and energy-intensive industry decarbonisation, projects funded under this topic will be encouraged to develop synergies and coordinate with similar or complementary projects funded under the topics *HORIZON-CID-2026-01-02: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal: Decarbonisation of Energy Intensive Industries* and *HORIZON-CID-2027-01-02: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal: Decarbonisation of Energy Intensive Industries* under this call, as well as with relevant projects funded under relevant European Partnerships (including e.g. the Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking and the Clean Energy Transition Partnership).

Horizontal call - AI in science

As pilots for the European Commission's recently announced RAISE (Resource for AI Science in Europe) initiative, a package of EUR 100 million for five new topics aims to foster interdisciplinary breakthroughs at the intersection of AI and scientific discovery. This budget comes from Clusters 4 and 6. Moreover, the budget of RAISE topics may be increased through additional contributions from foundations or other philanthropic actors.

Two topics will support the creation of Thematic Networks of Excellence in AI in Science, bringing together leading institutions in materials science, agriculture, and environmental pollution to share knowledge and build robust, cross-sector collaboration on AI in science.

Two further topics will fund the development of Automated Labs for AI in Science, targeting key application areas in materials science and food research, enabling faster, data-driven experimentation and innovation.

The last topic will establish Doctoral Networks (modelled after the Marie Skłodowska-Curie action) to train a new generation of researchers in AI-driven scientific methods across all disciplines.

These actions are expected to create interconnected networks aiming at addressing the challenges of the field, going beyond the scope of the projects. They will also help build the RAISE scientific community which will contribute to shaping modern science. Together, these initiatives represent a coordinated effort to embed AI in the core of scientific research in Europe and pave the way to RAISE.

Legal entities established in China are not eligible to participate in any actions falling under AI in Science. For additional information please see "Restrictions on the participation of legal entities established in China" found in General Annex B of the General Annexes.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-RAISE-2026-01-01: Thematic Networks of Excellence for AI in Science (RAISE pilot) (RIA)

Call: AI in Science	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 15.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. 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 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.
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Expected Outcome:

- Scientific progress with the help of AI, addressing strategic scientific challenges in the thematic areas selected;
- Pilot networks of excellent labs in the selected thematic areas to pool talent and expertise as part of a Resource for AI Science in Europe (RAISE), operating as a virtual institute across Europe;
- Establish a model of cooperation among these labs and support the development of a strategic research agenda for the application of AI in scientific research in the selected thematic domain(s)
- Reinforce the European AI in science community, attract top-notch talent and spread excellence in AI in science;
- Develop synergies with the “Science for AI” RAISE pilot call.

Scope: The aim of this topic is to establish networks of excellent labs across Europe, dedicated to collaborative research using AI in strategic and promising scientific areas or domains, piloting RAISE and aligning research efforts.

The selected consortia will be composed of leading European research labs in the thematic area with strong experience in applying AI in the research process. At least half the members of the consortium should have a proven track record of developing innovative AI solutions for scientific research. Consortia are welcome to involve expertise in Social Sciences and Humanities in their proposal as they see fit to achieve the objectives.

Each network of excellence will be dedicated to the application of AI to scientific research in a specific thematic area or scientific discipline. A thematic network of excellence for AI in materials science is proposed (Cluster 4).

To achieve these objectives, the consortium will undertake a range of dedicated activities:

- Draw an ambitious strategic research agenda for the field and identify the key scientific grand challenges that can be addressed with AI in the thematic area of the network.
- Carry out collaborative research to solve the prioritised scientific challenges, through explicit targets and milestones.

- As part of RAISE as a virtual institute, closely work with central RAISE governance and the other RAISE networks of excellence as privileged partners for sharing data, research results, expertise and infrastructure.
- Develop talent and knowledge exchange schemes (e.g. jointly supervised fellowships, mobility schemes, summer schools, matchmaking events) and include partnering schemes with institutes outside the excellence network to spread excellence across Europe.
- Identify, expand, curate, integrate share and make available relevant datasets and AI models. Develop community-driven standards and benchmarks for AI models in the thematic scientific area or discipline.
- Develop collaborations with industry for uptake of scientific outcomes and AI-based research methodologies.

The consortium should use financial support to third parties (FSTP), in order to spread excellence or seek complementary expertise across Europe. For spreading excellence, the FSTP should be based on the transferring of knowledge to the FSTP recipients. For complementary expertise, the FSTP should be based on bringing complementary/supplementary data, expertise, AI models, etc.. The consortium should set up an open and objective selection process to complement the efforts of the consortium for a maximum of EUR 60,000 per beneficiary. While it is expected to involve several such beneficiaries, the core consortium's activities should represent a *minimum* of 85% of the total financial grant. FSTP recipients should be based in a Member State or an Associated Country. FSTP activities should be integrated into (one or more) separate work packages, which are to describe the conditions for implementing the support.

Proposals are expected to develop synergies with running Horizon Europe projects in the same field, for example with HORIZON-CL4-INDUSTRY-2025-01-DIGITAL-61

HORIZON-RAISE-2026-01-02: Thematic Networks of Excellence for AI in Science – Agriculture and Environmental Pollution (RAISE pilot)

Call: AI in Science	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 12.80 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 12.80 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.
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Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- scientific progress with the help of AI, addressing strategic scientific challenges in the thematic areas selected (agricultural sciences and environmental pollution sciences);
- pilot network of excellent labs in the selected thematic areas to pool talent and expertise as part of a Resource for AI Science in Europe (RAISE), operating as a virtual institute across Europe;
- establish a model of cooperation among these labs and support the development of a strategic research agenda for the application of AI in scientific research in the selected thematic domains;
- reinforce the European AI in science community, attract top-notch talent and spread excellence in AI in science;
- develop synergies with the “Science for AI” RAISE pilot call.

Scope: The aim of this topic is to establish a network of excellent labs across Europe, dedicated to collaborative research using AI in strategic and promising scientific areas or domains, piloting RAISE and aligning research efforts.

The selected consortium will be composed of leading European research labs in the thematic area with strong experience in applying AI in the research process. At least half the members of the consortium should have a proven track record of developing innovative AI solutions for scientific research. Consortia are welcome to involve expertise in Social Sciences and Humanities in their proposal as they see fit to achieve the objectives.

The network of excellence will be dedicated to the application of AI to scientific research in agricultural sciences and environmental pollution sciences (Cluster 6).

To achieve these objectives, the consortium will undertake a range of dedicated activities:

- drawing on the consortium's knowledge and excellence, propose an ambitious strategic research agenda for the field, beyond the research agenda of the consortium in the context of the project, identifying key scientific grand challenges that can be addressed with AI in the thematic area of the network;

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Horizontal Activities

- carry out collaborative research to solve the prioritised scientific challenges, through explicit targets and milestones;
- as part of RAISE as a virtual institute, closely work with central RAISE governance and the other RAISE networks of excellence as privileged partners for sharing data, research results, expertise and infrastructure;
- develop talent and knowledge exchange schemes (e.g. jointly supervised fellowships, mobility schemes, summer schools, matchmaking events) and include partnering schemes with institutes outside the excellence network to spread excellence across Europe;
- identify, expand, curate, integrate share and make available relevant datasets and AI models. Develop community-driven standards and benchmarks for AI models in the thematic scientific area or discipline;
- develop collaborations with industry for uptake of scientific outcomes and AI-based research methodologies.

The consortium should use financial support to third parties (FSTP), in order to spread excellence and seek complementary expertise across Europe. The FSTP should bring complementary/supplementary data, expertise, AI models, etc. The consortium should set up an open and objective selection process to complement the efforts of the consortium for a maximum of EUR 60,000 per third party. Beneficiaries are expected in addition to spread excellence by transferring knowledge to FSTP recipients.

The core consortium's activities should represent a minimum of 85% of the proposed budget. FSTP recipients should be established in a Member State or an Associated Country. FSTP activities should be integrated into (one or more) separate work packages, which are to describe the conditions for implementing the support.

Proposals are expected to develop synergies with running Horizon Europe projects in the same field, notably with the projects on AI foundation models in agricultural sciences and environmental pollution sciences funded under topic HORIZON-CL4-INDUSTRY-2025-01-DIGITAL-61: AI Foundation models in science (GenAI4EU).

HORIZON-RAISE-2027-01-01: Automated Scientific Discovery - Materials Science (RAISE pilot) (RIA)

Call: AI in Science	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 9.00 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 26.50 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome:

- Development of closed-loop scientific experimentation systems that integrate automation with AI-driven, trustworthy decision-making processes in existing laboratory environments;
- Accelerated scientific discovery with increased efficiency and reproducibility;
- Improved scientific productivity;
- Advancement of laboratory automation, including development of best practices, challenges, and opportunities for accelerating R&D; and
- Prototype functional demonstrators that showcase the integration of automation with AI-driven decision-making, enabling the development of closed-loop scientific experimentation systems.

Scope: This topic addresses the development of safe and trustworthy closed loop scientific experimentation systems through the integration of laboratory automation with AI-driven decision-making processes and robust data infrastructures. Funded projects will help scientific labs with an already advanced level of automation and digitalisation to design, develop, and test the intelligence layer that enables scientific instrumentation to semi- or fully autonomously plan, run, and analyse experiments, ideally in coordination/network with other labs and without requiring a complete redesign of existing laboratory outfitting.

Proposals will incorporate comprehensive data management systems capable of handling the collection, storage, processing, and sharing of experimental data. This includes developing scalable and secure data storage solutions, efficient data processing and analysis tools, and mechanisms to facilitate data sharing and collaboration across labs, while ensuring data security and privacy.

Systems could incorporate AI-driven resource optimisation modules, actively minimising energy, reagent, and material consumption during automated experimentation cycles. Systems should incorporate appropriate level of security and robustness by design.

Proposals should demonstrate how an existing lab can be retrofitted with AI-driven systems to plan, execute, and analyse experiments in a closed-loop fashion, incorporating human oversight and interaction to ensure accuracy, safety, and ethical compliance.

Possible research targets include (non-exhaustively):

- Autonomous/semi-autonomous and adaptive AI systems (including agentic AI) that connect with laboratory instruments and robotics and can autonomously plan, act, learn and adapt within a scientific environment, within a validated safe pipeline,

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Horizontal Activities

- Assistive and interactive safe AI-managed robotic systems that automate diverse experiments and can be applied to a diverse hardware setup.
- Scalable automation solutions and networked AI systems that enable collaborative experimentation across multiple labs and networks of labs (including different geographic locations), supporting the simultaneous execution of large volumes of experiments,
- Systems that provide real-time data processing and analytics, enabling immediate feedback and dynamic adjustments during experiments
- Standards and protocols to ensure interoperability between different laboratory instruments, robotics, and AI systems
- Intuitive user interfaces for enhanced human-machine interaction
- AI-driven predictive maintenance systems to optimize equipment uptime and resource utilization.
- Exploration of how scientific automation technologies can be adapted for use in various scientific disciplines beyond those in the scope of this call

Proposals should demonstrate close interdisciplinary collaboration of computer/AI scientists and domain scientists.

While the scope of this call prioritises software development, it does not exclude the justified purchase of complementary equipment necessary to implement the research targets of the project.

The focus of this topic is on any aspect of materials science. Impact areas of automated experimentation in this field could include, non-exhaustively, battery technologies, photovoltaics, carbon capture/storage, water purification, soil remediation, drug discovery or sustainable fabrics.

International collaboration is encouraged.

Proposals are expected to develop synergies with running Horizon Europe projects in the same field, for example with HORIZON-CL4-INDUSTRY-2025-01-DIGITAL-61.

HORIZON-RAISE-2027-01-02: Automated Scientific Discovery – Food (RAISE pilot)

Call: AI in Science	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a

	proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

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

- Development of closed-loop scientific experimentation systems that integrate automation with AI-driven, trustworthy decision-making processes in existing laboratory environments;
- Accelerated scientific discovery with increased efficiency and reproducibility;
- Improved scientific productivity;
- Advancement of laboratory automation, including development of best practices, challenges, and opportunities for accelerating R&D;
- Prototype functional demonstrators that showcase the integration of automation with AI-driven decision-making, enabling the development of closed-loop scientific experimentation systems.

Scope: This topic addresses the development of safe and trustworthy closed loop scientific experimentation systems through the integration of laboratory automation with AI-driven decision-making processes and robust data infrastructures. The funded project will help scientific labs with an already advanced level of automation and digitalisation to design, develop, and test the intelligence layer that enables scientific instrumentation to semi- or fully autonomously plan, run, and analyse experiments, ideally in coordination/network with other labs and without requiring a complete redesign of existing laboratory outfitting.

Proposals will incorporate comprehensive data management systems capable of handling the collection, storage, processing, and sharing of experimental data. This includes developing scalable and secure data storage solutions, efficient data processing and analysis tools, and mechanisms to facilitate data sharing and collaboration across labs, while ensuring data security and privacy.

Systems could incorporate AI-driven resource optimisation modules, actively minimising energy, reagent, and material consumption during automated experimentation cycles. Systems should incorporate appropriate level of security and robustness by design.

Proposals should demonstrate how an existing lab can be retrofitted with AI-driven software systems to plan, execute, and analyse experiments in a closed-loop fashion, incorporating human oversight and interaction to ensure accuracy, safety, and ethical compliance.

Possible research targets include (non-exhaustively):

- Autonomous/semi-autonomous and adaptive AI systems (including agentic AI) that connect with laboratory instruments and robotics and can autonomously plan, act, learn and adapt within a scientific environment, within a validated safe pipeline;
- Assistive and interactive safe AI-managed robotic systems that automate diverse experiments and can be applied to a diverse hardware setup;
- Scalable automation solutions and networked AI systems that enable collaborative experimentation across multiple labs and networks of labs (including different geographic locations), supporting the simultaneous execution of large volumes of experiments;
- Systems that provide real-time data processing and analytics, enabling immediate feedback and dynamic adjustments during experiments;
- Standards and protocols to ensure interoperability between different laboratory instruments, robotics, and AI systems;
- Intuitive user interfaces for enhanced human-machine interaction;
- AI-driven predictive maintenance systems to optimize equipment uptime and resource utilization;
- Exploration of how scientific automation technologies can be adapted for use in various scientific disciplines beyond those in the scope of this call.

While the scope of this call prioritises software development, it does not exclude the justified purchase of complementary equipment necessary to implement the research targets of the project.

Impact areas of automated experimentation in biomass and precision fermentation could include the development of alternative protein sources in food production and alternative fats, bio-based materials, specialty carbohydrates, biotechnologies in food systems (such as biochemicals, microbial cultures, etc), food ingredients.

International collaboration is encouraged.

HORIZON-RAISE-2027-01-04: Developing a model for a Data Lab for Science linking with EOSC and RAISE (RAISE pilot) (CSA)

Call: AI in Science	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 1.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 1.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ⁴⁶.

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

- a sustainable operational model and reference blueprint for a Data Lab for Science linking with the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) and the Resource for AI Science in Europe (RAISE), enabling researchers to accelerate the uptake of AI in Science;
- easier access for researchers to large amounts of AI-ready research data, and to associated high-quality data services to seamlessly develop and train AI models for science; and
- better alignment, interoperability and scaling across countries and disciplines of AI workflows and related services such as data pooling, anonymisation, curation, or synthetic data generation.

Scope: Data Labs are introduced in the Data Union Strategy as a connector between AI factories and the Common European Data Spaces, providing specialised services to enable turning data into useable resources for AI training and the development of AI applications such as data pooling, curation, pseudonymisation, and synthetic data generation.

A significant number of tools and services within the scope of the Data Lab concept have been developed by research infrastructures and scientific service providers, notably organisations that operate or contribute resources to EOSC, the Common European Data Space for research and innovation.

The development of Data Labs addressing the needs of scientists is a key element in the AI in Science strategy, as a collaboration between RAISE and EOSC. This action aims to anchor the implementation of the Data Lab model with the development of EOSC and RAISE. The Data Lab for science will be a key deliverable and a key element of the data work strand of RAISE.

⁴⁶ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Proposals should include all of the following activities:

- Identify, consolidate and orchestrate existing data, services and other relevant results of Horizon Europe EOSC-related projects, as well as other community-endorsed promising solutions in view of setting up and implementing a Data Lab for Science, including a mapping of such results and solutions to facilitate their navigation, access and use. The results and solutions may encompass relevant data services, but also related policies, guidance and training approaches.
- Identify and collect necessary elements for seamlessly integrating a Data Lab for Science into the existing European data and high-performance computing infrastructures enabling cohesive workflows.
- Identify technical, operational, legal, organisational or any other type of bottlenecks or gaps preventing the seamless sharing, reuse or pooling of data for AI development and applications in science.
- Develop a blueprint for a Data Lab for Science addressing such bottlenecks and support its implementation through the demonstration of use cases, in coordination with the EOSC Federation and relevant developments in the EuroHPC Federation.
- Develop governance and financing models that ensure a sustainable pathway for a Data Lab for Science beyond the project's duration.
- Identify researchers' needs and gaps on data services in different scientific disciplines that are not addressed by existing solutions and propose recommendations for future policy and funding actions.
- Connect and encourage collaboration among projects offering data and data-related services for AI in Science.

The action should build on relevant results of Horizon Europe projects that contribute to the development of EOSC and RAISE, as well as EU-funded projects developing AI solutions for science such as foundation models in science, data commons, or AI research assistants.

The action should closely coordinate with relevant Horizon Europe projects such as those funded under HORIZON-INFRA-2025-01-EOSC-03, HORIZON-CL4-INDUSTRY-2025-01-DIGITAL-62 and HORIZON-CL4-INDUSTRY-2025-01-DIGITAL-61, as well as with relevant projects under EuroHPC and the AI Factories.

HORIZON-RAISE-2026-01-03: RAISE Doctoral Networks for AI in Science (RAISE pilot)

Expected Outcome: This action builds on the MSCA Doctoral Networks 2026 call (HORIZON-MSCA-DN-2026).

The project results are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

For supported doctoral candidates:

- New research and transferable skills and competences in the application of AI in science, leading to improved employability and career prospects within and outside academia;
- New knowledge allowing the conversion of ideas into products and services, where relevant;
- 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:

- Improved quality, relevance and sustainability of doctoral training programmes and supervision arrangements;
- Enhanced cooperation and transfer of knowledge between sectors and disciplines;
- Increased integration of training and research activities between participating organisations;
- Boosted R&I capacity and uptake of AI in science;
- Increased internationalisation and attractiveness;
- Regular feedback of research results into teaching and education at participating organisations.

Scope: Successful RAISE Doctoral Networks and doctoral candidates will be associated with RAISE, the Resource for AI Science in Europe. They will become part of the RAISE research community and will interact with its other members.

As such, the scope of this call is limited to AI (artificial intelligence) in science, as outlined below. Proposals should therefore clearly specify how they meet this “AI in science” criterion.

Doctoral candidates are to either develop or significantly participate in the development of innovative AI systems, models, tools or methodologies for their scientific domain. These systems, models, tools or methodologies must substantially innovate the way in which scientific information is analysed and enable a scientific contribution that furthers the state of the art in the discipline of the doctoral research.

The development of the AI tool, model or methodology is to be an integral and indispensable part of the research work and be clearly delineated in the research work package. The scientific advancements of the project are to be directly dependent on the capabilities and application of these AI algorithms to drive the scientific inquiry, prediction, or understanding.

Proposals are to achieve research results in the domain-scientific discipline of the doctoral research through using innovative AI techniques, going beyond a unique focus on computer-scientific AI development (e.g. to result in publications only in computer-scientific AI-related venues) or the use of existing AI systems, methodologies or general-purpose computational tools for data processing/statistical analysis in an instrumental way.

All doctoral candidates should receive dedicated doctoral-level training on AI in science (understood as outlined above).

In order to apply for the RAISE Doctoral Networks call, applicants must submit their proposal to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA) Doctoral Networks 2026. At proposal stage, applicants will be able to declare their interest in being considered for the RAISE Doctoral Networks and, if so, they should demonstrate that their proposal falls within the scope of the RAISE call.

The proposals submitted under the RAISE Doctoral Networks must fulfil all the admissibility and eligibility conditions of the MSCA Doctoral Networks 2026. The RAISE proposals will be evaluated applying the MSCA award criteria and the MSCA scoring system.

At the end of the MSCA evaluation procedure, a cross-panel list of fundable RAISE proposals will be established with the highest-ranking reserve list proposals. The list would be ranked according to the MSCA evaluation scores and comprise proposals with a requested budget as close as possible to 3 times the available budget. Experts will assess the relevance of the proposals on this list to the RAISE topic. The final ranking of the RAISE proposals will be established taking into consideration the MSCA score and the assessment of the relevance of the proposal to the RAISE topic.

Horizontal call - Bridging actions

The call on bridging actions includes a series of topics aiming to facilitate a smooth transition between Horizon Europe 2021–2027 and the next EU R&I Framework Programme, Horizon Europe 2028–2034.

These actions will focus in particular on the ‘innovation to investment journey’. This concept reflects the tight links that will exist between Horizon Europe 2028-2034 and the future European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), introducing the ‘innovation to investment journey’, a seamless process from research to market deployment. This approach stems largely from the Draghi Report⁴⁷, which highlights that Europe’s limited industrial dynamism is partly due to weaknesses along the ‘innovation lifecycle’, notably barriers at the stage of commercialisation of research and innovation results. To prepare for this new approach, a horizontal call has been envisaged with a focus on paving the way towards ‘fit-for-deployment’ projects, thereby creating a pipeline of innovations ready for market uptake.

In addition, the call seeks to address a number of strategic priorities in a horizontal manner, notably in relation to the Apply AI Strategy⁴⁸ and the European Strategy on Research and Technology Infrastructures⁴⁹, while also being relevant to sectoral frameworks such as the EU Adaptation Strategy⁵⁰ and the EU Ports Strategy⁵¹.

Therefore, the call covers three main areas:

1. **Knowledge valorisation and data access:** Knowledge valorisation ensures that scientific results go beyond academic publication and are effectively translated into value for society, the economy and public policy. It reinforces Europe’s competitiveness by improving the exploitation of research results, supporting innovation, job creation, and enabling companies, particularly start-ups and SMEs, to bring new solutions to the market, while also contributing to the Union’s strategic autonomy by reducing dependencies on external technologies and maintaining leadership in key areas such as digital, health and climate. a. HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-01 aims to address labour and skills shortages, facilitating SMEs’ access to highly skilled research talent. b. HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-02 aims to bridge the gap between research outcomes under Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe and initiatives supporting knowledge valorisation through Innovation Ecosystems across thematic areas. c. HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-03 addresses the lack of coherent EU-level pathways for scaling climate resilience solutions across economic sectors, with the objective of strengthening competitiveness, enabling cross-sector replication, and embedding climate resilience by design across the European economy, while acting as a bridge towards the next framework programme and the ECF. Grants to Identified Beneficiaries HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-OA1, HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-OA2 and HORIZON-

⁴⁷ [The Draghi report on EU competitiveness](#)

⁴⁸ [EUR-Lex - 52025DC0723 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

⁴⁹ [EUR-Lex - 52025DC0497R\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

⁵⁰ [EUR-Lex - 52021DC0082 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

⁵¹ [EUR-Lex - 52026DC0112 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

BRIDGING-2027-OA3.e. HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-02-05 supports actions that bring solutions from Horizon Europe Pillar II closer to production and uptake by testing and validating them in real-world conditions, taking into account societal needs, cultural diversity and responsible innovation.

2. **Research infrastructures and data access:** HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-06 and HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-07 respond to the strategic objectives of the European Strategy on Research and Technology Infrastructures, aiming to develop more sustainable access schemes, enhance outreach to new communities and industry, and ensure a continuum of complementary services with technology infrastructures (topic HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-06). They also aim to position research infrastructures as hubs for international cooperation and as foundations for global scientific networks, including through training and mobility programmes to build capacity and foster talent development (topic HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-07). HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-04 aims to increase the resilience and sustainability of key research data and knowledge infrastructures in the life sciences sector, by supporting their integration into the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) Federation and broader collaborative frameworks, improving data sharing and access, developing sustainable funding approaches, and strengthening technical capacity. The action is closely linked to the HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-08 aims to strengthen the sustainability and resilience of key European infrastructures and resources in climate science, thereby reinforcing the EU's leadership and autonomy in access to climate data. In a similar vein HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-04-11 supports the development of detection capacity of outdoor activities in Solar Radiation Modification technologies and of the necessary enhancement of climate models to attribute observed changes in radiation balances to interventions. This shall contribute technical capabilities to a future international, multilateral governance framework for SRM research; and shall deter unilateral development of SRM-technologies activities, that are not aligned to the decisions taken by Conference of Parties of Convention on Biological Diversity on climate intervention technologies.
3. **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** these proposed Apply AI actions introduce an innovative approach to structurally support cross-domain priorities enabling AI-based innovation in key sectors identified in the Apply AI Strategy. It aims not only to address immediate sectoral needs but also to contribute directly to the policy priorities of the next framework programme, translating research into innovation aligned with concrete market needs. The topics included (HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-09, -01-10, -01-12, -01-13) target urgent actions to address market failures and reduce strategic dependencies. Many high-potential AI solutions currently fail to reach the market or scale due to persistent, sector-specific barriers. These horizontal actions therefore focus on identifying and addressing such systemic obstacles, including through piloting dissemination mechanisms (e.g. platforms or marketplaces for AI solutions) and testing AI technologies, including in real-world conditions, in order to generate the insights needed to overcome barriers to scale.

Legal entities established in China are not eligible to participate in both Research and Innovation Actions (RIAs) and Innovation Actions (IAs) falling under this call. For additional information please see 'Restrictions on the participation of legal entities established in China' in the Annex B of the General Annexes of this Work Programme.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-05-01: Skills for innovative SMEs

Call: Bridging actions 2027	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 30.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 30.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: Only entities that are beneficiaries in the Enterprise Europe Network as a result of the call SMP-COSME-2024-EEN are eligible to apply.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply: The following additions to the general award criteria apply: The quality and efficiency of implementation criterion shall take into account the ability and experience of the applying entities to award grants to third parties outside their own jurisdiction. The implementation criterion shall include and emphasise the communication strategy proposed to reach out to both innovative SMEs with skills shortages and PhD-level experts.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The granting authority can fund a maximum of one project.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for

	Horizon Europe for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025). The consortium must provide financial support to third parties (FSTP) for the implementation of this action. Since providing FSTP is a core activity of this action, the EUR 60 000 threshold laid down in Article 207 of Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 does not apply. The maximum amount of FSTP provided in form of grants that may be awarded to any single third party is set at EUR 300 000 for the entire duration of the action. This ceiling is justified by the fact that FSTP is a primary activity of this action, by its expected duration of 1-2 years, including costs of relocation and of a European competitive salary for an internationally mobile expert at PhD level, and by the extensive experience gained by the Enterprise Europe Network in providing business support to SMEs. However, if the objectives of the action would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult the maximum amount may be higher if duly justified in the proposal. The Consortium must allocate at least 90% of the total proposed budget to FSTP.
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Expected Outcome:

- Establishment of an SME support scheme through the Enterprise Europe Network, which delivers transnational skills-matching, recruitment support, and innovation management services to innovative SMEs across Europe.
- This support scheme has the following expected outcomes: Innovative SMEs have reduced labour and skill shortages through a transnational mobility scheme, which allows them to recruit and train highly skilled researchers from abroad;
- SMEs have improved innovation capacity to support research and innovation (R&I) projects and increased participation of highly skilled staff employed in R&I through recruitment and training;
- Researchers gain new knowledge and skills in industrial innovation and business management, through employment and training in innovative companies.

Scope: To facilitate the innovation to investment journey and boost competitiveness, the EU needs to promote skills and quality jobs and help SMEs strengthen their innovation potential, by addressing labour and skills shortages, as highlighted in the Competitiveness Compass for the EU. Europe faces a growing challenge in meeting the demand for skilled talent in strategic sectors like clean and circular technologies, energy, health, biotech, agriculture, bioeconomy, digital technologies, aerospace and civil security. The progressive loss of women in science,

technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers, also known as the ‘leaky pipeline’, is further increasing these skills shortages. Nearly four in five SMEs say they cannot find the talent they need. The lack of access to skills, including the latest scientific knowledge and capacity to manage innovation processes effectively, have been identified as major barriers for innovation in SMEs, especially among start-ups and scale-ups.

In line with the 'Choose Europe for Science' initiative, this action is expected to set up a transnational mobility scheme to provide lump sum grants (via FSTP) to innovative SMEs who have experienced skill shortages and difficulty in recruiting innovation talent.

The action builds on the successful results of the ‘European SME innovation associate pilot’, which was launched in three consecutive calls under the Horizon 2020 work programmes 2016 – 2020. An evaluation study⁵² of this pilot found that the grant was instrumental for most SMEs to recruit an innovation associate and that most supported SMEs were able to bring the results of their innovation projects to market. The insights from this earlier action should be reflected in any proposal. The action also complements Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA), by providing additional work opportunities for researchers/early-career professionals holding a PhD, including but not limited to those who completed the MSCA fellowship, and aim to gain further experience in the private sector. Existing structures, such as the European Universities alliances, may offer SMEs further access to trainings, resources, networks, facilities and infrastructures across Europe.

The selected consortium shall organise and manage the SME support scheme. In particular, the consortium is expected to:

- Ensure the sound design and implementation of the SME support scheme, including launching the call, eligibility checks, evaluations, and business support, where necessary.
- Promote the scheme to secure quality applications, monitor impact (including on skills development) and disseminate success stories of the innovation-to-investment journey.
- Provide support to funded SMEs for the transnational recruitment of researchers, including through the EURAXESS network and assistance with visa applications;
- Organise networking events and training on industrial innovation and business management, and promote cooperation among the community of researchers and funded SMEs;
- Ensure equal access across EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries and balanced distribution of strategic sectors.

⁵² European Commission: Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, Ramboll, LE Europe, DIW, CARSA, ECORYS, Botnari, A., Hahn, F., Juskevicius, R., Lübbers, T., Muller, P., Riviere, M., Savickaite, I., Sierra, N.Weström, P., Accompanying study to the European SME Innovation Associate – Pilot action – Final report, Publications Office, 2019, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2826/645018>

Eligible third parties to the FSTP scheme are SMEs that have an innovation idea and can demonstrate that the relevant skills cannot be found on the national labour market (e.g. by providing data on labour and skills shortages on the national context). SMEs should include in their application to an FSTP call a description of their innovation idea, a vacancy notice specifying the knowledge and skills needed for the development of the project, and a recruitment plan, which offers equal opportunities to researchers of all genders. Upon successful evaluation organised by the consortium, selected SMEs are expected to advertise their vacancy on the EURAXESS portal and other relevant platforms, with clear indication that the grant was awarded, in order to recruit the researchers.

The scheme encourages transnational mobility of PhD knowledge holders, including MSCA fellows who have completed their fellowships at the date of recruitment. In the case of MSCA fellows, since they have already met the MSCA mobility rule, they do not need to move again if selected by an SME in their current country of residence. Additionally, SMEs may hire researchers with the nationality of the country in which the SME is located, as long as those researchers are currently employed and residing abroad.

Moreover, the scheme should be open to recruit researchers both from STEM disciplines and social sciences and humanities (SSH) background, who could bring social innovation practices or an interdisciplinary perspective to the innovation capacity of the SMEs.

These essential specificities are expected to be built into the SME support scheme:

- Competitive salary of the researcher / total employers' costs including full social security according to national legislation for the researcher for a minimum duration of 12 months and a maximum duration of 24 months (including the salaries actually paid if the researcher leaves before 12 months).
- Relocation costs of the researcher, which may include removal cost, travel cost of the researcher and their immediate family (if applicable) to the new place of employment, visa cost (if applicable), translation cost of certificates (if applicable), a temporary transition allowance to cover extra costs upon arrival in the place of employment, cost for the relocation in the country of origin after the project (if applicable), a family and childcare allowance (if applicable), as well as other clearly justified expenditure directly related to relocation.
- Travel to conferences and workshops, as well as access to and use of technological and research infrastructures, or other activities relevant to the SME's innovation idea.

HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-06-02: Valorising Horizon project results via innovation ecosystems

Call: Bridging Actions 2027	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
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<i>contribution per project</i>	2.50 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 20.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: To ensure a balanced portfolio, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least to one application highest ranked within each area, A, B, C, D and E, provided that the applications attain all thresholds. Proposals must clearly indicate the area they are applying to.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ⁵³. The granting authority may, up to 4 years after the end of the action, object to a transfer of ownership or to the exclusive licensing of results, as set out in the specific provision of Annex 5. Beneficiaries must provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. Taking into consideration the objective to support prototyping and validation/demonstration of technologies in relevant environments, the maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 150 000

⁵³ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

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

- owners of Horizon project results that are better prepared to bring their products, practices and solutions to the market, with clearer value propositions, validated user cases, and credible commercialisation pathways;
- strengthened links between research outcomes, Horizon Europe instruments and public/private knowledge intermediaries foster a more cohesive and responsive innovation journey;
- enhanced collaboration between research, education and innovation stakeholders (knowledge triangle) ensures more effective exploitation of impactful research results and stronger alignment with societal and industrial needs.

Scope: A structural gap persists between research outcomes of Horizon 2020 Pillar III⁵⁴, Horizon Europe Pillar II (Horizon) and the initiatives supporting knowledge valorisation. While many Horizon projects end with experimental proof of concepts and laboratory validation, most market- and business-oriented support mechanisms (e.g. acceleration, investment or pre-commercial procurement) typically engage only at later stage, such as through validation in relevant environments, prototyping or demonstration. As a result, critical elements for innovation de-risking (e.g. identifying concrete use cases, validating results in real-world environments, defining customer segments, developing viable business models or intellectual property strategies) are often underdeveloped when Horizon funding ends. This disconnect disrupts the innovation pipeline, limiting the capacity of promising innovations to progress toward follow-on financing and market deployment.

Thus, there is a need to facilitate a continuous innovation journey, from unexploited research outputs to deployment, leveraging existing structures and activities supporting innovation development, such as Knowledge and Innovation Centres (KICs), Regional Innovation Valleys, European Startup and Scaleup Hubs already supported through current Horizon Europe Pillar III instruments or other relevant national, regional and transnational innovation hubs and centres. A successful continuous innovation journey requires knowledge valorisation support to advance Horizon's collaborative research results with high innovation potential (whether technological, non-technological or SSH-based) into validated, high-impact innovations (both because of their financial and societal benefit potential). This innovation journey should be paved through European, national and regional innovation ecosystems, guiding those innovations towards the right programmes and attracting public and private investors.

Projects should cover the following activities:

- scout and map promising innovations, startups, SMEs and exploitable results emerging from Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe (Horizon) - whether recently concluded or

⁵⁴ Societal Challenges Programme

ongoing - and systematically integrate them into the innovation pipeline, with particular attention to Pillar II projects and outputs with credible innovation potential;

- launch competitive calls targeting single Horizon projects and/or owners of Horizon results within their thematic area, to support validation and valorisation of their results. Economic support is to be used solely for prototyping, testing, demonstrating, piloting, product validation and market replication of exploitable results in (near to) operational environment;
- provide guidance and facilitate access for selected candidates - identified through scouting, mapping and competitive calls - to ‘real-life’ validation sites, including but not limited to demonstration sites, living labs, testing facilities or industrial partners;
- provide expert mentorship and continuous, tailored support to selected candidates throughout the valorisation and validation of their results, with a focus on key activities such as development of value propositions, business model development, customer or user validation, preliminary market consultations, IP strategies and exploitation strategies. This support should prepare participants to successfully engage with public and private programmes, accelerators and investment opportunities. To avoid duplicating existing initiatives, selected candidates should be actively guided towards leveraging existing innovation, education and entrepreneurial platforms and programmes – such as those provided by Erasmus+, European University Alliances⁵⁵ or the KICs – wherever advantageous;
- deliver targeted training on scalability, encompassing market and investment readiness strategies, pre-commercial procurement pathways and deployment instruments. Additionally, provide support for building or strengthening entrepreneurial teams around promising Horizon results (e.g. matching researchers with experienced entrepreneurs or intrapreneurs from the innovation ecosystem);
- facilitate selected candidates in accessing and navigating potential follow-on EU funding instruments (EIC⁵⁶, EIE⁵⁷, Regional Innovation Valleys, European Startup and Scaleup Hubs, successors to existing programs like InvestEU, and InnovSMEs, national/regional innovation funds) ensuring smoother transitions through the innovation pipeline.

Proposals must address one of the following thematic areas: A) Agriculture and Food systems, B) Clean transition: energy & transport, C) Health, D) Bioeconomy, and E) Raw materials & advanced materials. Proposals must clearly indicate the area they are applying to.

Consortia should comprise those actors that in innovation ecosystem act as knowledge intermediaries - such as technology transfer offices, EU supported innovation ecosystems,

⁵⁵ European universities alliances, funded by Erasmus+, have the scope and scale, together with their innovation and business partners, to contribute to stronger knowledge valorisation, through dedicated education and training offers. [European Universities alliances and their partners - European Education Area](#)

⁵⁶ European Innovation Council

⁵⁷ European Innovation Ecosystem

existing innovation platforms, incubators, clusters and entrepreneurship support initiatives - which will be best placed to link Horizon project consortia and owners of exploitable Horizon results with accelerators, investors, municipalities, regions, clusters, innovative public and private procurers, living labs and mission-oriented innovation platforms.

Proposals must provide financial support to third parties (FSTP) to launch competitive calls for validation and valorisation of Horizon Results. As the primary purpose of the action is to de-risk innovations through validation and valorisation, a minimum of 60% of the total requested EU contribution should be allocated - within each thematic area- for this purpose. FSTP funding should be provided only to support research results from projects funded under Horizon 2020 Pillar III⁵⁸ and Horizon Europe Pillar II, and/or owner of research results stemming from those projects. Beneficiaries should define the process for the selection of innovative results through open calls. They will also define the process that will lead to a selection of a pool of evaluators that will evaluate the applications received in the open calls.

Proposals should demonstrate a gender-sensitive approach that explicitly considers and addresses the structural, cultural and institutional barriers faced by women innovators and entrepreneurs across the innovation ecosystem.

Proposals should benefit from synergies and avoid overlaps with relevant ongoing projects, e.g. funded under topic HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-03, HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-05 and HORIZON-CL4-2026-01-MAT-PROD-48.

HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-04-03: Bringing innovative climate preparedness and resilience solutions closer to the market

Call: Bridging actions 2027	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 20.00 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 20.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).

⁵⁸ Societal Challenges Programme

<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries must provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 800,000 to bring innovative climate preparedness and resilience solutions closer to the market⁵⁹. Eligible third parties are private for-profit entities established within a Member State or an Associated country.
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Expected Outcome: In direct support of the upcoming European Integrated Framework for Climate Resilience, the successful project is expected to address all of the following outcomes:

- Climate preparedness and resilience innovative solutions, including Nature-Based solutions, advance in their investment journey and get closer to the market, strengthening the competitiveness of the companies and organisations developing them.
- Public authorities are mobilised to stimulate demand for climate adaptation solutions, thereby contributing to the development and maturity of the European resilience market.
- Structural and operational bottlenecks to the deployment of climate resilience solutions are identified, along with good practices, and policy-relevant insights are derived from lessons learned.

Scope:

Rationale

Preparedness to current and future climate change is increasingly recognised as a driver of innovation and an emerging economic opportunity. The growing impacts of climate change are accelerating demand for technologies, services, practices and solutions that enable societies and economies to anticipate and manage climate risks. Already in 2021, the EU Adaptation Strategy highlighted the importance of scaling such solutions in order to strengthen resilience across economic sectors and regions. Moreover, the 2025 Preparedness Union Strategy outlines the link between climate security and the need for stronger public-private cooperation as a critical pillar of the EU's preparedness.

As climate change and its cascading impacts intensify - through heatwaves, floods, droughts, ecosystem and supply-chain disruptions - the ability of industries, societies and economies to

⁵⁹ It is estimated that EUR 60,000 - the usual amount maximum amount that can be paid to a third party - is an insufficient amount to provide meaningful support to businesses and projects to bring innovative climate preparedness and resilience solutions closer to the market. Experience with the direct support to businesses foreseen by the project, and with pilot demonstrations, show that a cost between EUR 400,000 and EUR 800,000 is more appropriate to cover various costs required to meet the ambition of the action.

anticipate, adapt, and respond is becoming a decisive factor in security, strategic autonomy, productivity, investment attractiveness, and long-term growth.

Climate resilience technologies are key to strengthen Europe's strategic autonomy. By anticipating climate impacts and embedding resilience into for example industrial, agricultural, maritime and forest-based, civil security, health, mobility and urban systems, Europe has the unique opportunity to reduce exposure to external shocks and reinforce the reliability of its internal market, in increasingly uncertain geopolitical times. Nature-based solutions have notably been identified as promising but there is a need to support their scaling up.

While EU research and innovation programmes have generated a substantial portfolio of climate adaptation solutions, a persistent gap remains between successful research outcomes and their wider deployment in economic sectors. Many promising solutions remain at demonstration stage and struggle to reach broader adoption due to fragmented demand, limited opportunities for real-world testing and insufficient connections between innovators and potential public and private buyers and users.

The project will address the lack of a coherent, EU-level pathway for scaling climate resilience solutions across all relevant economic sectors, which currently leads to underexploited innovation potential. By taking a business-focused approach, it aims to strengthen competitiveness, enable cross-sector replication, and help embed climate resilience by design across the European economy, acting as a bridge between Horizon Europe, the future FP10 and the European Competitiveness Fund.

Activities of the project

The proposals should address all the following aspects:

Services provided by the central consortium

Proposals should develop a common framework of intervention, setting-up the blueprint for the financial support to businesses and projects provided in form of financial support to third parties.

Recognising that many climate preparedness and resilience solutions address public needs, the project is expected to engage with and leverage privileged access to public authorities, including those directly involved in various EU initiatives (such as the EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change and other EU Missions, the Covenant of Mayors, the New European Bauhaus as well as the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network). Such activities of buyer mapping and demand aggregation² will be organised centrally by the consortium as coordination activities. They should also engage with operators of critical infrastructures, utilities, insurers and large industrial users exposed to systemic climate risks, where relevant. The objective is to **pool demand**, facilitating matchmaking activities between beneficiaries and interested buyers.

Finally, leveraging the experience gained from the support provided, the project consortium is expected to identify structural and operational bottlenecks to the deployment of climate preparedness and resilience solutions, along with good practices, and produce policy-relevant insights derived from lessons learned.

Direct support to businesses in the form of financial support to third parties

Through the launch of competitive calls, the project should provide financial support to allow at least 25 third parties to bring their solutions closer to the market. The financial support is aimed at solutions that are already relatively close to market at TRL 7.

The financial support is expected to be used for:

- **Advisory services and direct support to businesses, with particular attention to SMEs**, to help bring innovative climate adaptation solutions⁶⁰ (TRL 7) closer to the market. Particular attention should be given to solutions that have previously received funding from Horizon Europe or previous framework programmes, in order to support their investment journey progression closer to market readiness, while avoiding funding twice the same activities by the EU budget.

The financial support should cover:

- *Business development (strategic and financial planning, regulatory guidance)*
- *Innovation acceleration (support to final product development, capacity building)*
- *Market deployment preparation (market knowledge, support to commercialisation, regulatory compliance support)*
- *Market-ready pilots (pilot implementation, performance testing)*

While recognising that all economic sectors are exposed to climate impacts, the project should give priority to at least one solution for each of the following **areas**⁶¹: 1) water, 2) food & agriculture, 3) transport, 4) energy, 5) health, 6) civil security and 7) critical infrastructure, including buildings. Solutions can also address multiple sectors at the same time. The overall portfolio of solutions brought closer to the market should be balanced across priority areas while giving particular attention to Nature-based solutions. The project should provide support tailored to the specific characteristic of each of these areas.

At least 80% of the total amount of the EU requested contribution should be for financial support to third parties. The (first) cascade call should be launched in the first 12 months of the project.

⁶⁰ Solutions are to be defined as any products and services developed by businesses to help people, assets, industry, or systems cope with the impacts of climate change.

⁶¹ Such sectors are relevant in the context of the European Integrated Framework for Climate Resilience, as well as the European Climate Risk Assessment report.

Proposals should describe how they intend to provide financial support to third parties, in the FSTP Annex provided with the application form, including: the maximum amount for each third party; the criteria for calculating the exact amount of the financial support, the different types of activity that qualify for financial support, on the basis of a closed list, the persons or categories of persons that may receive financial support, and the criteria for giving financial support.

To deliver effective services across the various support areas and stages, the consortium should include partners with expertise in business innovation & market analysis and development, legal & regulatory affairs, operational and financial management applicable to climate resilience markets. Relevant expertise on integrating social sciences, humanities, and cultural heritage perspectives should be accounted for.

HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-03-04: Supporting the long-term resilience and European sovereignty of critical research data and knowledge repositories and scientific services for the life sciences

Call: Bridging actions 2027	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 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 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: Subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy

	Community (2021-2025) ⁶² . The granting authority may, up to 4 years after the end of the action, object to a transfer of ownership or to the exclusive licensing of results, as set out in the specific provision of Annex 5.
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Expected Outcome: Proposals are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- Increased resilience and sovereignty of critical European research data and knowledge repositories and scientific services used in the life sciences⁶³, including in particular biomedical and biomolecular related disciplines.
- Further integration of trusted, FAIR data⁶⁴ and research infrastructures in the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC)⁶⁵ Federation.
- Increased European leadership and contribution to international collaboration frameworks supporting data infrastructures.

Scope: Europe is home to some of the world's key research data repositories, scientific services and facilities that are indispensable for the life sciences.

Despite their crucial role in advancing the life sciences in Europe, such infrastructures are often vulnerable to risks that can critically impair their sustainable operation and serving of the community, such as overdependence on precarious funding streams, overreliance on a too limited number of experts or organisations for the operation and further development of technical components or features that could otherwise benefit from more distributed solutions and appropriate safety nets against 'single points of failure'.

EOSC is the Common European Data Space for research, a flagship initiative to transform Europe's landscape of research data and knowledge repositories and scientific services towards a more coherent and harmonised common space of high-quality, FAIR research data, knowledge and interoperable services. It aims to benefit research infrastructures by increased economies of scale, higher efficiencies and sharing of resources and costs, and to benefit researchers by facilitating access to quality services and enabling research data and knowledge sharing and reuse within and across disciplines and borders in Europe.

The aim of this action is to increase the resilience of key research data and knowledge repositories and services used in the life sciences, i) by supporting their participation and

⁶² This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

⁶³ For a description of disciplines within the life sciences, see the 'Choose Europe for life sciences' strategy, COM(2025) 525.

⁶⁴ FAIR data are data which meet the principles of findability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability.

⁶⁵ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/open-science/european-open-science-cloud-eosc_en

integration into the EOSC Federation as well as relevant European or global collaborative frameworks to interconnect, share and scale resources, and ii) by supporting a vibrant broad community of infrastructure operators that diversifies and enriches these services, strengthening their operational sustainability and expanding their uptake by end-users.

The action targets critical research, data and knowledge infrastructures in the life sciences as well as other key facilities that serve the needs of researchers in the life sciences.

Proposals should address all the following activities:

- Reinforce the integration in the EOSC Federation of key data and research infrastructures and scientific service providers that serve the needs of the life sciences. Activities should include fully operational contribution to and adoption of EOSC federating capabilities, interconnection of relevant data and services within the EOSC Federation, and development of concrete use cases that demonstrate increased efficiencies and economies of scale across multiple EOSC Nodes as well as scientific use cases to demonstrate the value of the EOSC Federation for researchers and other end-users in the life sciences and for cross-discipline research.
- Develop and deploy solutions and set up collaborations and agreements that enable the broader community to sustain and enrich these repositories and services, strengthening technical reliability, cybersecurity and trusted access mechanisms, and reducing risks of service interruption.
- Develop and demonstrate business and financing models that minimise the risks of service downgrades or disruptions, such as diversifying funding sources, federating technical components and features across multiple competent organisations, and further expanding their user base beyond researchers.
- Support the participation in European or global collaborative initiatives or frameworks that aim to diversify funding sources and support load sharing and balancing commitments across multiple actors in EU Member States, Associated Countries and globally, such as the Global Biodata Coalition (GBC)⁶⁶.
- Support training and upskilling programmes for technical and scientific staff needed for operation of these resources, and aiming to avoid loss of critical expertise.

Proposals should identify the specific key digital repositories and services that their activities will focus on, justify their importance for the advancement of the life sciences in Europe with concrete performance indicators and other metrics, and describe the specific risks of these resources that will be addressed by the action. They should ensure broad participation of organisations across EU Member States and Associated Countries.

Proposed actions should ensure complementarity where relevant with projects funded under topic HORIZON-INFRA-2026-DEV-01-07: “Risk management, mitigation and contingency

⁶⁶ <https://globalbiodata.org>

for ESFRI/ERIC and other world-class research infrastructures” and HORIZON-INFRA-2026-01-EOSC-02: “Trusted frameworks for secure and efficient data sharing in EOSC (EOSC Partnership)”. Synergies with other Common European Data Spaces may be considered, where relevant.

HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-02-05: Advancing promising results from Pillar II collaborative research through the innovation journey

Call: Bridging actions 2027	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	Up to EUR 2.50 million.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 32.50 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: consortia may include a maximum of 6 independent eligible entities as participants. The proposals must be based on results generated within a prior multi-beneficiary project funded directly under the Clusters of Pillar II (Clusters 1 to 6), through a Research and Innovation Action (RIA), an Innovation Action (IA) or a Pre-commercial Procurement Action (PCP). Applicants may submit a proposal based on results generated within more than one such projects (from the same or different Clusters of Pillar II), however only one of these projects will be considered as primary. Applicants must explicitly state in their proposal the project concerned (or the primary project concerned in case the proposal is based on results generated within more than one projects), by providing the relevant grant number and acronym as indicated in the Funding & Tenders Portal. The project(s) must have been completed before the submission deadline⁶⁷. Ongoing projects⁶⁸ are not considered eligible. Only projects where the granting authority for the completed project is the Commission or Executive Agency⁶⁹ are eligible⁷⁰.

⁶⁷ The ‘end date’ of the grant must be prior to the submission deadline.

⁶⁸ Projects that have an ‘end date’ after the submission deadline.

⁶⁹ This means for example that projects such as the ones funded under a co-funded European Partnership or a joint undertaking are not considered eligible.

⁷⁰ Results generated within projects funded via financial support to third parties are not eligible.

	Proposals must provide evidence⁷¹ that the consortium owns or has access to the knowledge assets, including intellectual property, where relevant. More specifically, proposals must include at least one of the following: • Confirmation that at least one of the applicants is the owner or holder of the relevant knowledge assets, including if applicable Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), and possesses the necessary rights to commercialise/use the results, or • Commitment letter from the owner(s) of the relevant result(s) confirming the owner(s)' willingness to negotiate fair, reasonable, and non-discriminatory access to the results, including IPR where relevant, for the purpose of future exploitation. In line with the “<i>restriction on control in innovation actions in critical technology areas</i>” delineated in General Annex B of the General Annexes, entities established in an eligible country but which are directly or indirectly controlled by China or by a legal entity established in China are not eligible to participate in the action. Some activities, resulting from this topic, may involve using classified background and/or producing of security sensitive results (EUCI and SEN). Please refer to the related provisions in section B Security — EU classified and sensitive information of the General Annexes. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	The starting TRL for proposals based on results generated within a project funded under Cluster 3, 4, 5 or 6 should be TRL 6. For proposals based on results generated within a project funded under Cluster 1 or 2, the proposed activities must start beyond the laboratory or research environment and focus on prototyping, testing, demonstrating, piloting, large-scale product validation and market replication under real-world conditions. In case of proposals that are based on results generated within more than one projects, the Cluster of the primary project -as stated by the applicants in their proposal- will be the Cluster to be considered.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply:

⁷¹ In case of proposals that are based on results generated within more than one projects, evidence of ownership or access to the knowledge assets, including intellectual property where relevant, must be provided for all these projects.

	The thresholds for each criterion will be 4 (Excellence), 4 (Impact) and 4 (Implementation). The cumulative threshold will be 12.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: To allow a faster access to funds for small collaborative consortia, grants under this topic will be funded under a Fast Track to Research and Innovation Procedure (FTRI). Indicative timetable for evaluation and grant agreement signature will be: • Information on the outcome of the evaluation: Maximum 4 months from the final date for submission; and • Indicative date for the signing of grant agreements: Maximum 6 months from the final date for submission. To ensure a balanced project portfolio covering all Clusters of Pillar II (Clusters 1 to 6), grants will be awarded (within available budget) to proposals not only in order of ranking but at least also to those proposals that are the 2 highest ranked within different Clusters targeted ⁷², provided that the proposals attain all thresholds. Eligible proposals submitted under this topic and exceeding all the evaluation thresholds will be awarded a STEP Seal ⁷³.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ⁷⁴. The granting authority may, up to 4 years after the end of the action, object to a transfer of ownership or to the exclusive licensing of results, as set out in the specific provision of Annex 5.

⁷² A proposal is considered to target a Cluster of Pillar II (Cluster 1 to 6), when it is based on results generated within a prior multi-beneficiary project funded directly under that Cluster. In case of proposals that are based on results generated within more than one projects, the Cluster of the primary project -as stated by the applicants in their proposal- will be considered as being the Cluster targeted.

⁷³ https://strategic-technologies.europa.eu/about/step-seal_en

⁷⁴ This [decision](#) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

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

- Research and Innovation (R&I) solutions funded under Horizon Europe Pillar II are further advanced along the innovation pathway towards uptake and deployment in the EU and/or Associated Countries, including their translation into high value products, services, processes or business models, strengthening the capacity of European public and private organisations to use innovative solutions.
- End users⁷⁵ and market actors actively co-develop and validate highly innovative solutions in real-world settings, ensuring demand-side needs are integrated, helping to de-risk the innovation journey.
- The EU and Associated Countries benefit from accelerated commercialisation, adoption and deployment of Horizon Europe results, thereby reinforcing societal benefits, sustainable competitiveness, resilience and strategic autonomy of the Union.

Scope: Projects funded under Horizon Europe's Pillar II generate a wealth of high potential innovative results. Even though such results are many times successfully translated into used solutions, there is a need to increase the efficiency of the R&I investments and foster more uptake of promising results into innovative solutions. If more results⁷⁶ were converted into innovative products, processes, services, practices, business models or other novel solutions, they would strongly contribute to European societal benefit, sustainable competitiveness, prosperity, clean transformation, wellbeing or strategic autonomy.

This topic aims at supporting actions that bring solutions generated by Pillar II closer to production and adoption by testing and validating them in real world settings, taking into consideration societal needs, cultural diversity and responsible innovation.

Consortia do not necessarily have to include beneficiaries from the previous grant(s) but must own or have access to the knowledge assets, including intellectual property, where relevant, as stipulated in the specific conditions of this topic. Applicants should justify the proposed composition of the consortium and how it brings the necessary expertise and results ownership. Proposals may also build on complementary background results from closely related EU actions or national/regional projects contributing to the same innovation pathway, provided that these complementary results strengthen the market-readiness and deployment potential of the main result of the Horizon Europe project.

Applicants should evidence that the proposed activities start beyond the laboratory or research environment and should focus on prototyping, testing, demonstrating, piloting, large-scale product validation and market replication under real-world conditions.

⁷⁵ Within this topic end users can be both public and private entities.

⁷⁶ The term 'results' means any tangible or intangible effect of a given action, such as data, knowhow or information, whatever its form or nature and whether or not it can be protected, as well as any rights attached to it, including intellectual property rights (patents, copyright, trademarks, etc.).

Proposals should focus on innovation activities that cover the later stages of development, including the use of research and technology infrastructures⁷⁷ where relevant, should cover more than one of the following activities:

- **Validation and Testing activities:** This could include refining or piloting of prototypes through iterative testing, ensuring they meet the required regulatory or other standards before moving forward; testing to gain approval from potential users, or trial in real-world settings, including to understand user preferences and/or optimise outcomes; stress testing for technical feasibility to ensure the robustness of solutions at scale.
- **Commercialisation aspects:** This could include activities around regulatory compliance standardisation or certification, development of business or pricing strategies and planning for market entry.
- **Scaling and Operations:** This could include activities around large scale validation such as interoperability and/or standardising processes for quality assurance and control; preparations for supply chains and operational readiness; planning for ramping up manufacturing or delivery.
- **Stakeholder, User and Market Readiness:** This could include activities that involve engaging users/customers through co-creation and iterative feedback mechanisms to refine products and strategies, and to ensure that the proposed solutions are aligned with industrial and/or societal needs, concerns and expectations.
- **Deployment and Investment Bridging:** This could include partnering activities to expands market reach and securing the required investment commitment for the next phase by EU or national deployment programmes or investment funds.

Proposals should clearly outline which wider impact can be expected if the project succeeds, along with convincing Key Performance Indicators or a similar framework to measure and follow up the project impact. Impacts do not have to be only monetary but can also consist of other kinds of societal benefits and impacts on wellbeing, clean transformation, resilience or strategic autonomy etc. To assess the value for investment, proposals should specify, with metrics where relevant, all the following:

- Describe the expected scale and significance⁷⁸ of the identified wider impacts.
- Include a business plan or exploitation strategy (including risks and mitigation) that will be further developed during the project. Proposals should identify the beneficiary(ies) (e.g. industry, company, public authority, etc.) responsible for the scaling-up of the

⁷⁷ The catalogue of European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) research infrastructures portfolio can be browsed on the ESFRI website: <https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu>

⁷⁸ Scale refers to the breadth or magnitude of an innovation's reach (e.g., the number of users, industries, or markets affected); significance refers to its importance or transformative effect (e.g., whether it represents an incremental improvement or a fundamental shift in how a problem is solved or a need is met).

solutions. The exploitation strategy should envisage a first deployment in the EU and/or Associated Countries.

- End users should be represented as a beneficiary within the consortium (and identified in the proposal) to test the feasibility of the solution and to ensure that the innovations developed meet the specific needs and requirements of the demand. To support the expected outcomes of the topic, additional end users beyond the project consortium can be subcontracted for further testing and validation activities.

The maximum project duration should not exceed 3 years.

If the activities to be carried out under the proposal are relevant and align with STEP⁷⁹ eligibility, (i.e. digital and deep tech, clean and resource efficient tech and biotech) proposals should demonstrate how they contribute to either: i) bringing innovative, cutting-edge technologies with strong economic potential to the internal market, or ii) reducing or preventing the Union's strategic dependencies.

Where relevant, applicants envisaging to include clinical studies⁸⁰ should provide details of their clinical studies in the dedicated annex using the template provided in the submission system.

HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-03-06: Access to research infrastructure services to enable R&I addressing industry needs in priority areas

Call: Bridging actions 2027	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

⁷⁹ https://strategic-technologies.europa.eu/about_en

⁸⁰ A clinical study covers clinical studies/trials/investigations/cohorts and is defined as any systematic prospective or retrospective collection and analysis of health data obtained from individual patients or healthy persons in order to address scientific questions related to the understanding, prevention, diagnosis, monitoring or treatment of a disease, mental illness, or physical condition. It includes but it is not limited to clinical studies as defined by Regulation 536/2014 (on medicinal products), clinical investigation and clinical evaluation as defined by Regulation 2017/745 (on medical devices), performance study and performance evaluation as defined by Regulation 2017/746 (on in-vitro diagnostic medical devices).

From 31 January 2023, all initial clinical trial applications in the European Union (EU) must be submitted via the Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS - <https://euclinicaltrials.eu>). CTIS is now the single-entry point for sponsors and regulators of clinical trials for the submission and assessment of clinical trial data.

Applicants are encouraged to consider the latest innovations and advances in the clinical trial design and research methods in order to evaluate promising interventions allowing shorter development timings. Applicants are also encouraged to follow the World Health Organization (WHO) guidance for best practices for clinical trials (<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240097711>).

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply: The page limit of the application is 100 pages.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used). Subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks. Given the specific nature of this topic, access provision activities must be included in the proposal. Please read carefully the provisions under the section “Specific features for Research Infrastructures” of this work programme part before preparing your application. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply: The following additions to the general award criteria apply: For the 'Excellence' criterion, the following aspects will also be taken into account: The extent to which the access activities (trans-national and/or virtual access) will offer access to the state-of-the-art infrastructures of European interest in the field, high quality services, and will enable users to conduct excellent research and/or innovation. The extent to which the project will contribute to facilitating and integrating the access procedures, to improve the services the infrastructures provide and to further develop their on-line services.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: To ensure a balanced portfolio covering as many of the six areas as

	possible, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but also to those proposals that are the highest ranked per each area subject to budget availability, provided that the applications attain all thresholds.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries will be subject to the additional access rights: Beneficiaries shall grant royalty-free access to their intellectual property relating to tools, standards, specifications, and other outputs generated by this action that are directly relevant to advertise the research infrastructures services and their modality of access, and for implementing access calls (such as peer-review process and communication with applicants), to the EU institutions and to the beneficiaries of projects funded by the EU in view of a more sustained and integrated EU access scheme. This access shall be provided through a mechanism to be defined in the proposal, during and up to two years beyond the lifespan of the Grant Agreement. Eligible costs may take form of unit costs for trans-national and virtual access to research infrastructures as defined in the Decision authorising the use of unit costs for the actions involving trans-national and virtual access. (see Annex 2a of the Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement).

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

- Research infrastructures have improved their attractiveness for industry so that they can sustainably extend their user base. Where appropriate, future continuum with technology infrastructures will be facilitated;
- Researchers and innovators have more efficient access to the best research infrastructures available to conduct industry-driven research and foster innovation, irrespective of location, through a single-entry point access portal, integrated or interoperable catalogues of services and converging access conditions and selection procedures;
- Breakthrough and leading-edge research and innovation are enabled by advanced research infrastructure services that are made available to a wider user community in the targeted areas;
- A new generation of researchers and innovators is trained to optimally exploit all the essential tools for industry-driven research and innovation with due attention to early-stage career researchers and innovators and to researchers and innovators from widening countries;

- Raised awareness in industry of relevant research infrastructures facilities and services, optimised use of the infrastructures by a broader user community and increased impact and sustainability of these infrastructures.

Scope: This topic aims at providing trans-national access (on-site or remote) and/or virtual access to integrated and customised research infrastructure services for industry-driven research to foster innovation in each of the target areas listed below, offered by complementary state-of-the-art research infrastructures. Access should target users from industry (notably SMEs, startups and scaleups) or from academia when collaborating with industry. Proposals should adhere to the guidelines and principles of the European Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures⁸¹ and to the principles of the Charter of access for industrial users to research and technology infrastructures [ref to be added once published, checking final title].

Access also includes ad hoc users' training and scientific and technical support (see Specific Features for Research Infrastructures). In this context, appropriate support to the technical and scientific staff that will facilitate access by non-expert users from industry should be considered.

The main goal of this topic is access provision to existing services: this should be clearly reflected by the proposed activities and the allocated resources. The development and customisation of services and/or modality of access, relevant to the areas, will also be supported, provided the resulting services are opened and offered already under the actions (short term R&D) and that the long-term sustainability of such services is ensured by the participant research infrastructures. Where applicable, proposals should pay due attention to shorten the 'time to access' for users from industry.

Data management (and related ethics issues), in line with FAIR⁸² principles, as well as the connection of digital services (e.g. data services) to the European Open Science Cloud and interoperability with other Common European Data Spaces⁸³, should be addressed where relevant.

Proposals should make available to researchers a portfolio of complementary research infrastructure services of European interest⁸⁴, including data services, and customised workflows to enable R&I addressing the targeted area. Proposals should include at least one ESFRI Landmark or European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) as beneficiary⁸⁵. In case of a distributed ERIC, as an alternative to the ERIC participating as a beneficiary, a

⁸¹ <https://op.europa.eu/publication-detail/-/publication/ec4692ae-ac6f-11ef-acb1-01aa75ed71a1>

⁸² Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable.

⁸³ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/data-spaces>

⁸⁴ A research infrastructure is of European interest when is able to attract users from EU or associated countries other than the country where the infrastructure is located. This includes ESFRI and ERIC infrastructures.

⁸⁵ See ESFRI Landmarks in ESFRI RIs PORTFOLIO <https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/> and ERIC Landscape – Active European Research Infrastructure Consortia (ERICs) https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-research-and-innovation/our-digital-future/european-research-infrastructures/eric/eric-landscape_en.

legal entity that is hosting ERIC facilities, resources or related services may participate as a beneficiary⁸⁶.

Proposals should include an outreach and engagement plan to actively advertise their services, to targeted communities from industry (notably SMEs, startups and scaleups) or from academia when collaborating with industry, focusing on EU member states and associated countries, including from widening countries. Where relevant, proposals should consider the use and/or development of intermediary capacities between research infrastructures and industry facilitating the matchmaking. Proposals are expected to exploit synergies and to ensure complementarity and coherence with other EU grants supporting access provision where relevant. Knowledge valorisation as well as coordination with technology infrastructures and digital services should also be considered, where relevant⁸⁷.

Proposals should include the list of services/installations⁸⁸ opened by research infrastructures for trans-national or virtual access and the amounts of units of access made available for users. Further conditions and requirements relating to access provisions that applicants should fulfil when drafting a proposal are given in the “Specific features for Research Infrastructures” section of this work programme part. Compliance with these provisions will be taken into account during evaluation.

The integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement. However, where applicable, proposals should mandate in their calls for access the integration of the gender dimension in the research and innovation content of the users applying to these calls.

To ensure a holistic view from design to implementation of possible access schemes, proposals should ensure strong and continuous collaboration with the cross-domain preparatory action on access HORIZON-INFRA-2025-01-DEV-05⁸⁹, with the pilots under topic HORIZON-INFRA-2026-01-DEV-02, and with the actions supported under topic HORIZON-INFRA-2027-01-SERV-01.

The topic targets the areas listed below related to scientific challenges and EU priorities. Proposals are expected to address one of these areas and the area addressed should be clearly identified in the proposal:

Area 1: Biomedical or food technologies

Area 2: Clean energy and/or clean mobility solutions

⁸⁶ The term ‘distributed’ research infrastructure typically refers to one or a few central hubs and several interlinked (national or institutional) nodes where many components of the research infrastructure may not be part of the same legal entity, the ERIC. A declaration signed by the legal representative of the ERIC should confirm that the ERIC is supporting this participation, explain the relevance for the ERIC and describe any further cooperation with the ERIC.

⁸⁷ See for example possible linkage with projects supported under topic HORIZON-CL4-INDUSTRY-2025-01-HUMAN-64.

⁸⁸ “Installation” means a part or a service of a research infrastructure that can be used independently from the rest. A research infrastructure consists of one or more installations.

⁸⁹ https://cordis.europa.eu/programme/id/HORIZON_HORIZON-INFRA-2025-01-DEV-05

Area 3: Advanced materials for circular economy and/or bioeconomy

Area 4: Accelerators and superconducting magnets

Area 5: Microelectronics

Area 6: Advanced sensing technologies for ocean observation

Proposals could consider the inclusion of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) EU Reference Laboratory for alternatives to animal testing (EURL ECVAM) and the Nanobiotechnology Laboratory in the area of Biomedical technologies. In that respect, the JRC will consider collaborating with any successful proposal and this collaboration, when relevant, should be established after the proposal's approval.

HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-03-07: Europe's world class research and technology infrastructures as strategic assets for talent to Choose Europe

Call: Bridging actions 2027	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 1.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 7.50 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used). If eligible for funding, legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action as a beneficiary or affiliated entity. In order to achieve the expected objectives of the action, consortia must include, as beneficiary, at least one ESFRI Landmark⁹⁰ and/or European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC)⁹¹.

⁹⁰ See the list of ESFRI 'Landmarks' in the 2021 ESFRI Roadmap on <https://roadmap2021.esfri.eu/> For ESFRI Landmarks that are not an ERIC or an international European research organisation, the beneficiary must be the legal entity hosting the infrastructure in the lead country (such legal entity is a minimum requirement to become an ESFRI Landmark).

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

	The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: To ensure a balanced portfolio covering as many of the nine areas as possible, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but also to those proposals that are the highest ranked within areas 1 to 9 as listed below subject to budget availability, provided that the applications attain all thresholds.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ⁹².

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

- Creation of interconnected international scientific networks centred around European research and technology infrastructures, including where appropriate their university partners and university alliances, promoting their potential for international scientific collaboration and exchange, with due regard to research security and safeguarding data critical for research addressing global challenges.
- Creation of opportunities for EU/Associated Countries scientific communities to engage with excellent researchers outside the EU. This should be achieved through engagement with scientific institutions in other world regions,
- Development of "Choose Europe" as a strategic direction in the context of Europe's research and technology infrastructures, for promoting Europe as a destination for top scientific talent and for promoting European infrastructures as strong and reliable partners for international scientific cooperation.

⁹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/european-research-infrastructures/eric_en.

⁹² This [decision](#) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- Strengthened visibility and communication of Europe's research and technology infrastructures' role as world-class hubs for science and innovation, for attracting talent and for fostering international cooperation.

Scope: This topic aims to leverage Europe's world-class research and technology infrastructures to attract global scientific talent and to strengthen Europe's position as a partner of choice for international scientific cooperation, in line with the European strategy on research and technology infrastructures. By highlighting the unique opportunities for scientific advancement, innovation and collaboration available in Europe and with Europe, while building cooperative links between research and technology infrastructures, the initiative endeavours to make Europe a preferred destination for researchers seeking to contribute to and benefit from these state-of-the-art infrastructures.

Projects are expected to focus on:

- Partnering with non-associated third-country scientific institutions, including universities to align on research methodologies, testing protocols and data sharing in the chosen field; promote the uptake in other world regions of practices developed and tested by pan-European research and technology infrastructures, to ensure comparability of results; and support the design of distributed research ecosystems, including data and cloud platforms and ecosystems. This could be achieved through joint workshops or training programmes, summer schools and other scientific visits aimed at building long-term bilateral links between European infrastructures and scientific institutions in other countries. Activities are expected to target students, early-career researchers, and/or scientific staff, including specialised technicians and support staff, while promoting gender-balanced participation.
- Organising targeted dissemination and outreach activities bringing together research and technology infrastructures, scientists and innovators, with the aim of effectively leveraging European infrastructures as world-class hubs for science and innovation and strengthening international engagement.

This could also include the production of reusable common communication assets, coordinated presence at major international science and innovation fora, and reinforcing links with initiatives such as EURAXESS. Where relevant, beneficiaries should build on resources funded under HORIZON-WIDERA2022-ERA-01-60.

Proposals are expected to address one of the areas listed below and the area addressed should be clearly identified in the proposal. If a proposal addressed multiple areas, they should select "Cross-cutting area". A proposal may also choose "Other area" and identify which one.

- Area 1: Health and biomedical sciences
- Area 2: Food science and agriculture technologies
- Area 3: Clean energy and clean mobility solutions

- Area 4: Environmental and Climate sciences and observation
- Area 5: Physics and astronomy
- Area 6: Advanced materials
- Area 7: Social sciences and humanities
- Area 8: Cross-cutting area
- Area 9: Other area

Proposals could consider the inclusion of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) EU Reference Laboratory for alternatives to animal testing (EURL ECVAM) in the area of Health and biomedical sciences, and the inclusion of the Nanobiotechnology Laboratory in the areas of Health and biomedical sciences, and Food science and agriculture technologies. In that respect, the JRC will consider collaborating with any successful proposal and this collaboration, when relevant, should be established after the proposal's approval.

Proposals should consider the Council Recommendation of 23 May 2024 on enhancing research security⁹³ and take into account its principles for responsible internationalisation.

HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-04-08: Sustainability and resilience of climate projections and related data records for European and global science and policy

Call: Bridging actions 2027	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used). If eligible for funding, legal entities established in low- to middle-income countries automatically eligible for Horizon Europe funding

⁹³ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C_202403510

	may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and Support Action as beneficiary or affiliated entity.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ⁹⁴.

Expected Outcome: The action should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- The EU climate data and infrastructure sovereignty is strengthened, securing access to essential observation and modelling data for European research community.
- Effective delivery of climate information relevant for European and global climate policy, including timely contributions to the IPCC assessments and UNFCCC processes.
- The resilience of the Earth System Grid Federation (ESGF) is strengthened in Europe and globally, and the foundations for an integrated, sustainable long-term operational solution are laid.

Scope: The evolution of the geopolitical situation, with the associated changes in science funding priorities and data access policies represent a major threat to evidence-based decision making. The continuity of production, maintenance and open access to climate data, including observations and projections, is fundamental for European and global climate science and policy action. Steps to ensure sustainability and resilience of the strategic resources and infrastructures in Europe needed to deliver these data are imperative. Acting on this offers an opportunity for the EU to consolidate its leadership in climate science and foster critical climate data sovereignty.

The action should address all the following aspects:

- Track the availability of climate change projections and related data records, as well as the evolution of the global compensation efforts, gaps and risks in the context of disengagement of major partners and other geopolitical developments.
- Coordinate Europe-wide solutions to mitigate the most pressing risks for the European and global scientific community in the context of securing access to data needed for IPCC, WCRP, CMIP, CORDEX, and other relevant scientific initiatives.

⁹⁴ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- Explore options and take steps to improve the resilience, effectiveness and to further development of the ESGF:
 - o Europe: Prepare the ground towards a sustainable long-term solution, in coordination with national efforts and in the context of the ESFRI. This includes exploring all relevant options to maintain data access, improve architecture and interoperability, governance, service quality and operational aspects. Among others, it should encourage and mobilise sustained national investments in storage capacity, staff and other core resources, and explore options to expand the node network.
 - o Global coordination function: sustain access and data availability, redundancy and maintenance, including support to the necessary technical components and expert capacity, with strong focus on inclusiveness, equity, and the needs of the most vulnerable countries. Promote global interoperability and trusted frameworks.

The action should build on existing efforts and engage with relevant national, European and international initiatives and stakeholders (e.g. ENES modelling community), maintaining a regular consultation on the status of data. Exploring the opportunities for integration into the landscape of research infrastructures prioritised by ESFRI is encouraged, with a view to identify long-term structural solutions and foster synergies with other stakeholders, initiatives and climate-relevant Research Infrastructures of pan-European interest. Moreover, the action should foster interoperability and alignment with common European Data Spaces, like the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) and downstream applications. Synergies with relevant data and service providers (e.g. relevant Copernicus Services, WMO and GCOS, ESA, EUMETSAT, ECMWF) and main EU AI- and HPC-related initiatives are also encouraged as appropriate. International cooperation is strongly encouraged specially for the global coordination component.

Particular efforts should be made to ensure that the data and data management tools produced by the project funded under this topic is in line with the FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable) principles.

The action should take into account and coordinate with relevant projects funded under the topics HORIZON-INFRA-2023-SERV-01, HORIZON-INFRA-2025-01-SERV-02, HORIZON-INFRA-2026-DEV-01-07, HORIZON-CL5-2025-06-D1-01: Climate simulations data and knowledge for optimal support of IPCC Assessments and International Policy and HORIZON-CL5-2026-07-D1-01: Next generation climate monitoring and related capabilities to maximise complementarities and avoid redundancies.

HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-09: EU AI Media Platform – modular multilingual public-interest infrastructure for European news and audiovisual media (IA) - Apply AI

Call: Bridging actions 2027
Specific conditions

<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 10.00 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 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: Subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to start at TRL 6 and achieve TRL 8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: The project will support the development of a modular, trustworthy and interoperable AI-enabled infrastructure enabling pan-European public-interest media platform(s) to make available real time news and information from professional media outlets across the EU and associated countries to wider audiences⁹⁵. It will harness AI to translate, process and distribute content for relevant channels through classification, recognition, linguistic analysis, translation and other multimodal workflows. It will also enable prototypic content creation and testing of immersive and innovation-inspired media experiences consistent with a public-interest mission for different age groups, taking into account gender-responsive design and promoting news diversity. Overall, it will improve multilingual access, including low-resource European languages, strengthen media pluralism and resilience for public service media and professional media outlets, content creators and independent publishers, and embed trust, provenance and accountability by design.

The concrete expected outcomes are:

- Reliable, modular and interoperable infrastructure with validated service levels and sustainability pathways, integrating AI-based components that support multilingual and multimodal media workflows including audiovisual processing and adaptation workflows, relevant metadata interoperability for broadcast and streaming contexts, social-media-facing interaction and adaptive, personalised, and interactive content experiences (modular journalism) catering for diverse user needs.
- Content in multiple languages and onboarding conditions and equal access for all types of media organisations, from public broadcasters to small local publishers, SMEs, cultural institutions and civil society groups.

⁹⁵

[COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL Apply AI Strategy, 2.10. Cultural and creative sectors, and media; Communication on the European Democracy Shield](#)

- Built-in safety, transparency and governance features, fair human-data interactions (e.g., legibility, agency, negotiability), traceability of key decisions, open evaluation methods, and validated governance and interoperability frameworks.
- Reliable tracking of content origins through provenance information, attribution metadata and verification signals.

Scope: This topic will support pilots for AI-enabled media infrastructures, fostering research and innovation in the European media sector. It should deliver innovative solutions by consolidating, integrating and validating reusable AI-enabled infrastructure components and governance arrangements of platform pilots ⁹⁶ for pan-European public-interest media platform(s), making use, where appropriate, of European AI infrastructure and building on results from relevant Horizon Europe, Digital Europe and pilot actions, in preparation for wider scale-up from 2028 onward. The action will encourage the development, testing and improvement of innovative solutions that respond to the needs of the media ecosystem. Proposals should integrate and scale up relevant results and move existing pilots towards operational validation in real-world conditions against declared service levels, including appropriate resilience, lifecycle-managed storage, a KPI framework and independent evaluation, in line with Union standards, and observability, traceability and content provenance by design. AI components should follow transparent and accountable practices, including documentation, explainability, logging and evaluation, to enable audit, redress and effective oversight.

The project should demonstrate a credible pathway towards broad European language coverage, accessibility and support for relevant emerging formats, with a credible post-grant sustainability approach and, where relevant, onboarding, training and pilot cohorts. It should foster participation of media organisations by addressing industry needs, including bridging tools and common formats linking editorial workflows and platform technologies (e.g. ingestion, aggregation, curation, metadata exchange, rights and licensing parameters, attribution and provenance information). The project should present a mechanism to bring together public and private media outlets and publishers, broadcasters, AI and language-technology providers, platform developers, content creators and social media actors, fact-checking and integrity actors, and rights-management organisations. Where relevant, cultural and heritage institutions and civil society organisations should also be involved. The infrastructure should test advanced open APIs solutions and demonstrate their technical viability. Moreover, the infrastructure should provide SDKs and documentation to enable integration with multiple front ends and third-party environments, onboarding pathways for smaller players, and where relevant, open-source development approaches. This includes social-media-facing interaction and referral functions, and, AI companion-style interactions via an API. Collective contextualisation services, facilitation of user onboarding and support for cooperation, the embedding of robust provenance safeguards for synthetic or manipulated content with clear redress paths and where relevant, cooperation with fact-checking and

⁹⁶ Such as “[Supporting multilingual access to trusted news and public-interest information across Europe](#)”

integrity actors, may equally be considered. The project should contribute to an existing or establish a structured multi-stakeholder governance framework including structured exchanges with relevant stakeholders and related initiatives through an appropriate coordination mechanism.

HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-10: Autonomous Drive Ambition Cities (IA) - Apply AI

Call: Bridging actions 2027	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 15.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. 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 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: In order to achieve the expected outcomes, and safeguard the Union's strategic assets, interests, autonomy, or security, it is important to avoid a situation of technological dependency on a non-EU source, in a global context that requires the EU to take action to build on its strengths, and to carefully assess and address any strategic weaknesses, vulnerabilities and high-risk dependencies which put at risk the attainment of its ambitions. For this reason, participation is limited to legal entities established in Member States, Iceland and Norway and associated countries. For the duly justified and exceptional reasons listed in the paragraph above, in order to guarantee the protection of the strategic interests of the Union and its Member States, entities established in an eligible country listed above, but which are directly or indirectly controlled by a non-eligible country or a non-eligible country entity, shall not participate in the action.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: Development and demonstration of AI-enabled electric autonomous mobility services (level 4) in urban traffic, improving safety, sustainability, data sharing and commercial scalability across cities, through a large-scale demonstrator integrating 5 - 7 coordinated city pilots in 5 or more Member States or associated countries including at least one cross-border pilot between adjacent cities - to bring near-to-market autonomous driving technologies into real operations:

1. Delivery on the Apply AI Strategy flagship action “Autonomous Drive Ambition Cities” by bridging the gap between high technical maturity and sustainable commercial deployment in cities.
2. Strengthened competitiveness of European base vehicle manufacturers, AD technology stack providers, mobility service brokers, and mobility service operators through real-world deployment opportunities as addressed by the European Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Alliance (ECAVA), in particular its working group on Autonomous Driving deployment.
3. Safer, more sustainable and accessible urban mobility through the integration of electric autonomous vehicles.
4. Demonstration of scalable autonomous mobility services and vehicles in real-traffic urban environments using mature autonomous driving technologies.
5. Improved access to and secure sharing of data as well as AI models and tools to support the development, testing, validation and safe operation of autonomous driving systems.
6. Demonstration of a scalable, future-proof supporting infrastructure capable of delivering all required services, ensuring operational continuity, safety, and the seamless scalability of autonomous mobility deployments.
7. Address regulatory, operational and governance barriers to the deployment and scaling of autonomous mobility services, by supporting procurement frameworks, and capacity building within cities, as well as the harmonisation of deployment conditions and requirements, including the security and robustness of such services, as well as the identification of viable business models and replication pathways across the EU.

Scope:

- Support cities or urban agglomerations (from countries who have signed or plan to sign the “Joint Declaration of Intent concerning the creation of a cross-border testbed for the deployment of autonomous vehicles” or can demonstrate a comparable level of technological, operational and regulatory readiness) partnering with mobility service provider(s) and operator(s), vehicle manufacturers and suppliers, technology providers, R&I entities and public transport operators (as needed and appropriate), to deploy AI-enabled electric autonomous vehicles, with automation capabilities at level 4 (SAE), to enable autonomous driving operations, such as autonomous shuttle services, ride-hailing, car sharing and autonomous point to point navigation. Facilitate the sharing of

knowledge, best practices, and recommendations among participating cities, industry, and with wider EU stakeholders.

- With a strong focus of proposals on providing pan-European added value through the exploitation of synergies, co-ordination, supply and demand-side aggregation, standard-setting, and sharing of data, AI models, and experiences across participating cities and industrial actors, it is expected that proposals build as far as possible on on-going actions at European, national, or regional level, and that complementary public funding and industrial investments are sought to support the actual deployment of autonomous vehicles and the roll-out of related mobility services at scale.
- Prepare integration, operations and deployment of autonomous vehicles in 5-7 European city pilots in 5 or more Member States or associated countries, including prototyping equipment (vehicle, software, hardware), integration of vehicles in the transport infrastructure and mobility system, performing initial demonstrations in real-life traffic, and developing scaling and financing roadmaps. These pilots should:
 - o Include at least one cross-border city pilot between adjacent cities or urban agglomerations to demonstrate interoperability across different national regulations and physical and digital infrastructures, thereby providing evidence-based recommendations for large-scale deployment and regulatory alignment in Europe.
 - o Support mandatory sharing of data, AI models and experiences across all pilots through a scheme to be agreed by the involved players e.g. through a European neutral, secure and trusted data handling entity or an organisation of similar profile. This sharing approach shall define, among others, the requirements for interoperable digital infrastructures and federated data-sharing and AI training frameworks, including the role of the infrastructure to augment vehicle perception in complex urban scenarios, that safeguard the interests of the industrial participants and enable safe, robust, and cybersecure-by-design operation of autonomous systems, robust cybersecurity and interoperability requirements for data and model sharing.
 - o Take into account the regulatory simplification work on-going in the Action on “Large scale testbeds for autonomous driving” under the **Industrial Action Plan for the European automotive sector of March 2025** (“Joint Declaration of Intent concerning the creation of a cross-border testbed for the deployment of automated vehicles” by many Member States) and provide guidance on interoperability and scaling of autonomous driving technologies, from pilot environments to large-scale urban operations in real traffic, addressing operational safety and security, regulatory approvals, certification procedures, procurement approaches and infrastructure integration (e.g. connectivity, data governance, charging infrastructure).

Proposers are expected to comply with the strategic objectives of the EU AI-, Data- and cybersecurity related policy objectives (including for Connected and Automated Vehicles).

Consortia will closely interact with the European Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Alliance (ECAVA), in particular its working group on Autonomous Driving deployment. Consortia will further need to demonstrate close interaction and complementarity with the activities of the CCAM partnership (in particular the SYNERGIES project and the CCAMBassador CSA, its work with cities, as well as the project resulting from HORIZON-CL5-2026-01-D6-06: Federated CCAM data exchange platform and the Large Scale Demonstration running as of 2027 and stemming from the topic HORIZON-CL5-2026-10-D6-01: Flagship-pilot: large-scale demonstrations of CCAM). The projects should make use of the emerging European infrastructures of AI factories and data labs, CEF projects, the common European Mobility Data Space EMDS, the emerging European Digital Infrastructure Consortium on Mobility and Logistics, any relevant emerging pan-European initiatives like Important Projects of Common European Interest, etc. to capitalise on mature technologies with strong commercialisation potential.

It is expected that one large scale demonstrator project is selected, which includes 5 - 7 city pilots in 5 or more Member States or associated countries. Proposers are encouraged to select the cities for their city pilots from the Call for Expression of Interest launched on 23 June 2026 for the Autonomous Drive Ambition Cities (ADACities) Initiative under the European Apply AI strategy.

Projects resulting from this topic are expected to apply the European Common Evaluation Methodology (EU-CEM) for CCAM.

HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-04-11: Detection, monitoring, modelling, and attribution capabilities for Solar Radiation Modification (SRM) activities and assessing their impacts on Earth's climate and ecosystems

Call: Bridging actions 2027	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 10.00 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 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).

<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply: The following additions to the general award criteria apply: Quality and efficiency of the implementation: - the risk management procedures to address conflict between the creation of a restricting governance framework for SRM and partners' interest in commercial deployment or development of technologies for the deployment of SRM.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The evaluation committee will be composed partially by representatives of EU institutions.

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

European Union's, Member States' and Associated Countries' policy making is supported with robust evidence and their visibility in deliberations of SRM strengthened. Evidence and new knowledge related to the points below supports the European Union's, Member States and Associated Countries' contributions to relevant international review and assessment processes of SRM, notably by the IPCC:

- Civil society, researchers, public authorities as well as policy and decision makers have access to a solid scientific-technological knowledge foundation concerning the detection, attribution and deterrence of SRM activities as a contribution to an emerging multilateral governance system spanning both SRM-related research and technological development.
- The development of a global SRM governance framework is supported through advanced knowledge, generated by desk research, modelling, earth observation, the documentation of development pathways of various SRM technologies and their potential impacts on the earth system and its parts (oceans, large-scale atmospheric circulation, regional climate such as monsoons as well as changes in precipitation), as well as on societies (impact on decarbonisation pathways, livelihood security, nature dependent value chains etc.) and ecosystems. These are considered substantial gaps by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and Group of Chief Scientific Advisors.
- Aerosol and cloud modelling capabilities for global and regional models concerning Stratospheric Aerosol Injection (SAI), Marine Cloud Brightening (MCB) and Cirrus Cloud Thinning (CCT)/Mixed Phase Cloud Thinning (MCT) and their effects on atmospheric chemistry and dynamics are enhanced as a solid scientific-technological base for a detection and deterrence system.

- Policy makers and public authorities have access to robust space-borne, ground-based, air-borne and in-situ EO data (e.g. Copernicus) based on any relevant physical, chemical or social, societal data for the purpose of detection, assessment and attribution for outdoor SRM-development activities. Knowledge about SRM-induced changes to be expected in ecosystems, like shifted precipitation patterns and altered light quality, associated marine and terrestrial net primary production, and on sensitive habitats is enhanced. The knowledge generated shall inform, in the context of SRM technology governance, the detection, monitoring and attribution policy, in the sense of an *ecological alert system* focused on protecting global biodiversity.

Scope: Support provided under this topic must not be used to advocate, promote, or support the development of SRM. The conduct of SRM field experiments as well as the conduct of technical and operational SRM research is out of the scope.

The activity aims at enhancing the capabilities to detect, monitor and attribute SRM-related research, innovation or deployment activities. The activity shall be conducted in line with the precautionary approach as outlined by the European Group on Ethics⁹⁷, in accordance with the conclusion of SAPEA reports, the IPCC reviews, and build on the decisions of relevant international bodies, mainly CBD and support the ambitions of the Ocean Pact.

In recent years, SRM has been the subject of increased debate amongst a variety of stakeholders. The debate encompasses multiple perspectives, including the scientific and technical challenges, inherent risks, governability and ethical considerations of proposed methodologies. SRM encompasses a range of strategies aimed at reducing global warming by reflecting the Sun's energy away from Earth or allowing excessive energy to leave the atmosphere through means other than reducing greenhouse gas concentrations. While the focus of relevant multilateral environmental agreements is fully on rapid greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction and adaptation to climate change, SRM is being proposed by some actors as an additional measure to reduce warming and address negative impacts of climate change. In this framework, the Council conclusions on EU Energy and Climate diplomacy⁹⁸ of 21 April 2026 expressed concern that “*large scale climate interventions, in particular solar radiation modification, pose significant risks for the climate, the environment, security, and geopolitics*”.

Critical uncertainties regarding the effectiveness and wide-ranging impacts of SRM currently obstruct comprehensive risk analysis and evidence-based policy. Knowledge gaps coupled to a lack of robust, formal governance is particularly concerning, as the potential for unilateral

⁹⁷ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/543a8475-e9b8-11ef-b5e9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8417-2026-INIT/en/pdf> <https://www.cbd.int/decisions/cop/10/33> Stop-mark or exit ramps might be defined if concrete risk for unintended use of the knowledge created is about to realise in the absence of a restricting governance regime. The advisory stricture shall in this case directly address the Commission services.

⁹⁸ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/543a8475-e9b8-11ef-b5e9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8417-2026-INIT/en/pdf> <https://www.cbd.int/decisions/cop/10/33> Stop-mark or exit ramps might be defined if concrete risk for unintended use of the knowledge created is about to realise in the absence of a restricting governance regime. The advisory stricture shall in this case directly address the Commission services.

deployment by state or private actors could trigger significant international tensions. Historically, SRM has been addressed within the framework of the CBD, specifically through Decision X/33⁹⁹ adopted at COP10 and decision XI/20 adopted at COP11¹⁰⁰. Reaffirmed at CBD COP16, these decisions maintain what is widely recognized as a de-facto moratorium on the deployment of SRM and other geoengineering technologies to prevent irreversible ecological damage.

The project under this topic should address critical knowledge gaps identified by the IPCC, CBD and Group of Chief Scientific Advisors related to the absence of an evidence-supported governance framework on SRM. The action shall enhance detection, monitoring, and attribution capabilities for SRM by leveraging EU leadership in Earth observation utilizing space-borne, ground-based, and in-situ data. This includes physico-chemical, and social, societal, media or any other relevant data. This robust monitoring framework should be designed to detect and attribute outdoor experiments and deter potential unilateral deployments by private or state actors.

All deployment and field experiment-type activities are out of scope of this topic. In the absence of field trials different methods of physico-chemical measurements have to be validated against each other in a natural environment and modelling plays a crucial role for enhancing reliability, applicability and attribution capacity. To that end, the project is expected to significantly advance high-fidelity modelling of aerosol-cloud interactions, specifically targeting SAI, MCB, and CCT/MCT and develop a solid scientific basis for understanding how these methods affect atmospheric chemistry and dynamics.

The project under this topic should contribute to the establishment of a potential future ecological early-warning system focused on protecting global biodiversity and expected to predict and monitor how SRM-induced changes, such as shifted precipitation patterns and altered light quality, might disrupt photosynthesis and associated marine net primary production, and sensitive habitats. By identifying these unintended consequences, the project aligns with the CBD and ensures that ecological protection remains a central pillar of any climate intervention research.

SRM is mainly criticized for reasons including ethical concerns, general mistrust of technocratic interventions, lack of international governance and regulatory frameworks, risk of termination shock, as well as unknown long- and short-term side effects and high uncertainty. To achieve the goals of the project, the activity should therefore bridge the gap between technical disciplines and the humanities. Only through this transdisciplinary lens can the multifaceted threats to our ecosystems and societies be addressed.

⁹⁹ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/543a8475-e9b8-11ef-b5e9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8417-2026-INIT/en/pdf> <https://www.cbd.int/decisions/cop/10/33> Stop-mark or exit ramps might be defined if concrete risk for unintended use of the knowledge created is about to realise in the absence of a restricting governance regime. The advisory stricture shall in this case directly address the Commission services.

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/default.shtml?id=13181> <https://creativecommons.org/cc-licenses/>

In December 2024 the European Commission’s Scientific Advisory Mechanism’s Group of Chief Scientific Advisors and European Group on Ethics have published expert advice on the limitations and requirements for research activities related to SRM technologies recommending inter alia highest possible transparency and open science practices. Further, the scientific advisory mechanism recommends setting limits to public support to SRM deployment technology development outside a multilateral governance framework. These considerations should guide the project design and consortium composition.

Entities with a known interest in the commercial development or deployment of SRM technologies may create a substantial conflict of interest within a project targeted towards the development of detection and monitoring capacity for a governance framework. Such conflicts should be avoided and related risks managed. To that end EU representatives will be participating in the evaluation committee. Beyond commercial sensitivities, the global discourse surrounding SRM is highly polarized. These technologies are frequently the subject of intense public debate. As the project operates in this highly sensitive discourse, it requires an exceptionally high standard of transparency to build public trust and ensure scientific credibility.

Outreach to citizens and civil society in co-designing the R&I agenda and assessing the R&I outcomes is indispensable as part of the project’s methodology and approach; this should have a global engagement dimension to be reflected in the composition of a steering board or similar advisory or feedback structure. Such structure should also advise on the development of a risk assessment regarding the possible misuse of the project results and be in a position to propose mitigation measures.

The project should commit to the FAIR-principles (“Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Re-useable”) with respect to research data. Open and early sharing of work helps to accelerate research, increase research transparency and support collaborative as well as inter- and transdisciplinary work. Early and open sharing of research, for example through preregistration, registered reports and / or preprints is strongly encouraged; while stringent management of potentially security relevant information produced or treated needs should be demonstrated. Widest possible use shall be made of Creative Commons licenses¹⁰¹ for outputs of the project other than scientific publications.

HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-12: Large-Scale piloting of next-generation AI-driven digital platforms for a more affordable, secure and sustainable European energy system (IA) - Apply AI

Call: Bridging actions 2027	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 15.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.

¹⁰¹ <https://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/default.shtml?id=13181> <https://creativecommons.org/cc-licenses/>

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

<i>project</i>	Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: In order to achieve the expected outcomes, and safeguard the Union's strategic assets, interests, autonomy, or security, it is important to avoid a situation of technological dependency on a non-EU source, in a global context that requires the EU to take action to build on its strengths, and to carefully assess and address any strategic weaknesses, vulnerabilities and high-risk dependencies which put at risk the attainment of its ambitions. For this reason, participation is limited to legal entities established in Member States, Iceland and Norway and associated countries. For the duly justified and exceptional reasons listed in the paragraph above, in order to guarantee the protection of the strategic interests of the Union and its Member States, entities established in an eligible country listed above, but which are directly or indirectly controlled by a non-eligible country or a non-eligible country entity, shall not participate in the action.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 7-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

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

1. Strengthened Europe's technological leadership and sovereignty in the energy sector.
2. Market-ready AI-driven digital platforms and solutions with quantifiable minimal environmental impact, that enhance grid operation, renewable energy integration and utilisation rates, energy storage integration, grid integration of data centres and other energy intensive critical infrastructures, non-fossil, balancing solutions, electrification and energy efficiency, derived from existing and ongoing AI and IoT research.
3. Successfully integrate applied research results in real-world pilot programmes involving energy operators, technology providers, public authorities, and end users.
4. Secure, interoperable, and cross-border data exchange mechanisms and digital services reducing fragmentation.

5. Accelerated scaling of digital solutions leveraging European data spaces, AI factories¹⁰², digital twins, and cloud-to-edge infrastructures.
6. Credible pathway from innovation to large-scale piloting, ensuring long-term sustainability and scale up.
7. Quantifiable improvements in terms of reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, energy savings, electricity cost reduction and grid flexibility.

Scope: This topic will support one large-scale cross-border pilot project demonstrating the operational use of next-generation AI-driven Digital Platforms (DPs) for the European energy system, to optimize electricity system operation and flexibility management cross multiple European energy systems. This pilot forms a core implementation layer of the AI-enabled digital backbone flagship identified in the Apply AI Strategy and contributes to the Strategic Roadmap for Digitalisation and AI in Energy.

The project should implement and validate these capabilities through operational pilots in at least six Member States or Associated Countries (ensuring geographic variability and coverage), involving real infrastructure, energy operators and users. The pilot should run for a sufficient duration to demonstrate operational performance under real system conditions (e.g. seasonal variability, renewable generation variability and EV charging patterns).

The objective of the pilot is to demonstrate that AI-enabled digital platforms can enable real-time coordination of distributed energy resources and cross-border flexibility services improving grid utilisation, increasing renewable energy integration and reducing system costs and emissions. Proposals should:

1. Develop and pilot at scale next-generation AI-driven digital platforms, critical digital infrastructures to support seamless data exchange across the European energy system, while considering the cross-sector dimension where relevant (e.g. the mobility sector, buildings, etc.).
2. Execute pilot activities in at least 6 member states or associated countries, involving at least 6 energy actors (TSOs, DSOs, retailers, aggregators), at least 8 digital technology providers from AI, cloud, edge, IoT, at least 4 mobility actors (from EV manufacturers, EV fleet operators and charging operators), at least 20 energy communities, as well as research organisations, and public authorities.
3. Build up on previous and ongoing related projects and initiatives such as the MetaOS for the edge and the swarm project clusters, the Edge-IoT large scale pilots in energy, the Operational Digital Platforms in CEF and the AI-powered digital spine of the EU energy system.

¹⁰²

4. Leverage advanced AI approaches and architectures where relevant, including generative, agentic, and embedded, AI to deliver secure and resilient cross-border flexibility, smart-charging, smart grid services and other emerging digital services.
5. Implement a transversal approach involving integration of energy systems, AI, digital infrastructures, and user uptake.
6. Combine existing solutions from Horizon Europe clusters 4 and 5 and connect technological development with market adoption.
7. Ensure the use of open APIs, open interoperability standards and open-source-based components to foster technological sovereignty and avoid vendor lock-in.
8. Actively participate in the work of the BRIDGE¹⁰³ collaborative initiative.

Include preparatory and structuring activities to prepare large-scale deployments.

It is expected that one project will be funded and that it will take approximately 36 months to complete.

HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01-13: EU Frontier AI Initiative: Advanced Scaling Frameworks for High-Performance AI Models (RIA) - Apply AI

Call: Bridging actions 2027	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 15.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. 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 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: In order to achieve the expected outcomes, and safeguard the Union's strategic assets, interests, autonomy, and security, it is important to avoid a situation of technological dependency on a non-EU source, in a global context that requires the EU to take action to build on its strengths, and to

	carefully assess and address any strategic weaknesses, vulnerabilities and high-risk dependencies which put at risk the attainment of its ambitions. For this reason, participation is limited to legal entities established in Member States, Iceland and Norway and the following additional associated countries : Canada, Israel, Republic of Korea, New-Zeland, United Kingdom, Switzerland and Japan. In addition, entities established in third countries which may become associated to Horizon Europe during 2026 and 2027 may be eligible to participate in this topic if the third country is identified for this topic as an eligible country in the List of Participating Countries in Horizon Europe at the time of submission of the application¹⁰⁴. In any case, the association agreement to the Programme must apply by the time of the signature of the grant agreement. For the duly justified and exceptional reasons listed in the paragraph above, in order to guarantee the protection of the strategic interests of the Union and its Member States, entities established in an eligible country listed above, but which are directly or indirectly controlled by a non-eligible country or by a non-eligible country entity, may not participate in the action unless it can be demonstrated, by means of guarantees positively assessed by their eligible country of establishment, that their participation to the action would not negatively impact the Union's strategic assets, interests, autonomy, or security . Entities established in an eligible country, but which are directly or indirectly controlled by China or by a legal entity established in China cannot submit guarantees. 105
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: This topic aims to advance the scientific and technical foundations for the scaling of AI models, enhancing the performance of training and inference processes and

¹⁰⁴ See the [List of Participating Countries in Horizon Europe](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-auratom_en.pdf) available at https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-auratom_en.pdf.

¹⁰⁵ The guarantees shall in particular substantiate that, for the purpose of the action, measures are in place to ensure that: a) control over the applicant legal entity is not exercised in a manner that retrains or restricts its ability to carry out the action and to deliver results, that imposes restrictions concerning its infrastructure, facilities, assets, resources, intellectual property or know-how needed for the purpose of the action, or that undermines its capabilities and standards necessary to carry out the action; b) access by a non-eligible country or by a non-eligible country entity to sensitive information relating to the action is prevented; and the employees or other persons involved in the action have a national security clearance issued by an eligible country, where appropriate; c) ownership of the intellectual property arising from, and the results of, the action remain within the recipient during and after completion of the action, are not subject to control or restrictions by non-eligible countries or non-eligible country entity, and are not exported outside the eligible countries, nor is access to them from outside the eligible countries granted, without the approval of the eligible country in which the legal entity is established.

providing European AI labs with the methodologies required to compete at the global frontier. Project results are expected to contribute to some of the following outcomes:

1. Establishment of robust scaling laws and predictive frameworks that allow for the reliable estimation of model performance before large-scale compute investment.
2. Enhanced competitiveness of European advanced AI models through optimised dataset mixtures, refined architectures, and superior hyperparameter configurations.
3. Optimised development for frontier AI models, achieved via automated and scientifically grounded scaling methodologies.

Scope: To maintain a leading position in AI, Europe must master the methodologies required to scale AI models' performance, training and inference processes. Establishing a predictive methodology for AI model development ensures that limited computational resources are deployed with maximum efficiency, thereby bolstering the EU and AC's technological sovereignty.

While previous actions have focused on training High-Performance AI models, this topic addresses the research gap in the underlying theoretical basis, methodologies and tools for predictable scaling of AI models and inference. By providing the technical foundations for high-performance systems without the costs of unguided experimentation, this action complements training-centric efforts. In this light, proposals should deliver, as an outcome of the research, a toolset designed to support the scaling of AI models.

Potential research areas include, but are not limited to:

1. Automated Scaling Law Derivation: Research into scaling laws to predict performance across diverse modalities and tasks, moving beyond simple power laws.
2. Exploratory Architecture Search: Developing automated methods to discover and refine model architectures that maintain performance while scaling both in training and inference, including innovations in sparsity, memory efficiency, and long-context handling.
3. Dataset Mixture Optimisation: Research into the systematic selection, weighting, and sequencing of datasets. This includes developing tools for automated data quality assessment.
4. Advanced Hyperparameter Tuning and Stability: Developing methodologies for stable training at large scales, including automated tuning of optimisers and learning rate schedules that remain effective as models grow.

Proposals should ensure that the developed frameworks and scaling methodologies are compatible with diverse hardware architectures, demonstrating that scaling is studied across different systems to avoid optimisation for specific proprietary hardware.

The selected project should actively support Advanced AI labs and High-performance Computing Centres already engaged in the development of frontier AI, ensuring that methodological advances are immediately validated in high-stakes environments. Proposals should describe how these scaling methodologies would benefit the development of models adapted to the specific requirements of particular strategic sectors, such as Public Administration, Manufacturing, Energy, Healthcare, Cultural and Creative Industries, or Physical AI.

Part of the Frontier AI Initiative, this topic complements HORIZON-CL4-2027-04-DIGITAL-EMERGING-11 “EU Frontier AI Initiative: Developing frontier AI solutions that are safe and computationally efficient within Apply AI” by establishing the underlying methodologies required for the large-scale training and inference of High-Performance AI models. Proposals should, therefore, describe the link between their planned activities and the objectives of topic HORIZON-CL4-2027-04-DIGITAL-EMERGING-11.

All proposals are expected to incorporate mechanisms for assessing and demonstrating progress, including qualitative and quantitative KPIs, benchmarking, and progress monitoring. When possible, proposals should build on and reuse public results from relevant previous funded actions. Communicable results should be shared with the European R&D community through the AI-on-demand platform.

The project selected in this topic should link to the resources offered by the AI Factories and the Data Labs. Where relevant, links could be established to European companies developing frontier AI models to foster a pre-competitive exchange of expertise and explore ways to mobilise the wider developer community for the efficient reuse of results.

All proposals are expected to allocate tasks for cohesion activities with the European Partnership on AI, data, and robotics (ADRA) and the CSA HORIZON-CL4-2025-03-HUMAN-18: GenAI4EU central Hub.

Other actions - Bridging actions call

Grants to identified beneficiaries

1. Sustaining Genomic Annotation Excellence for European leadership

Expected Outcome: Results under this action are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- Ensure uninterrupted and open access to (non-personal) genomic data, in particular for users based in the EU and in Associated Countries to Horizon Europe.
- Support the uptake of research-driven translational applications that underpin EU health innovation and competitiveness by providing high-quality data. Specific opportunities include enabling pre-clinical genetic research, and cross-sectoral applications in bioeconomy, biotechnology and AI-based tools.

- Strengthen strategic data sovereignty in the EU Member States and Associated Countries by ensuring mid-and long-term sustainability of this critical database. This is supported by expanding training and capacity building to create a more distributed knowledge base, fostering resilience through coordinated funding and collaboration.

The action is expected to contribute to the sustainable coordination and operation of GENCODE, ensuring its position as a shared European resource at the forefront of genomic annotations for human and mouse genomes, integral to the European as well as the global scientific community.

Scope: GENCODE provides comprehensive reference annotations for human and mouse genomes, which are critical for researchers studying gene function and regulation - key aspects in the life sciences and health fields. This enables researchers to accurately interpret genetic information, leading to advances in personalised medicine and drug development.

As a Europe-led database, GENCODE serves as a vital component for maintaining strategic data sovereignty amidst evolving global data paradigms. Recent developments have underscored the need for a collective approach by EU Member States and Associated Countries to sustain and govern GENCODE, including through the diversification of funding sources to ensure its long-term stability.

In this context, the proposal should address:

- Coordination of the maintenance and development of this genomic database established in Europe.
- Design and delivery of training programmes for technical staff, researchers and other types of (commercial) users (e.g. through ELIXIR nodes and other relevant European infrastructures).
- Deploy and refine AI models for data curation and training by automating the selection, cleaning, and annotation of high-quality data to enhance model performance and prepare it for testing and validation within AI systems.
- Prepare for and implement interfaces with European data spaces and initiatives such as the European Health Data Space (EHDS)¹⁰⁶, the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC)¹⁰⁷ and the 1+Million Genomes Initiative¹⁰⁸.
- Develop a business/sustainability plan to mobilise funds from EU Member States, Associated Countries and global public and private stakeholders, ensuring the financial sustainability of the database and supporting the development of future governance models.

¹⁰⁶ https://health.ec.europa.eu/ehealth-digital-health-and-care/european-health-data-space-regulation-ehds_en

¹⁰⁷ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/open-science/european-open-science-cloud-eosc_en

¹⁰⁸ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/1-million-genomes>

The project should have an indicative duration of up to seven years.

The European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) in Heidelberg, Germany, and the Centre for Genomic Regulation (CRG) in Barcelona, Spain, are the only organisations which can undertake the proposed work. These entities possess the exceptional expertise and resources needed across various disciplines, including molecular biology, genome annotation, and bioinformatics to implement this action. EMBL's European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI) is a founding partner and core operator of GENCODE. GENCODE is produced through tightly coupled collaborations between EMBL-EBI and key data generation partners, with EMBL-EBI acting as the coordinating hub for receiving the data generated from these partners. Together, EMBL and CRG, are the main employers of GENCODE's specialised workforce and ensure operational continuity, leveraging their extensive experience to drive the project's objectives forward, especially servicing users based in the EU and Associated Countries. Their status as European organisations underscores the project's commitment to regional excellence and collaboration in genomic research. Currently, no other entities possess the combination of technical expertise, infrastructure, and strategic insight needed to achieve the full potential of the proposed initiative.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposals according to Article 198(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 24(3)(b) of the Horizon Europe Regulation to the legal entities identified below.

Award criteria:

The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply: The thresholds for each criterion will be 4 (Excellence), 4 (Impact) and 4 (Implementation). The cumulative threshold will be 12.

Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements:

The funding rate will be 100%.

Legal entities:

CRG - Centre for Genomic Regulation, Barcelona, Spain

EMBL - European Molecular Biology Laboratory, Meyerhofstrasse 1, 69117, Heidelberg, Germany

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 198(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: First Semester of 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 19.00 million from the 2027 budget

2. Sustaining Protein Sequence Database Excellence for European leadership

Expected Outcome: Results under this action are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- Ensure uninterrupted and open access to protein sequence data, in particular for users based in the EU and in Associated Countries to Horizon Europe.
- Support the uptake of research-driven translational applications that underpin EU health innovation and competitiveness by providing access to high-quality data. Specific opportunities include enabling drug discovery and development through AI-powered protein modelling, as well as cross-sectoral applications in biotechnology and other AI-based tools.
- Strengthen strategic data sovereignty in the EU Member States and Associated Countries by ensuring mid-and long-term sustainability of this critical database. This is supported and further building European resilience. This is supported by expanding training and capacity building to create a more distributed knowledge base, fostering resilience through coordinated funding and collaboration.

The action is expected to contribute to the sustainable coordination and operation of UniProt, ensuring its position as a shared European resource at the forefront of scientific research, thereby supporting and advancing health research and innovation globally.

Scope: UniProt is a comprehensive database of protein sequences, which are critical for researchers studying molecular biology, genomics, and therapeutic development. It also provides foundational data for AI-driven modelling approaches that support research and innovation across the life sciences. By enabling reliable interpretation of protein function, it contributes to progress in areas such as biomedical research and personalised medicine.

As a Europe-led database, UniProt serves as a vital component in maintaining strategic data sovereignty amidst evolving global data paradigms. Recent developments have underscored the need for a collective approach by EU Member States and Associated Countries to sustain and govern UniProt, including through the diversification of funding sources to ensure its long-term stability.

In this context, the proposal should address:

- Coordination of the maintenance and development of the protein sequence database established in Europe, to ensure continuous access, with consideration given to engaging EU Member State - based partners to enhance data curation and annotation activities.

- Design and delivery of training programmes for technical staff, researchers and other types of (commercial) users (e.g. through ELIXIR nodes and other relevant European infrastructures).
- Deploy and refine AI models for data curation and training by automating the selection, cleaning, and annotation of high-quality data to enhance model performance and prepare it for testing and validation within AI systems.
- Prepare for and implement interfaces with European data spaces and initiatives, such as the European Health Data Space (EHDS)¹⁰⁹, the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC)¹¹⁰ and the 1+Million Genomes Initiative¹¹¹.
- Develop a business/sustainability plan to mobilise funds from EU Member States, Associated Countries and global public and private stakeholders, ensuring the sound governance and financial sustainability of Uniprot and supporting the development of future governance models.

The project should have an indicative duration of up to seven years.

The European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) in Heidelberg, Germany, and the Swiss Bioinformatics Institute (SIB) in Switzerland are the only organisations which can undertake the proposed work. These entities possess the exceptional expertise and resources needed across various disciplines, including in molecular biology, bioinformatics and AI. EMBL's European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI) is a founding partner and core operator of UniProt, delivering the majority of the critical technical integration and data management workflows. UniProt workflows are deeply integrated in the wider data infrastructure at EMBL-EBI, working with other data resources to ensure efficient continuity from genes to proteins to structures. Together, EMBL and SIB, are the main employers of UniProt's specialised workforce and ensure operational continuity, leveraging their extensive experience to drive the project's objectives forward, especially servicing users based in the EU and Associated Countries. Their status as European organisations underscores the project's commitment to regional excellence and collaboration in genomic research. Currently, no other entities possess the combination of technical expertise, infrastructure, and strategic insight needed to achieve the full potential of the proposed initiative.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposals according to Article 198(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 24(3)(b) of the Horizon Europe Regulation to the legal entities identified below.

Award criteria:

¹⁰⁹ https://health.ec.europa.eu/ehealth-digital-health-and-care/european-health-data-space-regulation-ehds_en

¹¹⁰ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/open-science/european-open-science-cloud-eosc_en

¹¹¹ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/1-million-genomes>

The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply: The thresholds for each criterion will be 4 (Excellence), 4 (Impact) and 4 (Implementation). The cumulative threshold will be 12.

Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements:

The funding rate will be 100%.

Legal entities:

SIB - Swiss Bioinformatics Institute, Switzerland

EMBL - European Molecular Biology Laboratory, Meyerhofstrasse 1, 69117, Heidelberg, Germany

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 198(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: First Semester of 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 30.00 million from the 2027 budget

3. Strengthening the long-term sustainability of Europe PMC

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

- Europe PMC becomes a sustainable, uninterrupted and up-to date open science resource for life sciences and biomedical research literature in Europe by safeguarding historical data, continuously enriching the repository with new data and metadata, and ensuring continuous collaboration with international partners.
- Europe PMC ensures the continuous ingestion of new data from publishers, sharing load with PubMed Central and maintains open access policies to promote scientific breakthroughs and innovation.
- Established communication pathways and partnerships with publishers enabling systematic integration of new full text and abstract publications.
- Enhanced communication pathways with research funders in view of increasing the visibility and strengthening the role of Europe PMC in open access requirements.

- The consistent curation of new content data to significantly enhance user accessibility and engagement, ensuring the usability of specialised tools and alignment with AI-driven discovery and analysis standards.
- Europe PMC continues its collaboration with PubMed Central by mirroring and synchronising new data, historical data and metadata, building the capability to continuously exchange content between these independent partners, thus ensuring global resilience and sustainability of research literature.
- Reinforced links, integration, interoperability and collaboration pathways of Europe PMC with relevant research and scholarly communication infrastructures of pan-European relevance, as well as with common European data spaces such as the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC)¹¹² and the European Health Data Space (EHDS)¹¹³.
- The open science resource ensures connection of the research publications with external data specific resources. By linking publications and their underpinning data with external databases hosted by pan-European research infrastructures, researchers will benefit from enhanced access, reproducibility and interconnected data resources. Furthermore, linking publications to innovative valorisation outputs, where relevant, will ensure users can advance and integrate innovation in their research outputs.

Scope: The proposal should address:

- Further development of the current technical capabilities of the repository to allow ingestion of new content, such as full text and abstract articles directly from publishers, including secure deposition pipelines and version control processes.
- Development and maintenance of processes that automatically validate incoming content according to international standards, including important processes to handle corrections, curation, cross links to other infrastructures, and report-back mechanisms for depositing publishers.
- Active engagement with publishers and other relevant content providers, negotiations and formalisation of legal agreements following global standards, onboarding content providers and providing them with help desk support.
- Regular maintenance of the new content data and metadata, facilitating user access, alignment with AI- driven discovery and analysis standards and ensuring sustainability of the new literature data.
- Continuous collaboration, mirroring and cooperation on data exchange with PubMed Central and further integration into European federated data ecosystem initiatives, such as EOSC.

¹¹² https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/open-science/european-open-science-cloud-eosc_en

¹¹³ https://health.ec.europa.eu/ehealth-digital-health-and-care/european-health-data-space-regulation-ehds_en

- Connecting research articles to other research resources, in particular from data used in publications to the corresponding databases hosted by pan-European research infrastructures, as well as linking publications to corresponding innovative valorisation outputs.

The Commission considers that a duration of at least 48 months for this action would be appropriate.

The European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), with its distinctive pan-European, intergovernmental model, is uniquely positioned to undertake the proposed work, since it plays a significant role in Europe PMC, particularly through the European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI).

EMBL-EBI has been managing and developing Europe PMC for the past 20 years, providing trusted infrastructure, standards, governance and collaborative approach, as well as ensuring it meets the needs of researchers by integrating literature with core life sciences data resources, and linking publications with related information such as sequences, protein structures, and pathways.

The action is expected to build upon results generated under the ERC Work Programme 2025¹¹⁴ action “Support to the Europe PMC Initiative” and create links with relevant initiatives, such as the Global Biodata Coalition (GBC)¹¹⁵, to ensure sustainability of funding.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposals according to Article 198(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 24(3)(b) of the Horizon Europe Regulation to the legal entity identified below.

Award criteria:

The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply: The thresholds for each criterion will be 4 (Excellence), 4 (Impact) and 4 (Implementation). The cumulative threshold will be 12.

Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements:

The funding rate will be 100%.

Legal entities:

EMBL - European Molecular Biology Laboratory, Meyerhofstrasse 1, 69117, Heidelberg, Germany

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

¹¹⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2025/wp_horizon-erc-2025_en.pdf

¹¹⁵ <https://globalbiodata.org>

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 198(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: First Semester of 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 8.00 million from the 2027 budget

Special features for Research Infrastructures in Bridging Actions

Specific Features For Research Infrastructures

This section provides further conditions and requirements on access provision that applicants must comply with, for different topics under the INFRASERV destination of the Research Infrastructures work programme. Compliance with these provisions will also be taken into account during evaluation. These provisions may also apply to topics with an access component under other destinations of this Work Programme, with indication, where relevant, of any deviation from these specific features.

Trans-national and/or virtual access¹¹⁶ activities.

Trans-national access activities

Trans-national access provision must be implemented as follows:

Trans-national access to infrastructure services offered under the grant is provided 'free of charge' to selected researchers or research teams (user-groups) including from industry. Access activities should be implemented in a coordinated way so as to improve the overall service provision to the research community. Access may be made available to external users, either **in person** ('hands-on'), when the user visits the infrastructure to make use of it, or through the provision to the user of **remote** scientific services, such as the provision of reference materials or samples, the remote access to a high-performance computing facility, the performance of sample analysis or sample deposition.

The research infrastructures must publicise widely the access offered under the grant agreement to ensure that researchers who might wish to have access to the infrastructures are made aware of the possibilities open to them. They must open specific calls to invite researchers to apply for access. The research infrastructures must promote equal opportunities in advertising the access and take into account gender issues when defining the support provided to visitors. They must maintain appropriate documentation to support and justify the amount of access reported. This documentation must include records of the names, nationalities, and home institutions of the users within the research teams, as well as the

¹¹⁶ See Article 18 and Annex 5 of Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement

nature and quantity of access provided to them. To this extent, a unit of access to each infrastructure service/installation¹¹⁷ needs to be identified and precisely defined in the proposal.

The selection of researchers or research teams must be carried out through an independent peer-review evaluation of the research projects (user projects) they wish to carry out at the infrastructure. The research team, or its majority, must work in countries other than the country(ies) where the infrastructure is located (when the infrastructure is composed of several research facilities, operated by different legal entities, this condition must apply to each facility) except when access is provided by an International organisation, the Joint Research Centre (JRC), an ERIC or similar legal entities with international membership. User teams where all or the majority of users work in non-associated third countries can be supported as long as the cumulative access provided to them is below 20% of the total amount of units of access provided under the grant. In exceptional and well justified cases, a higher percentage of access to non-associated third-country user teams can be set out in the proposal.

Only user groups that are allowed to disseminate the results they have generated under the action may be eligible for access (unless the users are working for SMEs).

The duration of stay at a research infrastructure must normally be limited to three months, unless otherwise provided for in the proposal.

The EU financial support to trans-national access will cover the *access costs*¹¹⁸ incurred by the access provider in providing access to the selected researchers, as well as the travel and subsistence costs incurred in supporting visits to the infrastructure of these researchers.

The *access costs* charged to the grant will not include capital investments (including depreciation costs of equipment, infrastructure or other assets) nor internally invoiced goods and services, unless otherwise specified in the work programme, while they may cover the running costs of the infrastructure as well as the cost for the logistical, technological and scientific support for users' access. This includes costs for ad-hoc training users need to use the infrastructure and for preparatory and closing activities that may be necessary to carry out users' work on the infrastructure.

Virtual access activities

Virtual access provision must be implemented as follows:

¹¹⁷ "Installation" means a part or a service of a research infrastructure that can be used independently from the rest. A research infrastructure consists of one or more installations.

¹¹⁸ Access costs will be supported through the reimbursement of the eligible costs specifically incurred by a research infrastructure for providing access to the research teams selected for support under the project, or on the basis of unit costs calculated according to the methodology indicated in the [Decision](#) of 5 May 2022, authorising the use of unit costs for the costs of providing trans-national and virtual access in Research Infrastructures actions under the Horizon Europe Programme. In the latter case the access costs will be calculated multiplying the unit cost by the quantity of access provided under the grant. The cost of the unit of access to the infrastructure, i.e. the unit cost, must then be indicated in the proposal. A combination of the two methods mentioned above will also be possible.

Virtual access to research infrastructure is provided through communication networks to users complying with the RI's access policy, without selecting them. Examples of virtual access activities are provision of access to databases available via Internet, or data deposition services.

The research infrastructures must publicise widely the access offered under the grant agreement to ensure that researchers who might wish to have access to the infrastructures are made aware of the possibilities open to them.

The EU financial support to virtual access will cover the *access costs*¹¹⁹ incurred by the infrastructure in providing access under the project, including the technological and scientific support researchers need to effectively use the services. Capital investments (including depreciation costs of equipment, infrastructure or other assets) as well as internally invoiced goods and services will not be eligible costs unless otherwise specified under the specific call or topic, in which case only the portion used to provide virtual access under the project can be eligible. A unit of access to each research infrastructure service must be identified and precisely defined in the proposal. The provision of virtual access during the project lifetime will be measured through the units of access defined in the grant agreement and must be periodically assessed by an external board. Eligibility criteria (e.g. affiliation to a research or academic institution) for users can be defined in the proposal, to take into account the access policies of the different RIs.

¹¹⁹ Access costs will be supported through the reimbursement of the eligible actual costs specifically incurred by a research infrastructure for providing virtual access to identified users under the project, or on the basis of unit costs calculated according to the methodology indicated in the [Decision](#) of 5 May 2022, authorising the use of unit costs for the costs of providing trans-national and virtual access in Research Infrastructures actions under the Horizon Europe Programme. In the latter case, the access costs will be calculated multiplying the unit cost by the quantity of access provided under the grant. The cost of the unit of access to the research infrastructure, i.e. the unit cost, must then be indicated in the proposal. A combination of the two methods mentioned above will also be possible.

Horizontal call - Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society

Acknowledging that humans are part of and fully dependent on nature, this call supports the EU Commission priorities ‘Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature’ and ‘A new plan for Europe’s sustainable prosperity and competitiveness’.

The call pursues the objective of increasing the biodiversity spending in Horizon Europe Work Programme 2026-2027 by supporting additional R&I activities dedicated to biodiversity across pillar II of Horizon Europe.

R&I activities are expected to develop knowledge and innovation supporting the objectives of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030¹²⁰ and the EU vision for 2050 outlined in the 8th environment action programme¹²¹. They will contribute to mainstream biodiversity action in the Union’s policies. Project results will inform deliberations on the EU biodiversity policy after 2030.

IPBES, the Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, released its “business and biodiversity assessment”¹²² on 9 February 2026, demonstrating that the current conditions in which businesses operate are largely not compatible with achieving a just and sustainable future, perpetuating systemic risks. Business as usual is driving nature’s decline, hence a transformative change is needed.

Protecting and restoring nature is the basis to build up Europe’s resilience, economic risk reduction and strategic autonomy, preventing natural disasters and reducing risks to food security. The call addresses the need for sustained effort to maintain and restore healthy ecosystems with activities to support the implementation of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation¹²³, using living labs¹²⁴ as open innovation ecosystems designed for real-world co-creation, involving researchers, innovators, companies, end-users including farmers and foresters, citizens, civil society and public authorities. Living labs have not been widely used yet for biodiversity and nature restoration while they can help and develop practices and systems achieving the best outcomes towards nature restoration objectives, and demonstrate their effectiveness for their wider uptake by primary producers including farmers, foresters, fishers and aquaculture operators. This is expected to align with the Vision for Agriculture and Food¹²⁵, the Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture towards 2040¹²⁶, as well as with the environmental objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy¹²⁷ and the Strategy for a Competitive and Sustainable EU Bioeconomy¹²⁸. Particular attention is put on implementation bottlenecks, long-term commitment, financing issues¹²⁹, and in-situ conservation of genetic

¹²⁰ [Biodiversity strategy for 2030 - European Commission](#)

¹²¹ [Environment Action Programme \(EAP\) to 2030 - Environment](#)

¹²² [Media Release: IPBES Business and Biodiversity Assessment | IPBES secretariat:](#)

¹²³ [Regulation - EU - 2024/1991 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

¹²⁴ please see: [Living Labs - ENoLL](#) and [GILL Hub - The GILL Hub](#)

¹²⁵ [Vision for Agriculture and Food - European Commission](#)

¹²⁶ [EUR-Lex - 52025DC0075 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

¹²⁷ [Key policy objectives of the CAP 2023-27 - European Commission](#)

¹²⁸ [Bioeconomy Strategy - Environment - European Commission](#)

¹²⁹ [EUR-Lex - 52025DC0374 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

resources. The call aims to contribute to the objectives of the European Water Resilience Strategy¹³⁰, the EU Soil Strategy and the Soil Monitoring Law¹³¹, the EU Forest Strategy¹³², the EU Climate Adaptation Strategy, the EU Zero Pollution Action Plan, the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive¹³³, the European Ocean Pact¹³⁴ and the communication on integrated wildfire risk management¹³⁵, with activities on the development of free-flowing rivers and resilience to forest fires. The call addresses the protection of ecosystems and species with innovation to support the implementation of the EU regulation on invasive alien species¹³⁶ and the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations¹³⁷ as well as the EU action plan against wildlife trafficking¹³⁸. The call supports approaches that contribute to protect and restore the marine, freshwater, terrestrial ecosystems in the EU's outermost regions given their exceptionally high biodiversity value, as stated in the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 and in line with the EU strategy for outermost regions¹³⁹.

This call supports the digital industry and sectors covered by the Clean Industrial Deal¹⁴⁰ in better assessing their dependencies, benefits and direct and indirect impacts on biodiversity. This should directly support the relevant industries to comply with their environmental obligations and accelerate transformative change¹⁴¹ for biodiversity in these sectors.

This call mobilises social sciences and humanities that are fundamental to successfully leverage action in a transdisciplinary approach for reaching a nature-positive society, involving societal values and behaviours. It promotes co-creation processes enabling the joint identification of problems, the co-design of solutions and the co-implementation of actions, thereby strengthening societal relevance, policy uptake, economic viability and long-term impact. This call should aim at identifying implementation bottlenecks, understanding regulatory compliance behaviour, analysing political feasibility or designing participatory governance models, but also validate, operationalize and facilitate the uptake of innovative tools, services and implementation approaches in real-world conditions. Particular attention should be paid to cost-effectiveness, replicability, scalability and long-term deployment potential, including through the active involvement of SMEs, technology providers and service operators. This call addresses knowledge gaps identified in various IPBES

¹³⁰ [Water resilience strategy - European Commission](#)

¹³¹ [Directive - EU - 2025/2360 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

¹³² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52021DC0572>

¹³³ [Directive - 2008/56 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

¹³⁴ [The European Ocean Pact - European Commission](#)

¹³⁵ [Communication on Integrated Wildfire Risk Management](#)

¹³⁶ [Invasive alien species - Environment - European Commission](#)

¹³⁷ [Wildlife trade - Environment - European Commission](#)

¹³⁸ [ENV - Revised EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking, adopted on 11 November 2022](#)

¹³⁹ COM(2022) Putting people first, securing sustainable and inclusive growth, unlocking the potential of the EU's outermost regions

¹⁴⁰ [Clean Industrial Deal - European Commission](#)

¹⁴¹ Transformative change involves profound systemic shifts in views (ways of seeing, thinking, and knowing), structures (ways of organising, regulating, and governing), and practices (ways of doing, behaving, and relating). Achieving such change requires the collective efforts of governments, businesses, civil society, and individuals at local, national, and global levels.

assessments, on direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss¹⁴² that in turn are defined by societal values and behaviours. Such systemic approach to lead on transformative change includes identifying knowledge gaps on technologies and substances of emerging concern (such as PFAS), as well as options to tackle their impact on biodiversity and human health.

This call has a strong focus on data collection, mobilisation and management and advantage should be taken of the use of advanced digital technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI) where appropriate. The call notably supports the global ocean observation system (GOOS) and data mobilisation to support policies involved in the One Health approach. It is expected to operationalise monitoring methods based on new technologies (such as e-DNA or images and sounds identification using AI) in existing biodiversity monitoring frameworks with cost-effectiveness objectives. International cooperation is encouraged under this call, in line with the global approach on R&I, contributing to EU international biodiversity commitments, notably those taken under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)¹⁴³, which defines targets for the medium term (2030) and goals for the long term (2050). This call will also support the Paris Agreement¹⁴⁴, the Sustainable Development Goals¹⁴⁵, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora¹⁴⁶ and the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement¹⁴⁷. Support to processes of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)¹⁴⁸ will be continued.

Complementarities and synergies will be ensured with the activities supported by relevant co-funded partnerships, notably Biodiversa+¹⁴⁹, and LIFE¹⁵⁰ projects, particularly on nature restoration and protection. This call will ensure resources for close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) and its Science Service.

Expected impact: Proposals submitted under this call should set out a credible pathway contributing to “**putting biodiversity on a path to recovery, and protecting and restoring ecosystems and their services**”, and more specifically to one or more of the following **expected impacts**:

- the biodiversity crisis and its consequences (including on the EU competitiveness) are better understood including with improved knowledge on direct and indirect drivers¹⁵¹, (PFAS inter alia). as well as on their combined effect on biodiversity loss, and their underlying societal values including genetic diversity level; the implementation of the

¹⁴² Indirect drivers of biodiversity loss are understood to mean here: production and consumption patterns, human population dynamics and trends (including their footprints), trade, technological innovations, and local to global governance (including financing).

¹⁴³ [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#)

¹⁴⁴ [The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC](#)

¹⁴⁵ [THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development](#)

¹⁴⁶ <https://cites.org>

¹⁴⁷ [Global ocean conservation treaty](#)

¹⁴⁸ [IPBES Home page | IPBES secretariat](#)

¹⁴⁹ [Biodiversa +](#)

¹⁵⁰ [LIFE - European Commission](#)

¹⁵¹ land-use change, climate change, pollution, natural resource use and exploitation, and invasive species according to IPBES

EU biodiversity policy is eased with advanced methods and tools; new options for policy makers are developed and further progress is made in mainstreaming biodiversity in EU policies;

- stakeholders have at their disposal cost-effective and operational monitoring methods for policy implementation and the global ocean observation system is improved to support marine biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management;
- stakeholders implementing nature restoration activities, including farmers, foresters, and fishers, as well as policymakers, public administrations, NGOs and citizens benefit from new approaches and solutions for nature restoration, improving ecosystem health and connectivity, that also address implementation bottlenecks, financing aspects and disaster risk-resilience;
- more effective controls of wildlife trafficking and invasive alien species are possible with new technologies, leading to increased EU biodiversity law enforcement and better protected ecosystems;
- technological and non-technological innovations, knowledge and tools are available to support private actors to better understand, anticipate and address their direct, indirect and cumulative impact on biodiversity while considering potential trade-offs and conflicting aims in climate action and providing options for nature-positive trajectories, making them more sustainable and resilient in particular for clean and digital industries;
- private actors are better equipped to comply with their legal obligations including their due diligence reporting obligations and to apply a systemic approach when analysing their activities on biodiversity; transformative change is accelerated with insights from the behavioural science;
- ecosystem health is better understood through strengthened observing systems, relevant data, analytical frameworks and through the One Health approach that in turn helps to integrate biodiversity considerations into health policies in Europe, supported by interoperable European data spaces and AI-enabled infrastructures;
- progress towards international commitments on biodiversity is made.

Specific conditions for multi-actor projects

Proposals submitted for topics including the eligibility condition to follow the multi-actor approach must meet all of the requirements below. The multi-actor approach is a form of interactive, transdisciplinary and responsible R&I that aims to make the R&I process more co-creative and inclusive, and thereby its outcomes are more co-owned, reliable, demand-driven and relevant to society. It also aims to extensively share these outcomes and to widely use them in practice. This entails more than just widely disseminating the projects' results or listening to the views of a board of stakeholders. A multi-actor project ensures the genuine and sufficient involvement of a targeted array of actors in co-creation, which serves the objectives of the project proposal.

These actors include: i) researchers, ii) farmers / farmers' groups and associations, iii) foresters / foresters' groups and associations, iv) aquaculture producers, v) fishers / fishers' groups and associations, vi) advisors, vii) food and bioeconomy businesses, viii) other businesses, ix) consumer associations, x) local communities, xi) citizens, xii) civil society organisations including NGOs and social economy actors, and xiii) government representatives. The selection of key actors that are relevant to participate depends on the objective(s) of the proposal that respond(s) to the needs of the (end-)users of the project results. The key actors are essentially the (end-)users¹⁵² of the project results who are backed up by any other useful intermediaries and actors who can contribute with further expertise and innovative ideas relevant to the topic's objectives, and support communication and dissemination. The genuine and sufficient involvement of such actors should take place over the whole course of the project: from participation in the development of the project idea, planning and experiments to implementation, communication and dissemination of results and to a possible demonstration phase.

Building blocks for the project proposal are expected to come from science as well as from practice: it is a 'co-creation' process. (End-)users are involved in the project activities not as a study-object, but to use their practical and local knowledge and/or entrepreneurial skills to develop solutions and to create 'co-ownership' of results for (end-)users. This should speed and scale up the acceptability and uptake of new ideas, approaches and solutions developed in the project in practice.

Therefore, a multi-actor project proposal must meet the following requirements:

- it must demonstrate how the description of the project concept, including the proposed objectives, activities and planning, are targeting the needs/challenges/opportunities for the (end-)users of the project results;
- it must demonstrate how the composition of the consortium fits into the project concept and reflects a balanced choice of relevant actors who have complementary types of knowledge (scientific, practical, etc.) and skills to achieve the project objective, and to ensure that project results are ready for practice and broadly implemented;
- it must demonstrate how the project intends to use existing practices and tacit knowledge. This should be illustrated in the proposal methodology with a sufficient number of high-quality knowledge exchange activities outlining the precise and active roles of the different, relevant non-scientific actors in the co-creation and sharing of R&I contents. The cross-fertilisation of skills, experiences, competencies and ideas between actors should generate innovative findings and solutions that are more likely to be widely applied in practice;
- it must demonstrate how the project will facilitate the multi-actor engagement process by making use of the most appropriate methods and expertise and what mechanisms the

¹⁵² An "(end-)user" of project result is a person who is him/herself using the project results in practice.

project will set up to maintain engagement of different, relevant actors, in particular non-scientific actors, during the whole project lifecycle;

- it must demonstrate the project's added-value for the (end-)users: how it will complement and advance state-of-the-art, including existing knowledge and best practices;
- it must demonstrate how the project will result in practical and ready to use knowledge, solutions, approaches, tools, products, processes or services that are easily understandable and accessible for (end-)users;
- it must demonstrate how these results ready for practice will be widely and effectively disseminated, and feed into the existing dissemination channels most consulted and trusted by the (end-)users of the project results in countries and regions.

In addition, to ensure Europe-wide communication and dissemination, in particular agriculture, forestry and rural development, the new knowledge and innovation generated by the multi-actor projects must be summarised in an appropriate number of 'practice abstracts' in the common EIP-AGRI format for Horizon¹⁵³. The 'practice abstracts' stemming from Horizon Europe projects should be uploaded to the EIP-AGRI project database using a dedicated online form accessible via the EU CAP Network website¹⁵⁴. Where appropriate, it is strongly recommended to involve interactive innovation groups such as the EIP-AGRI operational groups funded under the CAP.

For areas falling outside the remit of EIP-AGRI and CAP specific objectives, other similarly effective solutions ensuring dissemination at European level should be sought.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-NATURE-2027-01-01: Understanding the nature and the extent of the effects of PFAS on biodiversity and ecosystem services

Call: Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.70 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 11.45 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

¹⁵³ The EIP common format for "practice abstracts" is available at the following link: [Practice abstracts | EU CAP Network](#)).

¹⁵⁴ [Practice abstracts | EU CAP Network](#).

<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁵⁵.
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Expected Outcome: Proposals are expected to contribute to **all** the following expected outcomes:

- the mechanistic understanding of PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) effects on biodiversity, on ecosystems and on ecosystem services is improved and evaluations of their extent are available;
- research needs to close knowledge gaps and to address issues on biodiversity and ecosystem services are better identified;
- the new knowledge can be integrated by policymakers in their decisions related to biodiversity protection and restoration, environmental protection and protection of human health as well as in socio-economic cost-benefit analysis for policy measures on PFAS.

Scope: PFAS pollution significantly impacts human health and the environment. Addressing PFAS is notably a flagship action under the Water Resilience Strategy¹⁵⁶. There is growing evidence on impacts on biodiversity above and below ground and water, but more evidence is needed to substantiate the effects on different species, populations and entire ecosystems, and their extent. A European Commission study published on 29 January 2026¹⁵⁷ revealed significant knowledge gaps on the effects of PFAS on biodiversity. In particular, the study underlined the difficulties to estimate and monetise ecosystem services loss because of PFAS, due to a lack of data on ecosystem-level effects.

Proposals should:

- conduct field-based studies, possibly in combination with controlled studies, to better understand the effects of PFAS and their breakdown products on species, populations and on ecosystems and their long-term ecological effects;

¹⁵⁵ This [decision](#) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

¹⁵⁶ [Water resilience strategy - European Commission](#)

¹⁵⁷ [New study confirms huge and growing costs of PFAS pollution - Environment](#)

- evaluate the nature and the temporal and spatial scale of the effects, including multi-generational effects both on key species and on entire ecosystems;
- explore and apply robust and, where possible, comparable methods to assess the impacts of PFAS on ecosystem services including practical approaches for biophysical and, where relevant, economic valuation that can support policy and decision-making;
- prioritise and justify the PFAS substances or groups of substances (e.g. short versus long chain ones; fluoropolymers; F-gases; ultrashort chain PFAS such as trifluoroacetic acids, etc.) to be addressed, taking into account their occurrence in European ecosystems, relevance for biodiversity impacts and policy relevance, as well as the environmental media through which the pollution takes place (soil, waterbodies, rain, seafoam, polar areas, ocean, air, e.g.);
- take into account bioaccumulation and biomagnification including across the trophic chain, co-exposure of multiple PFAS substances as part of the combination of other toxic substances found in-situ, long term and chronic exposure over prolonged periods of time and uncontrolled environmental variables which may either mitigate or exacerbate the effects of PFAS;
- focus on tissue-specific accumulation and distribution patterns of PFAS when assessing their bioaccumulation and toxicological effects; consider organisms that have received less attention until now¹⁵⁸, for instance apex predators, wild plants including aquatic plants, soil organisms, plankton or low trophic species, and habitats that are fragile and/or endangered but also key cornerstones in functional ecology. Also for plant species that can take up very high amounts of PFAS, such as those used for phytoremediation (for example reed and hemp), it should be investigated whether they are experiencing significantly more negative effects due to these higher PFAS concentrations in their tissue. It is up to the applicant to justify the chosen biodiversity aspect and its PFAS-related relevance. Emphasis on regional focus areas could be considered since high PFAS contamination is often highly localised;
- estimate costs resulting from the loss of ecosystem services due to PFAS pollution;
- explore approaches such as ecosurveillance to monitor ecosystem health, building on effective approaches already in place where available and considering diffuse and point sources of pollution. The identification of indicator species that can be used to monitor ecosystems damaged by PFAS contamination and their recovery after remediation should be sought;
- identify remaining critical knowledge gaps, for which more targeted research will be needed;

¹⁵⁸ Proposals should build on and complement on-going research activities notably under the co-funded partnership [Partnership for the Assessment of Risks from Chemicals | Parc](#) and the Horizon project [TerraChem](#)

- suggest ways for policy makers to integrate the new knowledge in decisions and possible solutions regarding nature protection and restoration, the protection of the environment in general and the protection of human health.

This topic is expected to support the objectives of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, the EU Soil Strategy for 2030, the EU Water Resilience Strategy and the EU zero pollution action plan.

This topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines and the involvement of SSH experts, institutions as well as the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise, in particular to support the valuation of ecosystem services, the policy uptake of project results, and the development of decision-relevant approaches under uncertainty, in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities.

Concrete efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the context of the funded projects is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable), particularly for real-time data feeds, exploring workflows that can provide “FAIR-by-design” data, i.e., data that is FAIR from its generation. Possibilities offered by the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) to store and give access to research data should be considered.

International cooperation is encouraged.

In order to increase synergies and the impact of the projects, all proposals selected for funding should form a cluster and are expected to participate in common networking and joint activities, including with projects from other calls where deemed appropriate. These activities should be included in a dedicated work package, having sufficient budget allocated to it. These activities may include:

- a common dissemination and communication strategy;
- common Data Management Strategy and Common Policy Strategy (including joint policy briefs);
- thematic workshops/trainings/working groups on issues of common interest (e.g. data management and exchange);
- close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD)¹⁵⁹ and its Science Service, including participating in answering science to policy requests.

HORIZON-NATURE-2027-01-02: Better understanding, anticipating and addressing the biodiversity benefits and impacts of the clean and digital industries

Call: Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society
Specific conditions

¹⁵⁹ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity-knowledge-centre_en

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 18.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁶⁰.

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

- society, end-users, industry and decision makers better understand, anticipate and address biodiversity impacts of Europe’s reindustrialisation and decarbonisation across the value chain, from the demand-side and the design and operational phase to the end-of-life and waste phases, thus preserving biodiversity and ecosystem services by choosing least-harm transition options;
- society, end-users, industry and decision makers understand the benefits and impacts on biodiversity of societal, political, economic and technological choices, taking into account the direct, indirect and cumulative, and spatial and temporal dimensions, thus avoiding burden-shifting across ecosystems, regions and value chains;
- clean and digital industries are more resilient and provided with solutions to mitigate their impacts on terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems and work towards a nature-positive economy, in line the EU Taxonomy and the Do No Significant Harm principle.

Scope: One of the EU’s biggest priorities is to achieve the sovereign clean transition and digital transition. The Clean Industrial Deal is Europe’s plan to improve competitiveness and reduce carbon emissions through circularity, focusing on energy-intensive sectors and clean technology, including the critical raw materials and energy infrastructure that supports them. The European Union also aims to lead the digital transition and the AI revolution, notably

¹⁶⁰ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

through the construction of data centres. These sectors contribute to climate mitigation and broader environmental objectives, by moving away from the fossil-based, non-circular, business-as-usual models. However, as the IPBES Business and Biodiversity Assessment states, it is necessary to address the biodiversity impacts and dependencies of these industries and the underlying societal demand to reduce trade-offs and foster nature-positive benefits. By equipping stakeholders with practical and science-based decision-support capabilities, this topic aims to enhance the biodiversity performance of these industries compared to the status quo, increase public acceptance and deliver a wider range of benefits to society. Industries in scope of this topic are all European-based industries relevant to the Clean Industrial Deal, and the digital and artificial intelligence industry including the European-based physical infrastructures directly supporting them (i.e. transport, energy production and electricity grid, mining, extractive and mineral processing, data centres, etc.). Data-intensive industries, in particular Intellectual Property rights industries and copyright, should be supported in assessing the biodiversity impacts of their digital production and consumption.

This topic is expected to support the objectives of EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, the Critical Raw Materials Act, the Clean Industrial Deal roadmap and to support stakeholders in complying with the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, the Nature Directives, the EU Taxonomy Regulation, the TEN- E and TEN-T regulations. Proposals should ensure geographical coverage across at least three EU/or Associated Country biogeographical regions¹⁶¹.

Proposals should, for minimum five different industrial activities (at the ISIC division/NACE level¹⁶²):

- develop typologies of biodiversity benefits, impacts and dependencies in terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems per industrial activity building on the ENCORE database¹⁶³. This should support industries in assessing their biodiversity impacts and dependencies and comply with their due diligence reporting obligations¹⁶⁴ and Sustainability Certification Alignment;
- taking into account the projected growth of the EU industrial and digital sector, assess holistically their direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on natural resources (abstraction, extraction and contamination), terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems and ecological connectivity of these industrial developments, considering their spatial and temporal dimensions, using where appropriate Absolute Environmental Sustainability Assessment (AESA)¹⁶⁵;

¹⁶¹ EEA dataset Biogeographical regions, Europe 2016, ver.1, available here: [Biogeographical regions](#)

¹⁶² [ISIC \(International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities\)](#) and [NACE \(EU classification of economic activities\)](#)

¹⁶³ [ENCORE](#), Exploring Natural Capital Opportunities, Risks and Exposure (UNEP, 2026)

¹⁶⁴ Simplified sustainability reporting and due diligence rules for businesses: new text adopted by the EP on 16/12/2025

¹⁶⁵ [JRC Publications Repository - Guidance for applying absolute environmental sustainability assessment on activities at different scales](#)

- compare business-as-usual industries to decarbonized, digitalized and circular industries by providing cost-benefit assessments of biodiversity mitigation measures and developing spatialized biodiversity-focused scenarios analysing the trade-offs and synergies of alternative technological, economical and societal pathways at the European scale, using natural capital accounting, lifecycle analysis and system dynamics modelling;
- provide recommendations and tools that directly inform society, industries and decision makers on biodiversity-sensitive societal, economic and technological trajectories (e.g. policy gaps, addressing the underlying drivers of demand, infrastructure permitting processes and spatial planning, “biodiversity friendly” technological alternatives, investment screening, biodiversity mitigation hierarchy implementation, etc.);
- involve industrial partners, local authorities and civil society organizations in testing and operationalising the recommendations and retrieving early evidence in practical conditions (e.g. piloting nature-based mitigation solutions, after-use of industrial sites, biodiversity stress-tests, etc.), demonstrating measurable improvements and secured ecosystem services.

Proposals should cooperate with relevant projects funded under the Clean Industrial Deal Horizon Europe call.

This topic requires a transdisciplinary approach, with the effective contribution of industrial partners, institutions, civil society, in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact for the clean and digital transition of the related research activities. In addition, this topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines and the involvement of SSH experts, institutions as well as the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise, in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities.

In order to increase synergies and the impact of the projects, all proposals selected for funding should form a cluster and are expected to participate in common networking and joint activities, including with projects from other calls where deemed appropriate. These activities should be included in a dedicated work package, having sufficient budget allocated to it. These activities may include:

- a common dissemination and communication strategy;
- common Data Management Strategy and Common Policy Strategy (including joint policy briefs);
- thematic workshops/trainings/working groups on issues of common interest (e.g. data management and exchange);

- close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD)¹⁶⁶ and its Science Service, including participating in answering science to policy requests.

HORIZON-NATURE-2027-01-03: Systemic approaches to accelerate transformative change for biodiversity

Call: Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000. Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁶⁷.

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

- policy and decision makers at relevant levels are better equipped to incorporate educational, cultural, societal and behavioural insights related to biodiversity – such as

¹⁶⁶ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity-knowledge-centre_en

¹⁶⁷ This [decision](#) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

business dependencies, vulnerabilities and systemic risks – into future policy development, including through participatory and co-designed approaches;

- institutional, business, financial and economic actors have better awareness on the systemic effects of their interactions and interdependencies with ecosystems, including international trade, across value chains; the understanding and mapping of cross-actor and cross-sectoral relationships and their associated knowledge production and decision-making pathways are improved;
- transdisciplinary research communities from natural and social sciences and humanities (SSH), as well as cultural and creative sectors, among others, collaborate to improve understanding on the indirect drivers¹⁶⁸ behind biodiversity-harming practices, identify leverage points and test evidence-based interventions – including in relation to governance, incentives, narratives, norms and power asymmetries – with public and private sector actors to incentivise and strengthen collaborative, nature-positive practices that enable transformative change for biodiversity.

Scope: As highlighted by IPBES, halting biodiversity loss requires transformative change¹⁶⁹ across mindsets, practices and the rules of the system, in ways that address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss and nature's decline. In this context, systems thinking and behavioural science are not optional add-ons but essential bridges between ambition and impact, enabling policies and interventions to better translate intentions and actions into behavioural and structural change across all relevant actor groups.

Proposals should:

- identify and analyse implementation gaps in transformative change for biodiversity through a systems approach, including behavioural sciences, SSH, culture and the arts, building on existing knowledge across different types, including Indigenous and local. Where relevant, systemic analyses should be supported by empirical biodiversity data, including ecosystem functioning indicators, to ensure that behavioural and governance interventions are grounded in measurable ecological outcomes;
- analyse and map cross-actor and cross-sector relationships, different worldviews and knowledge systems - including Indigenous and local knowledge - power dynamics, gender roles, governance and influence pathways, including how knowledge is produced, validated and mobilised across actor groups, to identify how interactions between them drive or hinder transformative change for biodiversity;

¹⁶⁸ The IPBES Transformative Change Assessment, Summary for Policymakers lists the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss and nature's decline as; Demographic and sociocultural; Economic and technological; Institutions and governance; Conflicts and epidemics (Figure SMP 1: <https://zenodo.org/records/17099400>).

¹⁶⁹ The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) defines transformative change as a fundamental, system-wide reorganization across technological, economic, and social factors, including paradigms, goals, and values.

- anticipate and analyse how indirect drivers of biodiversity loss interact with societal, economic and cultural values, affect intrinsic biodiversity values, access to and perceptions of nature and behavioural change, in order to identify key leverage points for interventions and inform strategies for transformative, nature-positive change. Proposals should address biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution as interconnected crises requiring coherent and mutually reinforcing solutions;
- design, pilot and evaluate approaches to shift governance arrangements, organisational and community routines and decision-making processes (e.g. compliance and enforcement, investment and finance decisions, cost-benefit analysis, land and sea management practices, and nature-based solutions, and communication strategies grounded in cultural and landscape values) for the benefit of communities as well as the private sector;
- develop guidance, building on existing networks, data sets, digital platforms and tools (including for monitoring), to support the adaptation, replication and scaling of the proposed approaches across sectors and regions. Where relevant, this may include the use, development and/or synthesis of indicators, models, data and tools to better capture nature restoration's contribution to systemic risks reduction, across ecosystems;
- optimise data usage, including standardised data formats widely adopted across sectors, for integrating biodiversity objectives with socio-economic outcomes, increase consistency and ease data interpretation and exchange among sectors and their integration into sectoral (digital) decision-support and management tools. Where relevant, support tools like natural capital accounting and nature credit frameworks with clear metrics for additionality and permanence, or information collected from different stakeholders and participatory processes should be incorporated;
- support stakeholders (e.g. in agriculture, fisheries and forestry, among others) in aligning their land/sea management practices, business models and broader operations and trade interactions with pathways to transformative change by addressing the challenges they face (e.g. meeting EU biodiversity targets and objectives, including corporate sustainability and due diligence reporting) and develop case studies. These should provide solutions that prioritise biodiversity and ecological objectives while considering socio-economic realities, promoting sustainable management, policy compliance, economic viability, community resilience and enhancing Europe's long-term competitiveness. Participatory and co-design approaches that actively involve stakeholders in identifying challenges, designing solutions, and validating outcomes should be included.

Proposals should build on and contribute to the findings of IPBES¹⁷⁰.

¹⁷⁰ In particular the Thematic Assessment on the Underlying Causes of Biodiversity Loss and the Determinants of Transformative Change.

Projects should build on clustering activities with Horizon Europe projects and other initiatives working in this field, through the dedication of appropriate resources. Funded projects should cover one or more ecosystems, including marine, coastal, freshwater and/or terrestrial. Proposals must apply a multi-actor approach and are encouraged to integrate international cooperation and/or participation of outermost regions. This topic requires the effective contribution from the SSH disciplines and the involvement of SSH experts, institutions as well as the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise, in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities. Proposals may include financial support to third parties (FSTP) to facilitate active and supportive involvement of actors, experts and institutions. A maximum of 15% of the EU proposed budget should be allocated to this purpose.

In order to increase synergies and the impact of the projects, all proposals selected for funding should form a cluster and are expected to participate in common networking and joint activities, including with projects from other calls where deemed appropriate. These activities should be included in a dedicated work package, having sufficient budget allocated to it. These activities may include:

- a common dissemination and communication strategy;
- common Data Management Strategy and Common Policy Strategy (including joint policy briefs);
- thematic workshops/trainings/working groups on issues of common interest (e.g. data management and exchange);
- close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD)¹⁷¹ and its Science Service, including participating in answering science to policy requests.

HORIZON-NATURE-2027-02-01: Assessing direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity decline of invertebrates

Call: Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.50 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 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

¹⁷¹ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity-knowledge-centre_en

<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: To ensure a balanced portfolio, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least also to the highest ranked proposal within the research field A, and the highest ranked proposal within the research field B, provided that the applications attain all thresholds.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁷².

Expected Outcome: Proposals are expected to contribute to **all** the following expected outcomes:

- stakeholders involved in biodiversity conservation and restoration activities have an improved understanding of how direct and indirect drivers¹⁷³ of biodiversity decline work, considering spatial and temporal scales and dynamics, and their interactions;
- the implementation at different spatial and temporal scales of the EU biodiversity policies and legislation, notably the Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR) is improved, enabling the prioritisation of actions and the identification of systemic solutions;
- stakeholders, including primary producers, whose business models rely on ecosystem services are better equipped to take strategic decisions that support biodiversity, thereby increasing opportunities while reducing their exposure to risks linked to the decline of these services.

Scope: Biodiversity decline has rippling effects on climate, economy, and human well-being. Focusing on representative groups of invertebrates (including insects, molluscs and crustaceans and, in particular, understudied taxonomic groups) across representative European terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems, is crucial for developing effective biodiversity conservation strategies since they are the foundation for healthy ecosystems and their decline has cascading impacts on ecosystem health and services. Understanding the relative impact of the aforementioned drivers at different spatial (from local to global) and temporal (from

¹⁷² This [decision](#) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

¹⁷³ [Direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity decline | IPBES secretariat](#)

immediate to long-term) scales and dynamics, is needed to develop effective and coherent biodiversity protection and restoration strategies to implement the EU Nature Restoration Regulation¹⁷⁴ while building a resilient competitive economy.

Proposals should:

- assess and rank the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity decline based on invertebrates' cases studies across representative European terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems, considering their cumulative impacts, different spatial and temporal scales and dynamics, and their interactions;
- better understand the drivers of invertebrates decline and how they vary spatially and temporally, aiming to advance in the attribution of causality. This could involve the use of spatial analysis techniques, temporal trend analysis, and modelling approaches as well as other modern technological approaches to anticipate future changes; develop methods and recommendations to replicate this exercise in other spatial settings;
- involving relevant stakeholders, develop and provide decision-support tools to competent authorities and stakeholders for effective protection and restoration strategies, enabling them to prioritise and address the most critical drivers of invertebrates' decline, with the aim of enhancing ecosystem resilience and services;
- building on relevant existing ecosystem modelling frameworks, include/add an anticipatory and predictive dimension, integrating early-warning systems and stress-testing approaches able to assess future trajectories under different land-uses scenarios;
- ensure that results feed into decision support tools¹⁷⁵ developed for primary producers to make informed choices that enhance the resilience and competitiveness of their business by restoring and protecting the ecosystems that provide the services they depend on;

Proposal should focus on invertebrates' species, in particular, understudied taxonomic groups, across representative European terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems, addressing **Area A**: Focus on insects or **Area B**: Focus on molluscs and crustaceans. The area (A or B) should be clearly indicated on the application.

Concrete efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the context of the funded projects is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable), particularly in the context of real-time data feeds, exploring workflows that can provide "FAIR-by-design" data, i.e., data that is FAIR from its generation. Possibilities offered by the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) to store and give access to research data should be considered.

This topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines and the involvement of SSH experts, institutions as well as the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise, in order to produce

¹⁷⁴ [Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1991 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration and amending Regulation \(EU\) 2022/869 \(Text with EEA relevance\)](#)

¹⁷⁵ Notably AKIS, and projects, missions and partnerships (agroecology).

meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities.

International cooperation is encouraged.

In order to increase synergies and the impact of the projects, all proposals selected for funding should form a cluster and are expected to participate in common networking and joint activities, including with projects from other calls where deemed appropriate. These activities should be included in a dedicated work package, having sufficient budget allocated to it. These activities may include:

- a common dissemination and communication strategy;
- common Data Management Strategy and Common Policy Strategy (including joint policy briefs);
- thematic workshops/trainings/working groups on issues of common interest (e.g. data management and exchange);
- close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD)¹⁷⁶ and its Science Service, including participating in answering science to policy requests.

HORIZON-NATURE-2027-02-02: Living labs co-creating solutions for the restoration of ecosystems addressing implementation bottlenecks and improving resilience to risks

Call: Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 10.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 60.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:

¹⁷⁶

https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity-knowledge-centre_en

	To ensure a balanced portfolio, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least also to two proposals highest ranked within the research field A, and two proposals highest ranked within the research field B, provided that the applications attain all thresholds.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000. Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁷⁷.

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

- stakeholders are empowered to co-create, deploy and replicate viable ecosystem restoration measures leading to their wider uptake, with solutions to address implementation bottlenecks and financing issues;
- competent authorities in charge of implementing the EU Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR) can design and reuse effective deployment frameworks, informed by evidence and lessons generated through living labs across different contexts;
- social, economic and environmental co-benefits, risks and trade-offs of nature restoration activities are demonstrated, addressed and made explicit to support informed decision-making and scaling, including, where appropriate, potential One Health aspects.

Scope: The NRR requires Member States to put in place area-based restoration measures, including Nature-based solutions, as highlighted and recommended in both the EU Climate adaptation strategy and in the European Water Resilience Strategy. Notably measures to implement the NRR article 9 on free-flowing rivers support the objectives of the European Water Resilience Strategy to restore and protect the water cycle, and the Water Framework Directive objective of good ecological status of rivers. NRR Article 11 on the restoration of agricultural ecosystems aims inter alia at developing high-diversity landscape features. Related strategies: the Vision for Agriculture and Food, the EU soil strategy for 2030, the EU

¹⁷⁷ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Forest Strategy for 2030, the new EU bioeconomy strategy and the European Ocean Pact reflect the objectives of the NRR. The communication on integrated wildfire risk management¹⁷⁸ highlights the need for more research on preventive restoration integrating wildfire prevention and post-fire recovery objectives in nature restoration activities. More science-based operational restoration approaches are needed to identify scalable solutions that overcome implementation bottlenecks, notably financing. Nature restoration can deliver major biodiversity, climate adaptation, water resilience and overall One Health benefits. However, in some contexts, restoration may also modify the suitability of habitats (for instance disease vectors and reservoir/host communities). Proposals are therefore encouraged to consider these aspects in cooperation with relevant public health and environmental authorities. Synergies with the EU Carbon Removal and Carbon Farming (CRCF) Regulation which supports result-based incentives for carbon farming and carbon removal activities that demonstrate co-benefits for biodiversity and ecosystem services have to be developed. Living labs¹⁷⁹ are expected to foster collaboration between sectors and communities through a strong place-based approach to co-design and co-create systemic solutions and to function as learning environments that enable reflection, comparison and feedback on implementation pathways, governance arrangements and enabling conditions for ecosystem restoration.

Proposals should:

- support the set-up of three new living labs, with 8 to 15 experimental sites each, across different ecosystems, as places for co-creating, testing and demonstrating innovative solutions to restore ecosystems following three main principles: (i) co-creation with a large and balanced set of stakeholders e.g. researchers, land and water managers (including farmers and foresters) and/or owners, policy decision makers, economic actors, civil society, social partners, municipalities and regions interested in nature restoration ensuring an adequate representation of primary-sector actors, (ii) activities carried out in real-life settings and (iii) involving stakeholders (including practitioners) at all stages of development;
- cover different geographical regions or climate zones and at least three different EU Member States and/or Associated Countries, including sites in outermost regions; address gender dimension; establish a work plan of activities to be developed during the project lifetime, ensuring the co-design, co-development, and co-implementation of innovative and scalable solutions and describing the rationale for cooperation across the living labs and among the stakeholders within the living labs;
- act as real-life policy experimentation environments, enabling the testing of regulatory, financial and governance innovations. Proposals should ensure the active involvement of competent public authorities (e.g. ministries, agencies, regional or local administrations) and establish feedback mechanisms to inform policy-making;

¹⁷⁸ [Communication on Integrated Wildfire Risk Management](#)
¹⁷⁹ <https://enoll.org/living-labs/>

- assess the ecosystem conditions (baselines), anticipate restoration trajectories and establish sustainable monitoring mechanisms to track progress towards the objectives, which should correspond to the EU legislation where relevant;
- identify pertinent bottlenecks to the mainstreaming and upscaling of the implementation of nature restoration activities, such as financing, economic, regulatory or scientific knowledge issues, permitting, risk management, land tenure and access, social engagement, governance or technical issues, skills and trainings; explore their causes including behavioural and cultural factors; and propose solutions to address them; assess the feasibility, replicability, effectiveness, efficiency and benefits of identified solutions, and their capacity to ensure that the results of restoration are maintained over time;
- establish and use harmonised Key Performance Indicators and MRV (measurement, reporting, verification) protocols compatible with the NRR and the European Water Resilience Strategy and develop integrated impact assessment frameworks capturing environmental, social, economic and governance dimensions, including long-term transformation effects and where relevant One Health indicators;
- identify sites demonstrating exemplary solutions for nature restoration, to be used as lighthouses for training, peer-to-peer learning, and communication;
- define sustainability pathways, governance structures and business models ensuring their continuation beyond the project duration.

Proposals should address **Area A**: building risk-resilience with restoration or **Area B**: developing effective and viable restoration practices in agriculture and forestry. The area (A or B) should be clearly indicated on the application.

Under **Area A**, proposals should demonstrate causality between restoration activities and improved, nature-based disaster risk reduction and resilience, notably to extreme weather events. At least one living lab should address water resilience against floods and droughts, through restoration of the natural connectivity of rivers and the water retention capacity and natural functions of floodplains including for aquifer recharge, while engaging with freshwater-related sectors, addressing specific implementation gaps and/or bottlenecks to contribute to the objectives of free-flowing rivers and good ecological status. Proposals addressing wetland, floodplain, riparian or water-retention measures are encouraged to consider potential health-related trade-offs, including vector habitat suitability, in cooperation with competent authorities, including public health. At least one living lab should address fire risk management in agriculture and forestry, with cost-benefit analysis and avoided loss and damages assessments, while engaging with landowners, managers, insurances, emergency services and relevant authorities. Proposals should address post-disaster ecosystem restoration, encompassing implementation bottlenecks alongside recovery processes.

Under **Area B**, proposals should focus on restoration through biodiversity-friendly farming and forestry systems, including agroecological approaches such as agroforestry or grazing-based grassland systems, organic farming and systems providing for high diversity landscape

features or environmental set-aside. Sites should be selected along a gradient of intensity of practises and evaluate restoration challenges from areas starting conversion processes to areas with anteriority in recognised “biodiversity-friendly” systems. Proposals should measure their potential to achieve restoration objectives using MRV protocols. At least one living lab should develop, test and validate tools to strengthen in-situ conservation of genetic resources and sustainable use of agro-biodiversity and/or forest biodiversity. Focus should be on developing decentralised, farmer- and forester-informed data systems and strategies to equip practitioners with evidence-based insights for biodiversity selection and integration for specific uses and environments. Additionally, standard protocols for local genetic resource maintenance and exchange should be developed. At least one of the living labs should integrate a strong focus on financing restoration. Monitoring and verification methods to assess the biodiversity impacts of carbon farming practices, notably in the context of the CRCF framework, should be developed. Projects should also explore, where relevant, how such methods may interact with biodiversity support schemes, including emerging nature credit mechanisms¹⁸⁰.

Proposals should ensure complementarities and avoid duplications with the activities of relevant EU-funded projects and initiatives, including the Agroecology Partnership, the Forest Partnership, the EU Mission Soil, the EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change, and should establish cooperation with the living labs established under those instruments as relevant.

Concrete efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the context of the funded projects is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable), particularly for real-time data feeds, exploring workflows that can provide “FAIR-by-design” data, i.e., data that is FAIR from its generation. Possibilities offered by the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) to store and give access to research data should be considered. A citizen science approach could be appropriate for this action to produce, collect and analyse data.

Living labs are expected to dedicate resources for networking activities with other living labs, under the lead of the CSA that will be supported under the topic HORIZON-NATURE-2027-02-03: Networking to scale up living labs for nature restoration solutions and to address bottlenecks to implementation.

This topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines and the involvement of SSH experts, institutions as well as the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise, across all phases of the living lab process, including co-design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, with particular attention to behavioural change, social acceptance, participatory governance and conflict mediation, in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities.

Proposals must apply the multi-actor approach involving stakeholders as indicated under (i), first item of the scope.

¹⁸⁰ [ENV - EU releases its roadmap towards nature credits](#)

Financial support to third parties (FSTP) to facilitate active involvement of small actors (e.g. land managers, SMEs or civil society) in one or more of the living labs of a project, can be provided through calls. A maximum of 30% of the proposed budget should be allocated to this purpose.

In order to increase synergies and the impact of the projects, all proposals selected for funding should ensure close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD)¹⁸¹ and its Science Service, including participating in answering science to policy requests.

HORIZON-NATURE-2027-02-03: Networking to scale up living labs for nature restoration solutions and to address bottlenecks to implementation

Call: Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁸².

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

¹⁸¹ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity-knowledge-centre_en

¹⁸² This [decision](#) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- Living labs working on nature restoration¹⁸³ are better connected, they are better involved in policy developments, and they benefit from existing knowledge and experience, leading to scale up of solutions for nature restoration and to address bottlenecks to implementation in particular through strengthened ownership including by local communities, private actors and public authorities;
- the cooperation between research, practice and policy on nature restoration is increased, with attention to practitioners involved in nature restoration (farmers, foresters, fishers and/or other businesses depending on ecosystem services) and rural/local communities and authorities as well as traditional and local knowledge holders;
- public authorities, land owners and/or managers, water related stakeholders, food and bioeconomy actors and practitioners have access to shared, validated deployment and governance frameworks that support the scale up of nature restoration actions as well as estimates for demand for certified environmental outcomes supporting restoration objectives (certified carbon farming credits¹⁸⁴ and, once methodologies are available, nature credits).

Scope: The EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 defines nature restoration objectives in line with target 2 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The EU Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR) provides that Member States shall put in place effective and area-based restoration measures.

Support to nature restoration living labs has been granted under Horizon Europe and more living labs are expected to be settled, making coordination and transfer of implementation frameworks increasingly important. including to capture recurring implementation bottlenecks. The Soil Mission has gathered experience on living labs for soil restoration notably through the project SOILL¹⁸⁵.

The Commission announced in the Bioeconomy Strategy the creation of a Buyers' Club for carbon farming; its aim is to bring together potential buyers of carbon farming credits certified under the Carbon Removal and Carbon Farming (CRCF) Regulation, for instance by facilitating alliances between land managers and potential financiers. The Commission has adopted a roadmap towards nature credits¹⁸⁶.

Proposals should:

- organise a European network of living labs and lighthouses dedicated to nature restoration to ensure a cohesive development and the effective uptake of validated deployment frameworks. It should notably facilitate the development of common

¹⁸³ Living labs supported under the Destination 'Biodiversity and ecosystem services' in the 2025, 2026 and 2027 calls and living labs under the Soil Mission having a strong focus on soil biodiversity.

¹⁸⁴ The Carbon Removal and Carbon Farming Regulation (2024/3012) entered into force in December 2024 and the certification methodologies for carbon farming are expected to enter into force in Q3 2026.

¹⁸⁵ [SOILL](#)

¹⁸⁶ [ENV - EU releases its roadmap towards nature credits.](#)

methodologies, standards, impact frameworks and capacity-building activities for living labs across Europe, ensuring strong involvement of national and regional living lab networks and fostering cross-border collaboration. It should ensure adequate coverage of EU Member States and Associated Countries so that as many as possible countries can benefit from the experience gained;

- ensure that living labs are adequately informed on the relevant legislation notably the NRR and about experience and knowledge on nature restoration including from the LIFE programme¹⁸⁷ and Biodiversa+ Knowledge Hubs¹⁸⁸;
- inform about nature restoration financing (existing or future) opportunities, including the Nature credits roadmap and the CRCF certification framework, and their implementation; promote where relevant existing CRCF and nature credits methods for agriculture, including organic agriculture, agroforestry, peatland restoration and rewetting, and/or afforestation with a view of testing them in the living labs;
- consolidate scientific results from the living labs and lighthouses in policy and implementation-focused outputs, fostering multi-level governance and supporting competent authorities in translating restoration challenges into operational priorities; encourage the development of shared spatial frameworks and optimisation tools that enable transferability of restoration solutions across regions;
- based on living lab and lighthouses activities, advocate ecosystem restoration and promote knowledge sharing and cultural exchanges on biodiversity as shared legacy with a view to strengthen legitimacy, to foster intergenerational communication and to counter misinformation;
- develop a mapping of current and emerging living labs and lighthouses dedicated to nature restoration and make it available;
- build on existing knowledge and on the experience of successful living labs and lighthouses to provide practical recommendations and transferable implementation models to new ones dedicated to nature restoration; facilitate alliances between actors of the living labs and coalitions of buyers of certified carbon farming credits with biodiversity benefits (“Buyers’ Clubs”), with a view to future replication for nature credits.

The network should integrate coordinators of living labs projects funded under topic HORIZON-NATURE-2027-02-02: Living labs for co-creating solutions for the restoration of ecosystems addressing implementation bottlenecks and improving resilience to risks of this call. It should also be open to living labs funded under Cluster 6 topics¹⁸⁹ or under other

¹⁸⁷ [LIFE Programme - Tackling key challenges to upscaling nature restoration in the EU](#)

¹⁸⁸ [BiodivRestore Knowledge Hub – Biodiversa +](#)

¹⁸⁹ Notably HORIZON-CL6-2025-01-BIODIV-01-two-stage: Living labs co-creating innovative solutions for forests and freshwater ecosystems restoration; HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-01-two-stage: Living labs for co-creating solutions for the restoration of ecosystems; HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-06: Living labs driving transformative change via knowledge integration and inclusive

initiatives, in particular under the Mission ‘Soil Deal for Europe’, under the Agroecology partnership, under the Mission 'Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030'¹⁹⁰ and under national or regional programmes, provided ecosystem restoration is their main objective. Balance in the involvement of Member States and Associated Countries and gender balance should be ensured in the network.

Proposals must apply the multi-actor approach and ensure adequate involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

The network should involve relevant stakeholders, such as:

- land-owners and managers, farmers, foresters; freshwater and seawater related sectors, for their concrete experience in living labs;
- competent authorities for nature restoration; in particular rural/local communities, private actors and public authorities - including water management authorities - to help to better identify concrete implementation needs and evidence gaps;
- local residents, environmental NGOs, youth organisations to represent civil society’s views;
- researchers to provide scientific coordinated guidance to the living labs;
- financing institutions; coalitions of buyers of certified carbon farming credits with biodiversity benefits (“Buyers’ Clubs”), to facilitate alliances with actors of the living labs and with a view to support them to test and possibly replicate concepts for nature credits.

This topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines including economics, finance, cultural and communication science, and the involvement of SSH experts, institutions as well as the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise, in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities.

In order to increase synergies and the impact of the project, the selected proposal should ensure close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD)¹⁹¹ and its Science Service, including participating in answering science to policy requests.

HORIZON-NATURE-2027-02-04: Innovative solutions to fight wildlife trafficking and to reduce invasion of invasive alien species

Call: Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society

governance and HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-04: Living Labs for the eradication and/or management of invasive alien species.

¹⁹⁰ Topic HORIZON-MISS-2025-03-OCEAN-07 (Mission Lighthouses coordination and support activities).

¹⁹¹ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity-knowledge-centre_en

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 13.00 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 13.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used). Some activities, resulting from this topic, may involve using classified background and/or producing of security sensitive results (EUCI and SEN). Please refer to the related provisions in section B Security — EU classified and sensitive information of the General Annexes. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B. The specific conditions for actions with PCP/PPI procurements in section H of the General Annexes apply to grants funded under this topic. In line with the “restriction on control in innovation actions in critical technology areas” delineated in General Annex B of the General Annexes, entities established in an eligible country but which are directly or indirectly controlled by China or by a legal entity established in China are not eligible to participate in the action.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: The specific conditions are described in General Annex H. The granting authority may, up to 4 years after the end of the action, object to a transfer of ownership or to the exclusive licensing of results, as set out in the specific provision of Annex 5.

Expected Outcome: Proposals are expected to contribute to **all** the following expected outcomes:

- custom officers, border guards and relevant law enforcement officers and civil servants from competent authorities have improved capacities to detect illegal wildlife trade and prevent invasive alien species introduction, reintroduction and spread;
- illegal wildlife trade is better detected, contributing to improved protection of endangered species, and the spread of invasive alien species through trade is prevented and identified as early as possible, supporting the EU and global biodiversity objectives.

Scope: Wildlife trafficking and invasive alien species pose major threats to biodiversity¹⁹² and present important challenges regarding enforcement, prevention and detection capacities. Invasive alien species also cause significant negative economic impacts, estimated at around €12 billion per year in the EU, and wildlife trafficking is one of the most profitable criminal activities worldwide¹⁹³. Moreover, they pose significant health hazards. The rate of introduction of invasive alien species has been increasing. Wildlife trafficking is also increasing, especially due to increase in online trade¹⁹⁴. The development of innovative tools to identify wildlife species in international trade offers opportunities for multiple applications to better combat drivers of biodiversity loss, in particular the overexploitation of wildlife through trade and illicit trafficking and, in specific cases, the introduction and spread of invasive alien species. European law enforcement, customs and competent authorities, need improved capabilities that allow better and automatic monitoring and detection in online trade (e.g. e-commerce platform and marketplaces); and in physical trade, considering trade and logistic chains (e.g. ports, border crossings, postal and logistics hubs); interpreting data from multimodal signals; to support the detection of illegal wildlife trade and smuggling and invasive alien species in trade (intentionally or unintentionally introduced) while minimising disruption to the trade flow. This topic is expected to support the implementation of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 (target 12 on invasive alien species), the EU invasive alien species regulation¹⁹⁵, the EU wildlife trade regulations¹⁹⁶, the revised EU action plan against wildlife trafficking (2022-2027)¹⁹⁷, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (target 4 on halting species extinction, protecting genetic diversity and managing human-wildlife conflicts; target, 5 on wild species; and 6 on invasive alien species).

¹⁹² IPBES, *Summary for Policymakers of the Thematic Assessment Report on Invasive Alien Species and their Control of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7430692>; IPBES, *Summary for policymakers of the thematic assessment of the sustainable use of wild species of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7411847>.

¹⁹³ UNODC, *World Wildlife Crime Report 2024: Trafficking in Protected Species*, 2024 https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/wildlife/2024/Wildlife2024_Final.pdf.

¹⁹⁴ Europol, *European Union Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment – The changing DNA of serious and organised crime*, Publication Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2025.

¹⁹⁵ [Regulation - 1143/2014 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

¹⁹⁶ [Wildlife trade - Environment - European Commission](#)

¹⁹⁷ [EUR-Lex - 52022DC0581 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

Proposals should:

- develop tools/prototypes, using innovative solutions for the detection of invasive alien species in trade and illegal wildlife trade, prioritising technologies and methods deployable by law enforcement and competent authorities, in co-creation with the end-users taking into consideration cost-effectiveness and minimising barriers to adoption;
- ensure that technical solutions developed under this topic are interoperable with existing operational systems used by law enforcement and competent authorities;
- ensure that the solutions developed allow for the lawful collection, preservation, and admissibility of digital and physical evidence. Furthermore, solutions should specifically facilitate cross-border evidence collection in support of competent authorities, while maintaining the unbroken chain-of-custody and data governance compliance principles;
- demonstrate the developed solutions in relevant environment(s);
- ensure the scalability of the tools developed and develop long-term maintenance plans;
- develop the skills and competences of competent authorities, including law enforcement services, border guards, customs authorities and environment protection agencies, to use these tools (including for the lawful collection of crime evidence), for example by developing trainings and training materials;
- develop modern and effective societal awareness raising campaigns involving civil society non-governmental organisations and companies where relevant.

Proposals should involve, as beneficiaries, at least 3 relevant competent authorities representing law enforcement (like customs or border guards), nature conservation services or environmental protection services from at least 3 different EU Member States or Associated Countries.

This topic requires the effective contribution of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) disciplines and the involvement of SSH experts, institutions as well as the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise, in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities.

Proposals may include PCP subcontracting activities as described in part H of the General Annexes of the work programme.

Funded projects are encouraged to liaise with the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC), for example with regards to a possibility of testing the relevant research outputs at the JRC Border Security Lab.

HORIZON-NATURE-2027-02-05: Cost-effective biodiversity monitoring for EU policies

Call: Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society
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Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 5.00 and 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 16.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: To ensure a balanced portfolio covering as many of the three areas A, B, C as possible, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but also to proposals that are the highest ranked per area subject to budget availability, provided that the applications attain all thresholds.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁹⁸.

Expected Outcome: Proposals are expected to contribute to **all** the following expected outcomes:

- more precise and more efficient biodiversity monitoring schemes, building on advanced technologies and more abundant data, are available;

¹⁹⁸ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- policymakers and relevant competent authorities have more efficient and user-friendly tools at their disposal to implement and evaluate results of the EU environmental legislation, leading to simplification of policy implementation and better protection and restoration of ecosystems.

Scope: The implementation of the EU environmental legislation, in particular the Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR), the Soil Monitoring Law (SML) and the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), requires precise monitoring of biodiversity to ensure that objectives are met. For instance, under the NRR, Member States are required to monitor annually the abundance and diversity of pollinator species using a specific monitoring method. Under the WFD implementation, the determination of ecological status of freshwater ecosystems is based on biodiversity monitoring. Under the SML, Member States have to monitor mandatorily the diversity of fungi and bacteria in soil through DNA metabarcoding, and optionally of archaea, protists and other relevant soil organisms. Data from these monitoring schemes, if produced according to the FAIR principle, can contribute to other monitoring frameworks, for instance to monitor the progress of the environmental objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Past and on-going projects¹⁹⁹, and initiatives such as the European partnership Biodiversa+ or the EU mission “A Soil Deal for Europe”, have explored and/or demonstrated the potential of new technologies, tools and methods for in-situ biodiversity monitoring with potential for better accuracy of data, increased efficiency and wider scales for data collection. However, this potential is not fully integrated in current binding biodiversity monitoring schemes, which could benefit notably from the availability of increased data leading to more precise assessment of the status of ecosystems. These innovative solutions still need to be tested, operationalised and piloted in the context of the concrete implementation of the EU legislation.

Proposals should address Area A: Nature Restoration Regulation, namely the EU Pollinators Monitoring Scheme²⁰⁰, Area B: Soil Biodiversity for the Soil Monitoring Law or Area C: Water Framework Directive. The area (A, B or C) should be clearly indicated on the application. Proposals under all the 3 areas should:

- develop scalable approaches for biodiversity monitoring with a view to improve the cost effectiveness of legally binding monitoring schemes. Integrate synergically different technologies and methods and engage end-users to tailor the approaches to their needs;
- develop demonstration cases to test, operationalise and pilot different biodiversity monitoring approaches to fulfil practical implementation of monitoring needs under the EU legislation such as NRR, SML or the WFD; where possible, develop and test automated and real-time monitoring frameworks supported by the use of AI;

¹⁹⁹ E.g. EuropaBON, MAMBO, BGE, etc.

²⁰⁰ EU Pollinator Monitoring Scheme, i.e. the pollinator monitoring method stipulated by the [Commission Delegated Regulation \(EU\) 2025/2188](#).

- assess and compare the different approaches regarding their potential scalability, existing gaps, limitations, or potential drawbacks;
- build and further advance on already identified methods, tools and/or technologies, as well as on their integration, for species identification and quantification, such as DNA approaches, to address the gaps for their cost-effective and practical application in monitoring frameworks under EU legislation;
- advance the use of genomic techniques in monitoring the abundance of species populations relevant for each Area (A, B or C), with a view to integrate them into indicator-based monitoring frameworks under the EU legislation.

Additionally, proposals under each area (A, B or C) should complete or substantially advance DNA libraries as indicated, including the development of additional markers if established standard DNA barcoding markers do not suffice for species level identification:

- under **Area A**, complete the DNA libraries for key pollinator groups (bees, hoverflies, butterflies and moths), and substantially advance for other relevant groups of pollinating insects (such as flies other than hoverflies, wasps, beetles, ants, etc);
- under **Area B**, complete the DNA libraries for the main groups of fungi and bacteria and substantially advance in the DNA libraries for archaea, protists and other relevant soil organisms;
- under **Area C**, complete the DNA libraries for biological quality elements under the WFD (e.g., fish, macroinvertebrates, phytobenthos including in particular diatoms, phytoplankton, macrophytes, macroalgae, and angiosperms).

Proposals should build on the results of previous and ongoing projects and initiatives relevant to biodiversity monitoring, such as the European Biodiversity Observation and Coordination Centre (EBOCC), envisaging enough resources to collaborate with them to provide an effective integration of different methods and technologies.

Concrete efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the context of the funded project is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable), exploring workflows that can provide “FAIR-by-design” data, i.e., data that is FAIR from its generation. Possibilities offered by the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) and by relevant European research infrastructures such as eLTER²⁰¹ should be considered where relevant.

In order to increase synergies and the impact of the projects, all proposals selected for funding should form a cluster and are expected to participate in common networking and joint activities, including with projects from other calls where deemed appropriate. These activities should be included in a dedicated work package, having sufficient budget allocated to it. These activities may include:

²⁰¹ <https://elter-ri.eu/>.

- a common dissemination and communication strategy;
- common Data Management Strategy and Common Policy Strategy (including joint policy briefs);
- thematic workshops/trainings/working groups on issues of common interest (e.g. data management and exchange);
- close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD)²⁰² and its Science Service, including participating in answering science to policy requests.

HORIZON-NATURE-2027-03-01: Advancing interdisciplinary, data-driven research at the biodiversity- health interface under a One Health approach

Call: Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 20.00 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 20.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply: The page limit of the application is 70 pages.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The consortium must include, as beneficiaries, at least seven legal entities independent from each other and each established in a different country as follows: • at least one independent legal entity established in a Member State; and • at least six other independent legal entities, each established in different Member States or Associated Countries. ECDC²⁰³ and/or EFSA²⁰⁴ and/or EEA²⁰⁵ and/or any other relevant decentralised EU agency responsible for human, animal and

²⁰² https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity-knowledge-centre_en

²⁰³ European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

²⁰⁴ European Food Safety Authority

	environmental risk assessment may participate as member(s) of the consortium selected for funding. Applicants may include in their proposals the possible contribution of the decentralised EU agency(ies) but the decentralised EU agency(ies) will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal. Applicants will indicate the contribution that the decentralised EU agency(ies) could bring to the project based on the scope of the topic text. After the evaluation process, the decentralised EU agency(ies) and the consortium selected for funding may come to an agreement on the specific terms of the participation of the decentralised EU agency(ies). If an agreement is found, the decentralised EU agency(ies) may participate in the grant agreement without any funding. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply: The thresholds for each criterion will be 4 (Excellence), 4 (Impact) and 4 (Implementation). The cumulative threshold will be 12.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: The granting authority may, up to 4 years after the end of the action, object to a transfer of ownership or to the exclusive licensing of results, as set out in the specific provision of Annex 5.

Expected Outcome: Proposals are expected to contribute to **all** the following expected outcomes:

- public authorities, researchers and policymakers have access to robust knowledge foundations and analytical frameworks that enable inter- and transdisciplinary biodiversity-related research and collaboration, address interdependencies and strengthen the operationalisation of the One Health and Planetary Health approaches;

- researchers, public authorities and global organisations have access to Findable Accessible Interoperable and Reusable (FAIR) data²⁰⁶ supported by enhanced digital infrastructures. These data will build on improved identification, mobilisation and interoperability of existing data across thematic areas relevant to ecosystem and wildlife health, the main drivers of biodiversity loss and their impacts on human and animal health;
- researchers, affected communities, food producers, data scientists, public authorities, healthcare professionals and animal health professionals, policymakers, risk assessors civil society organisations, private sector actors, societal partners and other stakeholders can assess the health benefits and risk prevention associated with maintaining, improving and restoring ecosystem health. These stakeholders will also be supported in applying evidence-based and tested recommendations, tools and solutions to effectively mainstream biodiversity in the operationalisation of One Health and Planetary Health approaches through biodiversity conservation and restoration actions and multi-host disease prevention.

Scope: A holistic life and environmental sciences approach that protects ecosystem, human and animal health must account for interdependencies between biodiversity and health domains. Inter- and transdisciplinary research supporting holistic approaches such as One Health and Planetary Health faces persistent barriers related to data quality, fragmentation, accessibility and interoperability, which should be addressed according to the FAIR principles.

This topic is expected to support the objectives of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030²⁰⁷, the implementation of the Nature Restoration Regulation²⁰⁸, the European Data Union Strategy²⁰⁹, the Strategy for European Life Sciences²¹⁰, the EU Global Health Strategy²¹¹, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework²¹², the EU One Health Approach and the global One Health agenda.

Proposals under this topic should focus on the development of use cases that will tackle the main barriers to the operationalisation of interdisciplinary research and research results at the interface of wildlife and ecosystem health, husbandry, animal, plant and human health.

²⁰⁶ FAIR data are data which meet the principles of findability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability. Data may include, amongst others, exploitation of information, digital research data generated in the action, data from European research infrastructures and programmes such as Copernicus, European Space Agency and the GEO initiative. For further details, see the FAIR principles website (<https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles>), the FAIR cookbook (<https://faircookbook.elixir-europe.org/content/home.html>) and the guides for researchers on how to make your data FAIR (<https://www.openaire.eu/how-to-make-your-data-fair>).

²⁰⁷ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en

²⁰⁸ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/nature-restoration-regulation_en

²⁰⁹ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/data-union>

²¹⁰ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-research-and-innovation/jobs-and-economy/towards-strategy-european-life-sciences_en;

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_1686

²¹¹ EU Global Health Strategy: Better Health for All in a Changing World - European Commission:

²¹² https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/eu-global-health-strategy-better-health-all-changing-world_en
<https://www.cbd.int/gbf>

Proposals should cover all the following aspects (use cases, data sharing and interoperability, proof of concept) and most of the interconnected activities:

- **Develop thematic use cases:** Develop thematic use cases (minimum six) to test and address critical challenges for biodiversity-focused inter- and transdisciplinary research. Taken together, the six complementary use cases should collectively address the most significant drivers (including their possible interactions) of biodiversity loss (land and sea use change, direct exploitation, climate change, pollution to air, water and soil, invasive alien and proliferating species) and their impacts on health. Health outcomes should include -but not be limited to- human health (infectious diseases and non-communicable diseases including mental health). Use cases including infectious diseases should consider the wildlife-domesticated animals interface, including multi-host pathogens and spillover. Where relevant, proposals may consider the impacts of large-scale natural or anthropogenic disturbances or environmental emergencies on ecosystem, animal and human health. Use cases should be explicitly grounded in biodiversity and ecosystem health and designed to support inter- and transdisciplinary analysis across relevant thematic domains, including a mandatory link to human health. Use cases should cover, considered together, at least three different ecosystem types across terrestrial, freshwater and marine realms and different biogeographical regions.
- **Enhance data sharing and interoperability across thematic domains to support the use cases:**
 - o Select and mobilise existing datasets (new datasets might be collected only if identified as crucial knowledge gaps) across domains for the use cases; and identify critical data gaps including in view of European data sovereignty. Promote inter- and transdisciplinary research across thematic domains and data sharing practices.
 - o Promote inter- and transdisciplinary research across thematic domains, in particular between Life Sciences and Environmental domains, enabled through collaborations within the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC)²¹³ Federation and with other initiatives such as the Common European Data Spaces.
 - o Develop and validate analytical and Data Source Integration tools (including through the use of AI models when appropriate), building harmonised ontologies and create reporting standards that facilitate interoperability of domains.
 - o Provide data and software governance recommendations and embed FAIR principles (and CARE²¹⁴ principles when relevant) across data and tools governance.
- **Develop a proof of concept for a holistic One Health approach:**

²¹³ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/open-science/european-open-science-cloud-eosc_en

²¹⁴ Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, Ethics.

- o Build on results from the use cases to develop a proof of concept based on full integration across domains to demonstrate how holistic approaches such as One Health or Planetary health can enhance resilience to threats such as biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, diseases/pests, pollution and climate change.
- o Develop evidence-based actionable outputs such as recommendations, guidelines interoperable indicators and decision-support tools to enhance and support the integration and implementation of One Health and biodiversity initiatives by policymakers and relevant public authorities.

Proposals are encouraged to leverage the use of EOSC and/or other Common European Data Spaces for the development of digital services and analytical tools, as well as for the usage and enhancement of their infrastructures and datasets, ensuring robust, validated, and high-quality data that support sustainability, interoperability and cross-domain integration. Proposals are moreover encouraged to make use of the relevant facilities and services of the European research infrastructures²¹⁵ that support interdisciplinary research contributing to the One Health approach, including through their connection to EOSC.

Proposals are encouraged to apply a multi-actor approach, including data providers and Social Sciences and Humanities disciplines, to support the above-mentioned systemic One Health-biodiversity integration and evidence-based decision-making and produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities. Proposals should seek early and structured engagement with relevant stakeholders to support uptake of the developed guidance, including with relevant international organisations supporting the One Health framework and EU and national agencies responsible for human, animal and environmental risk assessment. International cooperation and participation of outermost regions are encouraged.

Proposals should capitalise on research findings, datasets and tools from recent or on-going EU funded projects and initiatives and gaps identified in relevant research agendas²¹⁶.

Proposals could consider the inclusion of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC). The JRC has wide experience in interdisciplinary analysis of environmental data and its implications for human and ecosystem health and can contribute to the project by sharing expertise and tools. In that respect, the JRC will consider collaborating with any successful proposal and this collaboration, when relevant, should be established after the proposal's approval.

In order to increase synergies and the impact of the projects, all proposals selected for funding should form a cluster and are expected to participate in common networking and joint

²¹⁵ The catalogue of European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) research infrastructures portfolio can be browsed on the ESFRI website: <https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu>

²¹⁶ For example the co-funded European Partnership on One Health Anti-Microbial Resistance - EUP OHAMR (<https://ohamr.eu>), the Strategic research and innovation agenda on health and climate change (<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/616cce9c-39e5-11f0-8a44-01aa75ed71a1>), the IPBES Thematic Assessment Report on the Interlinkages among Biodiversity, Water, Food and Health (<https://www.ipbes.net/nexus-assessment>), etc.

activities, including with projects from other calls where deemed appropriate. These activities should be included in a dedicated work package, having sufficient budget allocated to it. These activities may include:

- a common dissemination and communication strategy;
- common Data Management Strategy and Common Policy Strategy (including joint policy briefs);
- thematic workshops/trainings/working groups on issues of common interest (e.g. data management and exchange);
- close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD)²¹⁷ and its Science Service, including participating in answering science to policy requests.

HORIZON-NATURE-2027-04-01: A stronger Global Ocean Observing System to enhance Europe’s strategic autonomy, climate resilience and biodiversity conservation

Call: Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 50.00 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 50.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply: The page limit of the application is 100 pages.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used). All international organisations are exceptionally eligible for funding. In line with the “<i>restriction on control in innovation actions in critical technology areas</i>” delineated in General Annex B of the General Annexes, entities established in an eligible country but which are

²¹⁷

https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity-knowledge-centre_en

	directly or indirectly controlled by China or by a legal entity established in China are not eligible to participate in the action. The following additional eligibility criteria apply: if projects collect in-situ data and marine observation, beneficiaries must make them openly available through the European Marine Observation and Data network (EMODnet), based on the FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) principle.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The evaluation committee will be composed partially by representatives of EU institutions.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Purchases of equipment, infrastructure or other assets specifically for the action (or developed as part of the action tasks) may be declared as full capitalised costs.

Expected Outcome: Proposals are expected to contribute to **all** the following expected outcomes, in full alignment with the OceanEye initiative:

- scientists, public authorities and businesses benefit from strengthened and resilient global ocean observing capacities, coordinated under the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission's Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS),²¹⁸ through the deployment of ocean observation equipment, in particular for the provision of critical observations for marine biodiversity and ecosystem knowledge;
- public authorities prioritise investments on infrastructures and capacity building to advance ocean research, protect and restore ocean health and biodiversity and provide critical services through a global ocean observing system and data delivery that is fit-for purpose, cost efficient and designed across all its components;
- increased EU leadership and strategic autonomy in global ocean observation capabilities, in support of EU climate and biodiversity goals, strengthening the EU's contribution to and influence within GOOS, and reducing the risk of critical dependencies, notably for key services (i.e. Copernicus Services);
- enhanced collaboration between observation communities, marine research infrastructures, European SMEs and technology providers, maritime industries, and service operators, actionably contributing to the validation, procurement readiness, uptake and large-scale deployment of innovative ocean observing technologies and

²¹⁸ <https://goosocean.org/>

approaches, in particular for biodiversity observations, while reinforcing the long-term sustainability of the global ocean observing system.

Scope: The EU has committed to global leadership in climate action, biodiversity protection and ocean governance, notably through the EU Ocean Pact, the EU Ocean Observation Initiative “OceanEye”, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the EU Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters, the EU Climate Law, and international commitments such as the Global Biodiversity Framework and Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ). Achieving these objectives requires sustained, global, interoperable and open ocean observations, as well as the knowledge and the capacity to use these observations.

IOC-GOOS, constituting the internationally recognised framework for in situ ocean observations worldwide, provides the global backbone for the development and monitoring of Essential Ocean Variables (EOVs),²¹⁹ and underpins European capacities such as Copernicus Marine Service and EU-funded research and innovation activities under Horizon Europe. Sustained and resilient ocean observation is crucial for marine biodiversity conservation and restoration under a changing climate, meaning that maintaining an optimised global ocean observing system is very important to achieve biodiversity goals.

Evolving geopolitical dynamics and reduced engagement by key international partners pose significant risks to the continuity, openness and resilience of global ocean observing systems, in particular in areas beyond national jurisdictions, highlighting the need for reinforced European action to safeguard scientific sovereignty and long-term, reliable observations and predictions. This topic aims to stabilise, further strengthen and operationalise the global ocean observing system and open access to data, with particular attention to the interconnected physical, biogeochemical and biological components relevant to biodiversity conservation and reliable services.

Bringing together the scientific community engaged in the Global Ocean Observing System, proposals should:

- focus primarily on areas beyond national jurisdiction, reinforce and expand the governance frameworks and observing networks of the GOOS operating under IOC-UNESCO²²⁰, and the communities monitoring environmental, biological and ecosystem EOVs, to help address current structural gaps at global scale – (e.g. the polar regions, the deep sea and other under-observed regions of relevance to Europe) and to ensure that the current system is resilient and able to support key services (i.e. Copernicus Services) through interoperable and timely delivery of data;
- support global strategic observation equipment deployment and coordination led by GOOS, and strengthen the integration of European biodiversity and ecosystem observing efforts into the global landscape, promoting a more equitable and sustained system and improving access and use of observations for the global good, and align efforts and

²¹⁹ <https://goosocean.org/what-we-do/framework/essential-ocean-variables/>.

²²⁰ <https://www.ocean-ops.org/goosreport>.

improve efficiency in ocean monitoring and data collection, fostering sustained operations;

- build on GOOS's existing knowledge, perform observing system experiments (OSEs), observing system simulation experiments (OSSEs) and/or apply network optimisation approaches to design and better coordinate the most reliable, sustained, cost-effective global ocean observing system (coverage, resolution, accuracy, and data redundancy), to strengthen the link between in situ and remote sensing monitoring programs and to optimise data assimilation and modelling strategies. These efforts should lead to the design and specification of a minimum viable observing system that is fit-for-purpose, notably for climate and biodiversity predictions and assessments, and for key operational services (i.e. Copernicus Services);
- identify critical technology needs (including AI) and co-create, with industry, a multiplatform technology roadmap including environmental, biogeochemical and biological sensors. Demonstrate the efficacy of high TRL sensors measuring Essential Ocean Variables (EOVs), with enhanced data integration and interoperability, to accelerate the maturation, scaling and uptake of innovative technologies with broad application potential;
- ensure that infrastructures, technologies and data are effectively used, shared and sustained across regions and communities, through skills development, training, and knowledge exchange.
- support the coordination efforts of GOOS and of its components, support the EU contributions to G7-FSOI and ensure appropriate connections and coherence with IOC-IODE and the Essential Biodiversity Variable framework developed under GEO BON.

The action should benefit the global ocean observing system first by maintaining its full capabilities in the short-term, through the deployment of observation equipment, and by a clear operational step-change in ocean observing capacities, including the validation, integration and sustained deployment of fit-for-purpose observing technologies, platforms, services and data delivery workflows across the GOOS value chain. In parallel, it should work toward long-term sustainability, capacity development, and structural solutions, through strengthened cooperation, and funding, with Member States and Associated Countries, international partners and global governance frameworks (IOC-UNESCO, GOOS).

Proposals should, where relevant, prioritise solutions that contribute to reducing critical dependencies on third countries, while ensuring performance, interoperability and long-term sustainability of the system.

This topic is part of a coordination initiative between ESA and the EC on Earth System Science (ESSI) under the Ocean Flagship. Successful consortia will be asked to coordinate with projects to be selected under ESA's FutureEO programme.

Other actions: Transformative change towards a nature-positive economy and society

Indirectly managed actions

1. Contribution of the EU to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is a science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services that aims to build capacity for and strengthen the use of science in policymaking. The European Union is an enhanced observer of IPBES, the most authoritative source of knowledge about biodiversity and ecosystem services. IPBES recognises the special status of the European Union and gives its delegates the right to speak and to introduce proposals like any IPBES Member, but not to vote. IPBES puts no financial obligations on members and observers but is funded solely through voluntary contributions and grants.

Expected Outcomes:

The action will enable IPBES to further strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services to support long-term human well-being, sustainable development, and conservation. It provides continued EU support for the implementation of the IPBES rolling work programme across all IPBES functions.

Scope:

The Commission will pay a contribution on behalf of the EU to the IPBES trust fund with the aim of supporting IPBES in the following areas:

- to promote the generation of new knowledge;
- to develop work on knowledge foundations and deliver capacity building;
- to synthesise, review, assess and critically evaluate relevant information and knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services, generated by governments, academia, scientific organizations, nongovernmental organizations and indigenous and local communities from the EU and worldwide; and
- to communicate, disseminate and evaluate the Platform's activities, deliverables and findings, including policy support tools and methodologies.

Legal entities:

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), based in Nairobi (Kenya), as the provider of the administrative arrangements of the IPBES secretariat, including the hosting of the Trust Fund of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), IPBES secretariat, Bonn UN Campus, Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1, 53113 Bonn, Germany

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

Form of Funding: Indirectly managed actions

Type of Action: Indirectly managed action

Indicative timetable: 2nd quarter 2028

Indicative budget: EUR 8.00 million from the 2027 budget

Other actions - Support for AI in Science through access to advanced AI infrastructure

Expected Outcomes:

The purpose of this action is to strengthen the scientific excellence and impact of Horizon Europe projects in the field of AI in Science by providing additional access to state-of-the-art AI computing infrastructure. It is expected to accelerate the development and deployment of AI methods for scientific discovery, reinforce Europe's AI in Science ecosystem, and maximise the impact of voluntary contributions from philanthropic organisations in support of Horizon Europe objectives.

Scope:

The Commission expects to make available access to advanced AI computing infrastructure to selected Horizon Europe projects in the field of AI in Science, to be supported through voluntary third-party contributions, and awarded following a competitive selection procedure among eligible Horizon Europe projects.

Eligible projects will be limited to those resulting from grants awarded under Horizon Europe topics associated to RAISE (Resource for AI Science in Europe). One or more beneficiaries from eligible projects will be invited to submit an expression of interest describing the scientific use of the requested computing resources and the expected added value for the implementation of their action.

The action is expected to support, in particular:

- the training, fine-tuning and deployment of AI models for scientific research;
- the acceleration of research activities requiring large-scale AI computing resources;
- the strengthening of scientific outcomes of Horizon Europe projects through access to computing capacities beyond those foreseen in their original grant agreements; and
- the efficient mobilisation of voluntary contributions from philanthropic and private-sector organisations in support of AI in Science.

Eligible legal entities:

Beneficiaries of grants awarded under Horizon Europe Work Programmes and associated to RAISE (Resource for AI Science in Europe).

Form of Funding: Directly managed actions

Type of Action: Non-financial donation

Indicative timetable: Q1 2027

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

Indicative budget: EUR 0.00

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Horizontal Activities

Budget²²¹

	2026 Budget (EUR million)	2027 Budget (EUR million)
Calls		
HORIZON-CID-2026-01	275.00	
HORIZON-CID-2027-01		265.00
HORIZON-RAISE-2026-01	27.80	
HORIZON-RAISE-2027-01		30.50
HORIZON-RAISE-2026-01-MSCA	30.00	
HORIZON-NATURE-2027-01	41.45	
HORIZON-NATURE-2027-02		108.00
HORIZON-NATURE-2027-03		20.00
HORIZON-NATURE-2027-04	50.00	
HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-01		55.00
HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-02		32.50
HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-03		30.50
HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-04	35.00	
HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-05		30.00
HORIZON-BRIDGING-2027-06		20.00
Other actions		
Grant awarded without a call for proposals according to Financial Regulation Article 198(e)		57.00
Indirectly managed action		8.00
Estimated total budget	459.25	656.50

²²¹ The budget figures given in this table are rounded to two decimal places.
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027.

