

Horizon Europe – Pillar III ‘Innovative Europe’

What is Horizon Europe?

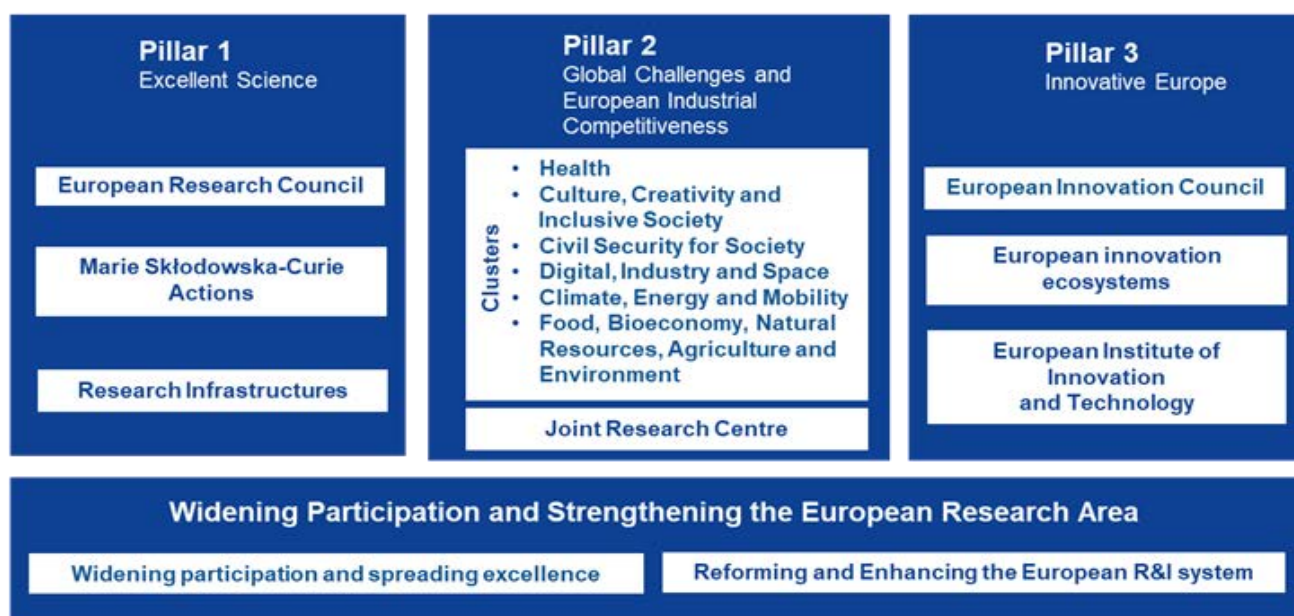
Horizon Europe is the EU’s key funding programme for research and innovation with a budget of €95.5 billion for the period 2021-2027. It tackles climate change, helps to achieve the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and boosts Europe’s competitiveness and growth.

The programme facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing EU policies while tackling global challenges. It supports the creation and better sharing of knowledge and technologies.

It also creates jobs, fully engages Europe’s talent pool, boosts economic growth, promotes industrial competitiveness and optimises investment impact within a strengthened European Research Area.

For information on UK participation in the programme see UKRO’s [dedicated factsheet](#).

Horizon Europe consists of three main pillars – reflecting the current R&I priorities of the Union – and an additional transversal element, focused on widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area:



What does Pillar III cover?

This pillar focuses on scaling up breakthrough and market-creating innovation through a new European Innovation Council (EIC) as well as activities aimed at enhancing and developing the overall European innovation landscape. It also includes support for the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT).

What is funded under Pillar III?

Pillar III aims to support and connect innovators across Europe. It will focus on fostering all forms of innovation, including breakthrough and disruptive innovation, and market deployment of innovative solutions, enhancing the European innovation ecosystems.

The **European Innovation Council** builds on the success of the Enhanced EIC pilot in Horizon 2020 and serves as a ‘one-stop shop’ for European innovators. It channels funding through three main instruments:

- **EIC Pathfinder** – building on the success of the FET Open scheme this instrument supports multidisciplinary, future and emerging breakthrough technologies at low Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) that are outside of Pillar II.
- **EIC Transition** – this new instrument supports the maturation and validation of novel, mid-TRL technologies in the lab and relevant application environments, as well as the development of a business case and business model towards an innovation's future commercialisation. It supports single applicants or small consortia.
- **EIC Accelerator** – this instrument bridges the financing gap between the late stages of innovation activities and market take-up to effectively deploy breakthrough market-creating innovation and scale up companies. It supports start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), individuals intending to launch a SME and small mid-caps (can apply for equity only).

European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE) aim to connect EU, regional and national innovation actors and support the implementation of joint cross-border innovation programmes by Member States and Associated Countries, enhancing soft skills for innovation in addition to other types of research and innovation actions. Actions complement the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support for innovation ecosystems and interregional partnerships around smart specialisation topics.

The **European Institute of Innovation and Technology** (EIT) continues to fund existing Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), whilst looking to establish new KICs in emerging priority areas, which help to strengthen sustainable innovation ecosystems across Europe. The Institute also fosters the development of entrepreneurial skills and innovation via a 'lifelong learning perspective' and support for the entrepreneurial transformation of European universities.

Finally, the EIT also bring new solutions for global societal challenges to the market, thus contributing to the objectives of Pillar II 'Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness'.

More information

- **Horizon Europe website**
- **European Innovation Council website**

Horizon Europe's legal basis:

- **Regulation establishing Horizon Europe**
- **Decision establishing the Specific Programme of Horizon Europe**
- **Second Strategic Plan for Horizon Europe (2025-2027)**

UKRO Portal

- **UKRO Portal** (subscriber access required)