

Horizon Europe – Missions

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](#).

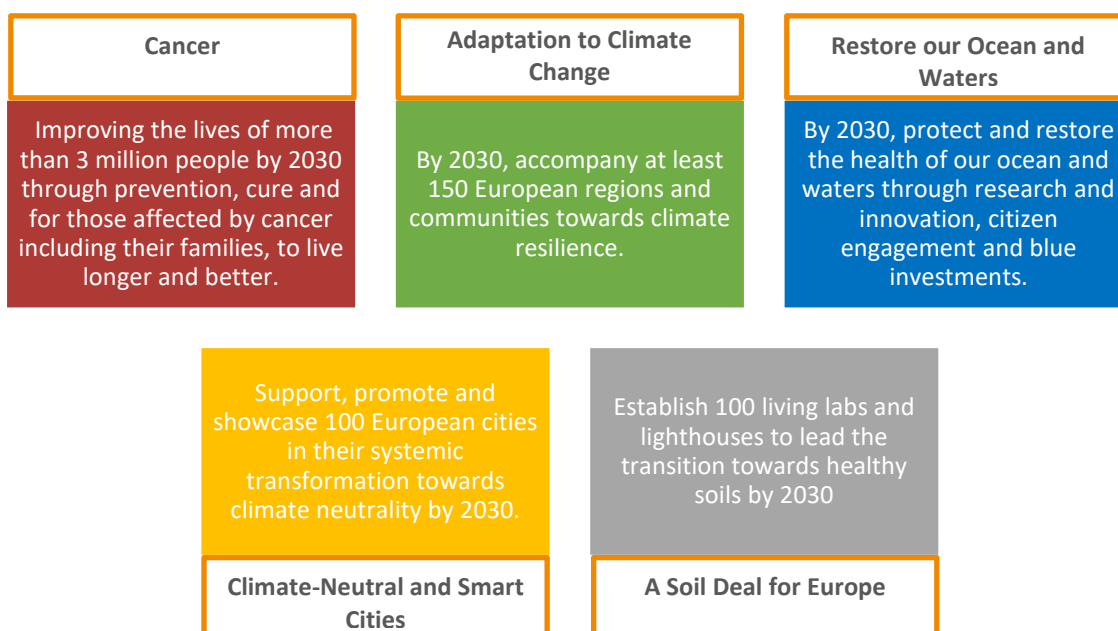
Missions in Horizon Europe

While Horizon Europe has been designed to provide continuity with Horizon 2020 in many areas, there are some novelties as well. One of them is the concept of 'Missions' or mission-oriented funding, which the then European Commissioner for Research and Innovation, Carlos Moedas, introduced early in the development of the new Framework Programme and which has been closely followed by the community since.

Horizon Europe Missions aim to deliver solutions to global challenges, are expected to be bold and inspirational and have the mandate to solve these challenges within a defined timeframe. They are funded using a 'portfolio approach' with projects expected to stretch across different disciplines and parts of Horizon Europe. This means that they go beyond individual projects or partnerships and will create strong synergies. They were first launched by the commission in September 2021 and have clear goals with fixed deadlines for achieving them.

Missions must relate to society and citizens' needs, be highly visible and have a strong impact. They are to be co-designed with the Member States and stakeholders but must also focus on keeping citizens closely involved in this process.

The five EU Missions are:



In the Horizon Europe structure, Missions are 'located' in Pillar II 'Global Challenges,' but also have close links with other programme areas. A maximum of 10% of the Pillar's budget for the first years of Horizon Europe was dedicated to the Missions.

Mission Governance

In 2019, the first **Mission Boards** were formed for each Mission. They consist of 15 members and are assembled following a call for expressions of interest. Their first mandate finished at the end of 2021 and new boards were announced in 2022. The chairs of the boards are high-level experts in their fields. The boards promote the Missions by raising awareness and advising on actions.

In addition, a **Mission Expert Group** has been created as a sub-group to the Horizon Europe Programme Committee with experts from EU Member States and Associated Countries. The group advises the European Commission on the development and implementation of a monitoring framework to track the Mission's progress.

Within the European Commission, **Mission Managers** were appointed to be their public face and leaders.

During the design phase, **Mission Assemblies**, consisting of high-level experts, supported the development of the Missions with an additional pool of ideas, knowledge and expertise.

Citizens are at the heart of Missions and the European Commission continuously engages with citizens for the design, monitoring and assessment of the Missions.

Implementation of Missions in Horizon Europe

In late September 2021, all five Missions were launched, with detailed **Implementation Plans** for each Mission made available.

The **Missions Work Programme 2025** part contains actions for all five EU Missions as well as further actions to support the full implementation of EU Missions according to their implementation plans, including synergistic actions between the Missions and other Horizon Europe instruments. The work programme includes activities for the Mission Boards, monitoring, portfolio and an OECD action for evidence-based policy making.

The 2025 work programme is also focusing on the challenges highlighted in the **2023 Commission Communication** and notably includes public awareness and governance actions as well as actions which help to leverage other sources of funding.

The **2025 Mission calls** have been published in May 2025. The majority of the 2025 calls for proposals have deadlines in September, while some calls on the Mission for Climate Neutral and Smart Cities will close in January 2026. The EU Missions' Cross-cutting activities will open in December 2025 and close in March 2026.

Mid-term review of Missions

In July 2023, two years after their launch, the Commission published its mid-term evaluation of the Missions and has adopted two documents that summarise an analysis of the Missions' selection process, their governance, budget, focus and progress to date. The **Staff Working Document** presents detailed information on the evaluation methodology and findings for each Mission area, and the **Commission Communication on EU Missions** contains key messages on progress and the future of Missions.

The EU Missions have demonstrated their added value and potential to accelerate change, and that they are on track to achieve their ambitious goals by 2030 in important areas such as adaptation to climate change, improving the life of cancer patients, cleaning up marine and freshwater ecosystems, making cities climate-neutral and making soils healthy.

However, the review highlighted the initiatives need to be further supported in reaching their long-term goals, including strengthening and better coordinating administrative governance, facilitating access to resources and funding, continuing to support local and national efforts, as well as boosting citizens' engagement and raising public awareness of the Missions.

In addition, the review of the Missions has also highlighted the need to reaffirm political and financial support for the instrument; for the next phase, the Commission proposes to spend 11% of the Horizon

Europe Pillar 2 budget on EU Missions (up from 10% currently), corresponding to over €3 billion for the period 2024-2027.

Applying for funding under the Horizon Europe Missions

Under the 2025 Missions Work Programme (published April 2025), consortia of researchers can apply using a fairly similar process as for the rest of Horizon Europe.

There are some differences in the evaluation and selection process, as the Missions will be funded through a portfolio approach. European Commission Programme Managers will look after portfolios of projects that typically include a mix of project types – from more traditional collaborative projects to prizes and financing mechanisms.

For the research and research manager community, the new mission-oriented approach might require some adjustment. UKRO will publish regular updates on the UKRO Portal.

More information

- [Horizon Europe website](#)
- [Introduction to EU Missions](#)
- [Horizon Europe Missions pages](#)
- [Find your UK National Contact Point](#)
- [Missions Work Programme 2025](#)

Horizon Europe's legal basis:

- [Regulation establishing Horizon Europe](#)
- [Decision establishing the Specific Programme of Horizon Europe](#)
- [First Strategic Plan for Horizon Europe \(2021-2024\)](#)
- [Second Strategic Plan for Horizon Europe \(2025-2027\)](#)

UKRO Portal

- [UKRO Portal](#)