

Horizon Europe – Pillar II ‘Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness’

What is Horizon Europe?

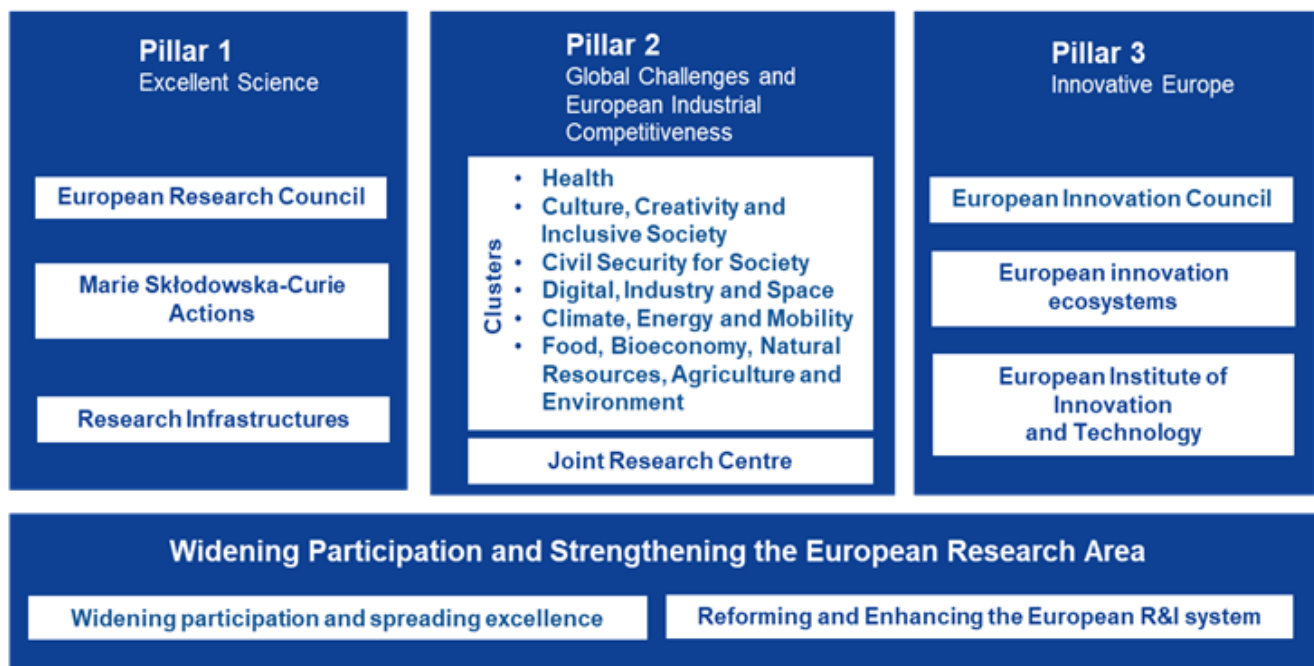
Horizon Europe is the EU’s key funding programme for R&I with a budget of €95.5 billion for the period 2021-2027. It tackles climate change, helps to achieve the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and boosts Europe’s competitiveness and growth.

The programme facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of R&I 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 II cover?

Pillar II focuses on challenge-driven calls, meaning projects must usually solve a problem described in the call topic. To maximise impact, flexibility and synergies, R&I activities under Pillar II are organised in **six Clusters**, which individually and together promote interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral, cross-policy, cross-border and international cooperation:

1. Health
2. Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Societies
3. Civil Security for Society
4. Digital, Industry & Space
5. Climate, Energy and Mobility
6. Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture & Environment

Each Cluster has a [Work Programme](#) and contributes towards several Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and many SDGs are supported by more than one Cluster.

Additionally, Pillar II also contains the [non-nuclear direct actions of the Joint Research Centre](#).

What is funded under Pillar II?

The budget of Pillar II is €53.5 billion for the period 2021 – 2027. Activities funded under Pillar II strengthen the impact of R&I in developing, supporting and implementing Union policies, and support the uptake of innovative solutions in industry and society to address global challenges. It consists of six Clusters which aim to maximise integration and complementarities across their thematic areas.

Each of the six Clusters has several defined intervention areas, which determine the focus of the collaborative calls for proposals. Further information about the specific intervention areas for each Cluster in Pillar II can be found in UKRO's [dedicated factsheets](#).

Most calls for proposals are addressed through collaborative, multi-national/multi-partner Research and Innovation Actions (RIA) or Innovation Actions (IA), with either a one- or two-stage application process. There are also Coordination and Support Action (CSA) topics, with a single-stage application process.

For Research and Innovation Actions (RIA), Innovation Actions (IA) and Coordination and Support Actions, there is only one funding rate for non-profit entities that will see reimbursement of 100% of direct costs, with a 25% flat rate for indirect costs. Other entities, such as SMEs, will also receive a reimbursement of 100% of direct costs for Research and Innovation Actions, and Coordination and Support Actions, but only 70% for Innovation Actions.

The individual [Work Programme](#) parts under Pillar II may also include Cofund Actions, which are specific types of projects for R&I funders. A Cofund Action will normally fund a programme of activities established or implemented by organisations managing or funding national/regional Research & Innovation (R&I) programmes, which is co-funded by Horizon Europe. It may support: networking and coordination; research; innovation; pilot actions; innovation and market deployment; training and mobility; awareness raising and communication; and dissemination and exploitation. Consortia of R&I funders in a Cofund Action will normally launch transnational calls for proposals, mimicking those of Horizon Europe, but traditionally reserved for organisations from countries taking part in the Cofund Action project.

Horizon Europe Missions

The five [Horizon Europe Missions](#) are flagships of Horizon Europe which aim to support urgent and large global challenges. While closely linked to Pillar II and primarily implemented through the above-mentioned types of actions, the Missions have their own work programme. They are also closely linked to other programme areas under Pillars I 'Excellent Science' and III 'Innovative Europe'. However, the Mission budget stems from Pillar II and a maximum of 11% of the Pillar's budget will be dedicated to the implementation of the Missions.

Further information can be found on the [dedicated factsheet](#).

European Partnerships

The [European Partnerships](#) are R&I programmes called 'partnerships' that the European Commission jointly develops and implements with private and/or public partners. There are three types of European Partnerships:

1. **Institutionalised European Partnerships:** These partnerships are established under specific legal frameworks, such as Articles 185 and 187 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). These partnerships are long-term collaborations with a high degree of integration.

2. **Co-funded Partnerships:** These partnerships focus on funding joint programmes of R&I activities.
3. **Co-programmed Partnerships:** These partnerships are based on joint programming of R&I activities and are often based on a Memorandum of Understanding.

The majority of partnerships are divided across the Pillar II Clusters. Most partnerships run calls for proposals and each call can have different rules. Some partnerships do not use the standard Horizon Europe eligibility rules.

Cross-cluster issue: The New European Bauhaus

The New European Bauhaus (NEB) is part of the EU's agenda of achieving climate neutrality by 2025, reducing net greenhouse-gas emissions, shift to a circular economy, and to protect biodiversity. The NEB will focus on the built environment and bring together all stakeholders, from universities to architects. It will be implemented as a cross-cluster issue in the Horizon Europe work programmes for 2025-2027.

Further information can be found on the [dedicated factsheet](#).

More information

- [Horizon Europe website](#)
- [2025 Work Programmes](#)
- [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#)
- [EU Missions website](#)
- [New European Bauhaus](#)
- [List of Participating Countries in Horizon Europe](#)
- [Pillar II Horizon Europe Partnerships](#)
- [The second Horizon Europe strategic plan 2025-2027](#)
- [Find your UK National Contact Point](#)
- [UK National Contact Point Newsletter](#)

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](#)