
**EN**

# Horizon Europe

# Work Programme 2026-2027

*3. Research Infrastructures*

*(European Commission Decision C(2025) 8493 of 11 December 2025)*

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# Introduction

The Horizon Europe Programme objectives are pursued through this Research Infrastructures work programme part endowing Europe with world-class sustainable[1] research infrastructures which are open and accessible to the best researchers and innovators from Europe and beyond. These research infrastructures are unique assets that stimulate researchers and innovators to "Choose Europe for Science".

This work programme supports activities to consolidate, evolve, open, integrate and interconnect a world leading ecosystem of research services for researchers and innovators in Europe, encompassing both national and pan-European infrastructures. The aim is to cover the continuum of needs from the creation of fundamental knowledge to technology development and innovation, while supporting open science.

The programme is building on continuous policy development under the European Research Area, including the strategy-led approach and roadmap exercise of the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) and the use of the European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) legal instrument. The programme is highly relevant to the Political Guidelines for the European Commission 2024-2029, which highlight that “to lead on innovation, we need to create the conditions for researchers to thrive. This means providing the infrastructure and innovative laboratories they need to test and develop ideas”.

It supports several actions in the European Strategy on Research and Technology Infrastructures [2] , including on schemes for transnational access, on framework for maintenance and upgrade of instrumentation and services, on expanding and enhancing the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) Federation, on strengthening international dimensions, and on attracting and growing talent. It also supports the EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy[3], notably for access of innovative companies to European infrastructures[4], as well as the goals of the AI in Science Strategy and of the Resource for AI Science in Europe (RAISE) contributing to the pooling of resources, data and computing capacity for accelerating the responsible use of AI in science[5]. Finally, it supports many thematic strategies such as on life sciences [6] and on advanced materials [7] , as infrastructures for R&I are one of the key components of these strategies, both through evolving infrastructures in these domains and through improving access schemes[8].

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1 Sustainable refers to the overall “capacity for a research infrastructure to remain operative, effective and competitive over its expected lifetime”. This also encompasses the environmental and resources footprint dimensions.
2 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2025:497:REV1
3 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0270
4 See e.g. topics 2026-DEV-01-02, 2026-DEV-01-04, 2026-TECH-01-01, 2027-TECH-01-01.
5 See e.g. topics 2026-SERV-01-01, 2026-01-EOSC-01, 2026-TECH-01-02, 2027-TECH-01-02.
6 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0525
7 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52024DC0098
8 See e.g. topics 2026-DEV-01-02, 2027-SERV-01-01 and 2027-SERV-01-02.

The programme aims to improve the sustainability of the research infrastructures ecosystem and synergies amongst funding sources, support human resources and skills development for an optimal functioning of research infrastructures, and reinforce the international dimension of research infrastructures in particular with regards to shared global challenges.

Another key aim of the programme is to continue enabling transnational access to research infrastructure services targeting both curiosity-driven research and challenge-driven research, considering also the development of new or customised services to better serve interdisciplinary approaches. Topics under this work programme aim at more integrated and sustained opportunities for transnational access, and it will also promote the training and educational dimensions of access while making sure these activities do not come at the cost of already overbooked transnational access services. The work programme also aims at fostering the uptake of research infrastructure services in other parts of the Horizon Europe programme.

A third key aim is to promote collaboration in the upgrading and design of scientific instruments and tools, including through cooperation with industry and through creating research infrastructure innovation ecosystems, including further engagement with SMEs, startups and scaleups. Reduction of the environmental footprint of research infrastructures is also a focus.

In line with the Strategic R&I Agenda of the 2021-2030 EOSC co-programmed European Partnership, the programme aims at ensuring that open science policies, practices and skills become the norm across the ERA and that the EOSC federation is enlarged through connecting existing research infrastructures in Europe and providing additional value added services based on user needs, also with the view of enabling the European contribution to a web of FAIR data and services.

Finally, the further evolution of the Destination Earth flagship initiative as a digital model of the Earth on a global scale is also supported, with a strong Artificial Intelligence component of the New Digital Twins.

Eligibility to participate is also subject to the ‘Participation of Chinese universities linked to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT)’ eligibility condition (see General Annex B of the General Annexes)’.

The Research Infrastructures work programme is structured around the following five destinations:

**INFRADEV - Consolidation and evolution of the European Research Infrastructure landscape**, to develop an integrated European ecosystem of research infrastructures, including single-sited facilities, distributed facilities and networks of facilities providing joint services.

**INFRAEOSC - Enabling an operational, open and FAIR EOSC ecosystem**, to contribute to a web of FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) research data and provide a trusted and secure federated system of research data and services (EOSC Federation) for researchers in the EU and Associated Countries to store, share, process and reuse within and

across disciplines and borders FAIR research outputs and tools for research, innovation and educational purposes.

**INFRASERV - Research infrastructures services to support a healthier future, a global climate and energy vision, a circular and resilient economy, and to advance frontier knowledge,** to support transnational access to state-of-the-art facilities for researchers and innovators, relevant for a large research domain or in support of societal challenge and EU priorities.

**INFRATECH - Next generation of scientific instrumentation, tools, methods, and advanced digital solutions of research infrastructures, and fostering innovation and co-creation with industry**, to support research infrastructure needs for technology development to maintain and upgrade their services and to create new ones, and to support the Destination Earth initiative.

**INFRANET - Network connectivity in Research and Education – Enabling collaboration without boundaries,** providing high-bandwidth networks and network services to interconnect researchers, data and computing resources in a non-discriminatory way regardless of the location of the users and the resources to allow scientists to conduct excellent research.

# Calls

## Call - Research Infrastructures 2026

***HORIZON-INFRA-2026-01***

### Overview of this call[9]

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

| Topics | Type of Action | Budgets (EUR million) | Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million)[10] | Indicative number of projects expected to be funded |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2026 | | |
| Opening: 10 Mar 2026<br>Deadline(s): 16 Jun 2026 | | | | |
| Destination INFRADEV - Consolidation and evolution of the European Research Infrastructure landscape (2026-27) | | | | |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2026-DEV-01-01: Research infrastructure concept development including major upgrades or extensions of existing infrastructures | RIA | 10.00 | 2.00 to 3.00 | 4 |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2026-DEV-01-02: Consolidation of the research infrastructure landscape – pilots for strategic coordination, synergies and simplified access pathways, by large thematic clusters of pan-European research infrastructures | RIA | 40.00 | 4.00 to 8.00 | 6 |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2026-DEV-01-03: Consolidation of the research infrastructure landscape – individual support for evolution, | RIA | 9.90 | 3.00 to 4.50 | 3 |

[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.

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

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| long-term sustainability and emerging needs of pan-European research infrastructures | | | | |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2026-DEV-01-04: Strengthening the human capital managing research infrastructures, including in international context | CSA | 2.00 | Around 2.00 | 1 |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2026-DEV-01-05: Research infrastructures as accelerators of the integration of Ukraine in the European Research Area | RIA | 8.00 | Around 8.00 | 1 |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2026-DEV-01-06: Strengthening the international dimension of ESFRI and/or ERIC research infrastructures | CSA | 8.00 | 1.00 to 1.50 | 5 |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2026-DEV-01-07: Risk management, mitigation and contingency for ESFRI/ERIC and other world-class research infrastructures | RIA | 10.00 | 1.00 to 4.00 | 3 |
| Destination INFRAEOSC - Enabling an operational, open and FAIR EOSC ecosystem (2026-27) | | | | |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2026-01-EOSC-01: Uptake of FAIR data management practices and of EOSC by research communities and research infrastructures (EOSC Partnership) | RIA | 40.00 | Around 40.00 | 1 |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2026-01-EOSC-02: Trusted frameworks for secure and efficient data sharing in EOSC (EOSC Partnership) | CSA | 10.00 | 3.00 to 5.00 | 2 |
| Destination INFRASERV - Research infrastructures services to support a healthier future, a global climate and energy vision, a circular and resilient economy, and to advance frontier knowledge (2026-27) | | | | |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2026-SERV-01-01: Implementing digital services to empower neuroscience research for health and brain inspired technology via EBRAINS | RIA | 32.00 | Around 32.00 | 1 |
| Destination INFRATECH - Next generation of scientific instrumentation, tools, methods, and advanced digital solutions of research infrastructures and fostering innovation and co-creation with industry (2026-27) | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| HORIZON-INFRA-2026-TECH-01-01: R&D for the next generation of scientific instrumentation, tools, methods, digitalisation and solutions for research infrastructure upgrades | RIA | 110.00 | 5.00 to 10.00 | 11 |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2026-TECH-01-02: Digital twins and/or their major components for environment, climate and security | RIA | 15.00 | 5.00 to 7.50 | 2 |
| Overall indicative budget | | 294.90 | | |

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

## Call - Research Infrastructures 2027

***HORIZON-INFRA-2027-01***

## Overview of this call[11]

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

[11] 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.

| Topics | Type of Action | Budgets (EUR million) | Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million)[12] | Indicative number of projects expected to be funded |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2027 | | |
| Opening: 09 Mar 2027<br>Deadline(s): 15 Jun 2027 | | | | |
| Destination INFRADEV - Consolidation and evolution of the European Research Infrastructure landscape (2026-27) | | | | |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2027-DEV-01-01: Preparatory phase of new ESFRI research infrastructure projects | CSA | 30.00 | 1.50 to 3.50 | 9 |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2027-DEV-01-02: Consolidation of the research infrastructure landscape – development of complementarities, synergies and/or integration between a set of pan-European research infrastructures | RIA | 20.00 | 2.00 to 5.00 | 4 |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2027-DEV-01-03: Consolidation of the research infrastructure landscape – individual support for evolution, long-term sustainability and emerging needs of pan-European research infrastructures | RIA | 29.50 | 3.00 to 4.50 | 8 |
| Destination INFRAEOSC - Enabling an operational, open and FAIR EOSC ecosystem (2026-27) | | | | |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2027-01-EOSC-01: Expanding and deepening the EOSC Federation (EOSC Partnership) | COFUND | 40.00 | Around 40.00 | 1 |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2027-01-EOSC-02: Strengthening the potential of the EOSC for knowledge valorisation and industry-academia collaboration (EOSC Partnership) | CSA | 8.00 | 2.50 to 4.00 | 2 |

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

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Destination INFRASERV - Research infrastructures services to support a healthier future, a global climate and energy vision, a circular and resilient economy, and to advance frontier knowledge (2026-27) | | | | |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2027-SERV-01-01: Access to research infrastructures, their resources and services: large-scale pilots for more integrated scheme across (sub)domains | RIA | 105.00 | Around 35.00 | 3 |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2027-SERV-01-02: Access to research infrastructure services to enable R&I addressing EU priorities and emerging challenges | RIA | 35.00 | Around 6.00 | 6 |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2027-SERV-01-03: Connecting research infrastructures and a wider user community across the European Research Area through access to advanced research infrastructure services | RIA | 12.00 | Around 3.00 | 4 |
| Destination INFRATECH - Next generation of scientific instrumentation, tools, methods, and advanced digital solutions of research infrastructures and fostering innovation and co-creation with industry (2026-27) | | | | |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2027-TECH-01-01: Testing and optimising models of co-creation of advanced research infrastructure technologies | RIA | 30.00 | 10.00 to 15.00 | 2 |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2027-TECH-01-02: Pioneering Destination Earth for a Sustainable Future: Large-Scale Pilots and Demonstrators | RIA | 30.00 | 7.00 to 12.00 | 3 |
| Overall indicative budget | | 339.50 | | |

| **General conditions relating to this call** | |
|---|---|
| *Admissibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex A. |
| *Eligibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex B. |
| *Financial and operational capacity and* | The criteria are described in General Annex |

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

# Destinations

## Destination INFRADEV - Consolidation and evolution of the European Research Infrastructure landscape (2026-27)

The objective of this destination is to consolidate and evolve the European research infrastructure landscape, considering notably the development of pan-European research infrastructures prioritised by ESFRI and the ERICs, and underpinning an effective, coherent and agile European Research Area through an integrated and efficient ecosystem of research infrastructures in Europe. It supports actions targeting various stages of the life-cycle of research infrastructures to develop an integrated European ecosystem of research infrastructures, including single-sited facilities, distributed facilities and networks of facilities providing joint services.

The expected impact of the EU intervention on the activities supported under this destination notably includes:

- Awareness, findability, and accessibility of research infrastructures: from a European portfolio of individual research infrastructures to a European portfolio of user- and challenge-driven complementary R&I services of European interest.

- Further sustainability, consolidation and evolution of the European research infrastructure landscape, with the objective to enhance its capacity and capability to support the continuum of research and innovation needs, with due attention to closing the innovation gap by increased participation of organisations from widening countries and candidate countries. Benefits of developments, notably digitalisation, should be balanced against possible costs for the environment.

- Reinforced international dimension of European research infrastructures, considering EU priorities and targeted objectives, notably for addressing global challenges, taking account of global initiatives and relevant lead ESFRI/ERICs involvement, pooling facilities, data, expertise and other resources and cooperation with other world regions of specific interest, with due attention to research security.

- Strengthened Ukrainian research infrastructure community of users and staff, including individual scientists displaced from Ukraine.

Legal entities established in China are not eligible to participate in both Research and Innovation Actions and Innovation Actions falling under this destination. 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-INFRA-2026-DEV-01-01: Research infrastructure concept development including major upgrades or extensions of existing infrastructures

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2026** | |
|---|---|
| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Research and Innovation Actions |
| *Eligibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:<br>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. |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>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) [13]. |

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

- support to planning and decision making for research infrastructures at the national (e.g. funding bodies, governments) and European level (e.g. ESFRI) through solid science cases, including expected scientific breakthrough, gaps analyses and feasibility/design studies for future research infrastructures or major upgrades or extensions of existing ones;

- a better alignment of the development of the European research infrastructure landscape with the advancements of excellent science, frontier research and technology innovation;

[13] 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

- increased performance, scientific capacity and excellence of the European research infrastructure landscape;
- new services and access opportunities available to the research community, allowing to better tackle scientific and societal challenges, notably in support of strategic research and innovation agendas developed by key EU initiatives;
- reduction of environmental (including climate-related) impacts as well as optimisation of resource and energy consumption integrated in the very early phase of development of new research infrastructures or major upgrades or extensions of existing ones.

Scope: This topic aims at supporting the development of new concepts for the next generation of research infrastructures of European interest[14], single- or multi-sited, distributed or virtual, that none or few countries might individually be able to implement. All fields of research can be considered.

Major upgrades or extensions of existing infrastructures may also be considered if the result is significantly transformative with regards to the scientific outputs or the technical approach of the infrastructure and equivalent to a new infrastructure concept. Proposals considering routine maintenance, incremental gains or just a new component of a research infrastructure are not in scope of this topic[15].

When developing a new concept, applicants should assess as a first option extending the scope of already existing infrastructures and/or sustainably integrating existing pan-European and national capacities to address the specific research infrastructure service needs, identifying what is missing and the new developments necessary.[16] Otherwise, applicants should explicitly justify why this option cannot be considered.

Proposals should demonstrate the uniqueness and added value for the European Research Area (ERA) of the new, upgraded or extended research infrastructure, considering the European landscape of research infrastructures and the ESFRI landscape analysis and, where relevant, the capacity to better tackle scientific and societal challenges, notably in support of strategic research and innovation agendas developed by key EU initiatives including European Partnerships[17].

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14 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.

15 Unlike a major upgrade or extension, the research infrastructure complemented by its new component is not equivalent to a new infrastructure concept and is not transformative enough to qualify as the next generation of research infrastructure of European interest

16 This option considers a new concept, which could develop independently and would qualify, alone, as a next generation of research infrastructure of European interest but which, for the sake of sustainability and consolidation of the European landscape of research infrastructures, would benefit from developing by extending or integrating into an existing research infrastructure.

17 https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/european-partnerships-horizon-europe_en#what-are-european-partnerships

Proposals for research infrastructure concept development should tackle all key questions concerning the technical and conceptual feasibility of new, upgraded or extended fully fledged user facilities.

In this respect, proposals should address all of the following aspects:

- demonstrate relevance in relation to the ERA, including to the existing landscape, and the expected advancement with respect to the state-of-art of the new, upgraded or extended infrastructure;
- highlight the research challenges the new, upgraded or extended research infrastructures will make possible to address, including at global level;
- indicate the gaps in the research infrastructure landscape the new, upgraded or extended infrastructure will cover and the synergies with other existing infrastructures at European and global level, including those co-financed from other EU instruments such as through Cohesion funds;
- indicate, when relevant, the potential impact of the new research infrastructure at regional level.

Proposals should also convincingly demonstrate that the project will effectively:

- identify technologies, with due attention to technology sovereignty, and the architecture (e.g. single site or distributed) for developing the research infrastructure;
- identify scientific user communities (and their related needs) that will benefit from access to research infrastructure services, including scientific data and instrumentation, and develop the planning of research services to users;
- identify governance options as well as strategic approaches for institutional/stakeholders' commitment and engagement, as well as for ensuring a wide membership;
- develop initial financial plans for the implementation and operation of the new, upgraded or extended research infrastructure as well as preliminary ideas for long-term sustainability, including synergies with other funds and programmes (e.g. ERDF for construction);
- develop plans for efficient data curation and preservation and for the provision of access to data collected or produced by the future infrastructure, in line with the FAIR principles.

When relevant, ethical dimensions, environmental (including climate-related) impacts as well as the optimisation of resource and energy use should be integrated in the concept development of new, upgraded or extended research infrastructures. In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

Proposals could consider the inclusion of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) Flagship Research Infrastructure projects that the JRC is planning to set-up to address new and upcoming priorities of the European Commission in the coming decades. 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-INFRA-2026-DEV-01-02: Consolidation of the research infrastructure landscape – pilots for strategic coordination, synergies and simplified access pathways, by large thematic clusters of pan-European research infrastructures**

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2026** | |
|---|---|
| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 4.00 and 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 40.00 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Research and Innovation Actions |
| *Eligibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:<br>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. |
| *Procedure* | The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:<br>To ensure a balanced portfolio covering the different domains, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least also to those proposals that are the highest ranked within each ESFRI domain, provided that the applications attain all thresholds. |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>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 relevant outputs generated by this action 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 beyond the lifespan of the |

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| | Grant Agreement .<br>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) [18]. |

Expected Outcome:

- Policy contribution, impact and visibility of research infrastructures of European interest, by large thematic domain, to relevant EU policy and priority initiatives, including beyond research, at national, regional, European and global level.
- Improved coordination, complementarities, and where applicable, interoperability, harmonisation, integration and synergies among research infrastructures within large thematic domains and, where relevant, across domains.
- A European portfolio of R&I services of European interest, supported by a common front page and few single-entry point access portals, integrated or interoperable catalogues of R&I services and converging access conditions and selection procedures, strengthening the European landscape of ESFRI-prioritised infrastructures and other world-class research infrastructures by large thematic domains.
- Increased awareness, findability and accessibility of research infrastructures for European researchers and innovators; simplified and adapted access pathways for new needs or new communities of users (e.g. where relevant, multidisciplinary R&I, EU collaborative research projects, EU operational or deployment programmes, public authorities, and industry, including SMEs, startups and scaleups).

Scope: This topic aims at equipping large thematic clusters of research infrastructures of European interest with a policy arm combined with a technical arm, to increase awareness, findability and accessibility, better matching user needs. This thematic clustering is aligned with ESFRI approach: proposals should explicitly state which ESFRI domain[19] they address (see specific conditions on procedure for ranking proposals). Proposals should foresee close collaboration across projects under this topic to ensure, where applicable, policy coordination, technical interoperability and other synergies.

[18] 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

[19] ESFRI domains: 1. Data, Computing and Digital Research Infrastructures; 2. Energy; 3. Environment; 4. Health & Food; 5. Physical Sciences and Engineering; 6. Social Sciences & Humanities. See ESFRI Landscape Analysis 2024 https://landscape2024.esfri.eu/.

Building on the clusters under Horizon 2020[20]and Horizon Europe[21], on the development of catalogues of services, and on new access pathways and improved services such as under Horizon Europe INFRASERV[22] projects, proposals should address all of the following aspects:

- Strengthening the representation of the research infrastructures cluster, as a single or coordinated voice, in key EU policy developments and strategic initiatives and contribute to policies in their domain with a research infrastructure component. Coordination with cross-domains fora, such as the ERIC Forum and EIROforum should also be ensured.

- Strengthening coordination among research infrastructures to foster complementarities, interoperability, harmonisation, integration and synergies within the domain, and where relevant with other domains to address increasingly complex and multidisciplinary science and technology challenges.

- Developing, optimising and connecting catalogues of research infrastructures services of European interest. Attention is required to new users, notably researchers and innovators from widening countries and candidate countries, industry (including SMEs, startups and scaleups), early-stage career researchers, and non-expert users. Flexibility to address future needs should be considered.

- Developing and implementing intermediary services, user support, tools and notably AI assisted research infrastructure services navigation. When relevant, resulting data and digital services should be made accessible through EOSC.

- Elaborating and promoting indicators flagging the strategic relevance of specific research infrastructures services to key EU R&I priorities and initiatives, including through common or coordinated impact assessments, and possible validation mechanisms with these initiatives.

Proposals should involve, not necessarily as beneficiaries, ESFRI Landmarks and Projects and/or ERICs in the domain, other research infrastructures that are international European research organisations and, where relevant, well-established networks of key European research infrastructures open to external users. Proposals should elaborate on which key EU priorities and initiatives (such as Horizon Europe partnerships, missions) they will consider and the nature and objectives of the envisaged coordination mechanisms or joint activities.

To ensure a holistic view from design to implementation of possible access schemes, proposals should ensure strong and continuous collaboration with the cross-domain

20 Implementation and operation of cross-cutting services and solutions for clusters and Connecting ESFRI infrastructures through Cluster projects.

21 Preparation of common strategies for future development of RI technologies and services within broad RI communities – https://cordis.europa.eu/programme/id/HORIZON_HORIZON-INFRA-2023-DEV-01-05/en

22 Research infrastructure services to enable R&I addressing main challenges and EU priorities and advancing frontier knowledge - cordis link

preparatory action exploring a more integrated and sustainable scheme for access to research infrastructures HORIZON-INFRA-2025-01-DEV-05[23], and the actions supported under topics HORIZON-INFRA-2027-01-SERV-01 and HORIZON-INFRA-2027-01-SERV-02. This collaboration should ensure a common front page to all above actions highlighting the common objectives of EU supported access, the main conditions and requirements, providing preliminary guidance on access opportunities and directing to the single-entry point portal of each pilot of HORIZON-INFRA-2027-SERV-01-01. The collaboration should also promote simplified access pathways, good practices on call conditions, converging access modalities and selection process, and effective governance of the set of projects acting as an access programme with appropriate advisory bodies.

Proposals could consider the inclusion of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) research infrastructures in the area of health and food. 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-INFRA-2026-DEV-01-03: Consolidation of the research infrastructure landscape – individual support for evolution, long-term sustainability and emerging needs of pan-European research infrastructures**

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2026** | |
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| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.90 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Research and Innovation Actions |
| *Eligibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:<br>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:<br>Due to the scope of this topic, proposals must include at least one of the ESFRI Landmarks [24] or European Research Infrastructure Consortia (ERICs) [25] as beneficiary. Such beneficiaries, and the research infrastructure(s) that they operate, must be explicitly identified in the |

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

[24] 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).

[25] European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) | European Commission (europa.eu)

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| | proposal. For distributed ERIC the ERIC must be the beneficiary. |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>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) [26].<br><br>The funding rate is 80% of the eligible costs. |

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

- better structured and strengthened European research infrastructure landscape;
- new services available to a wider user community, including participants in other parts of Horizon Europe, allowing to better tackle scientific and societal challenges;
- increased capacity to address EU policy priorities and/or socio-economic challenges;
- reinforced global competitiveness of the European Research Area;
- reduction of environmental (including climate-related) impacts as well as optimisation of resource and energy consumption integrated through the full life cycle of research infrastructures;
- increased long-term sustainability of European research infrastructures.

Scope: This topic targets the consolidation of the EU research infrastructures landscape through the support, together with the countries that are members of the research infrastructures, to the strengthening, long-term sustainability, reorientation or evolution of ESFRI Landmarks[27] or European Research Infrastructure Consortia (ERICs)[28].

[26] 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

[27] See list of ESFRI Landmarks in the ESFRI RIs PORTFOLIO https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/

[28] See 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

The proposed action should justify the specific objectives and focus on activities that are critical for the sustainability and optimised use of the ESFRI Landmarks or ERICs, such as activities aiming at several of the following objectives:

- enlargement of the membership or broadening of the base of participating countries, notably widening countries and candidate countries;
- addressing critical aspects raised following an assessment or monitoring exercise, e.g. in the context of ESFRI activities;
- reinforcing international cooperation;
- revision of business/funding plan;
- development of managerial and technical skills for research infrastructure staff;
- structuring and strengthening of national/thematic nodes;
- extension of remote and/or virtual access;
- management of research data according to the FAIR principles;
- reorientation or evolution of the research infrastructure scope;
- development, update and or implementation of impact assessment of the research infrastructure.

In case of reorientation or evolution of the research infrastructure scope, activities should fill gaps in the research infrastructures landscape[29], enabling the research infrastructure to address new research or societal challenges and/or serve new user communities, increasing and improving service capacity and/or integrating new resources/facilities.

Due attention should be given to related EU initiatives, strategies and priorities and, where relevant, to complementarity and relevance to activities in other parts of Horizon Europe, such as better addressing SRIAs of Horizon Europe partnerships. Proposals should explain concrete complementarities and any synergies with previous or current EU grants, notably under the research infrastructures part of the Horizon Europe work programme, e.g. INFRADEV and INFRATECH grants.

Given the funding rate, proposals should ensure a minimum adequate backing by the beneficiaries, who should provide the remaining share for the activities covered by the Grant Agreement and foster the sustainability of the ESFRI Landmark or ERIC.

Specific attention should be given, where relevant, to the greening of technologies and methodologies used by the research infrastructure, to the interaction with industry/SMEs, to

[29] Although the action aims at individual support to a pan-European research infrastructure, applicants should consider the ESFRI Landscape Analysis and liaise during the action with other relevant ESFRI/ERICs to ensure complementarity https://landscape2024.esfri.eu/ .

the fostering of the innovation potential of the infrastructures, and to their integration into local, regional and global innovation ecosystems.

**HORIZON-INFRA-2026-DEV-01-04: Strengthening the human capital managing research infrastructures, including in international context**

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2026** | |
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| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 2.00 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Coordination and Support Actions |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>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) [30]. |

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

- Specialised training provided to the staff managing research infrastructures of European interest, enhancing the skills of RI research infrastructure staff as regards planning future operations and engaging with their various user communities and stakeholder groups (including funding agencies, academia, industry).
- Broader understanding of the EU research infrastructures policy, the possibilities for transnational access and the basics of international research infrastructures cooperation, be it via ERIC creation and development or other governance models.
- Shared understanding of the possibilities and potential offered by EU policies and funding instruments, improving the impact of research infrastructures and enhancing

[30] 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

European scientific capacities. The completion of the training programme should lead to recognised accreditation in ECTS points.

Scope: This topic aims at the training of staff managing research infrastructures, the adequate supply of skilled human resources, and strengthening and sustaining specific education curricula and courses with due attention to widening and candidate countries as well as to evolving research infrastructure environments.

The complexity of research infrastructures and the exploitation of their full potential require adequate skills for their managers. Research infrastructures are built and operated at the cutting edge of what is technologically feasible, involving a high associated risk that needs to be managed.

They may involve a wide consortium of partners for their funding, construction and operation, either because they are distributed research infrastructures, or because certain problems are of a scale that can only be tackled through European and international cooperation.

This renders their governance and the associated financial and legal issues a complex problem. The skills and expertise specifically needed to effectively construct, manage and use research infrastructures are therefore not widely available.

Proposals should build on existing curricula such as those developed under the RItrainplus[31] project and strengthen and continue professionalising the training offer including through sustained and recognised executive master's in management of research infrastructures. Proposals should pay attention to the upskilling of research infrastructures managers with regard to the impact of increased digitalisation of research infrastructures, including use of AI, further internationalisation and geopolitical changes, and closer links to industry. Proposals should engage with pan-European research infrastructures such as those prioritised by ESFRI, ERICs and EIROforum, to ensure the proposed training fits the needs of complex research infrastructures.

The proposed action should include several of the following objectives:

- Support the training of staff managing research infrastructures, and exchanges of staff and best practices. The training may also be offered to students engaged with a research infrastructure or aiming at a research infrastructure career path.

- Develop specific education curricula and courses targeting pan-European research infrastructures, taking into account their diverse scientific fields and organisational models; in doing this, engagement with universities is expected.

- Offer dedicated scholarships to staff in Ukrainian research infrastructures, while promoting and disseminating training opportunities to widening and candidate countries in particular.

[31] RItrainPlus - RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE TRAINING PLUS https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101008503

- Address training topics such as the socioeconomic impact of research infrastructures, scientific capabilities and capacity, engagement with academic users and industry (including understanding the needs of startups and scaleups), in-depth guidance on State Aid rules, and the long-term financial and environmental sustainability of the infrastructure's activities.

- Address the areas of data management, exploitation and stewardship skills, FAIR principles and data protection rules.

- Pay attention to training research infrastructure staff in the different governance models for international research infrastructure collaborations, across different scientific fields, taking stock of the rapidly evolving geopolitical context.

- Address training on research security and provide an overview of how research infrastructures need to face these challenges in their operations.

- Report on the sustainability of the training activities, and engage with national agencies, ERICs, international organisations, and other relevant stakeholders.

- Demonstrate an evolution based on related past activities and the experience gained in projects such as RAMIRI (Realising and Managing International Research Infrastructures) and RItrain (Research Infrastructures Training Programme).

**HORIZON-INFRA-2026-DEV-01-05: Research infrastructures as accelerators of the integration of Ukraine in the European Research Area**

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2026** | |
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| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | 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. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Research and Innovation Actions |
| *Eligibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:<br>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.<br>The following additional eligibility criteria apply: in order to achieve the expected objectives of the action, the application must include at least |

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| | three legal entities as beneficiaries established in different Member States/Associated Countries, including at least one legal entity established in the government controlled territories of Ukraine. |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>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.<br>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) [32]. |

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

- Strong and sustainable collaboration frameworks between Ukrainian and European research infrastructures, supporting joint research initiatives.
- An early phase implementation plan for the reconstruction and upgrade of Ukrainian research infrastructures, aligning with the priorities of the ERA Policy Agenda.
- Remote access of Ukrainian researchers and innovators to European research infrastructures, allowing them to participate in scientifically excellent projects across various fields and enhancing their integration into the ERA.
- Remote fellowships for researchers based in Ukraine for research activities related to scientific instrumentation and advanced methods in collaboration with European research infrastructures.
- Effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the progress and impact of integration efforts, ensuring objectives are met and supporting continuous improvement and adaptation.

Scope: The objective of the topic is the utilisation of Europe's research infrastructure landscape to facilitate the integration of Ukraine in the European Research Area. Proposals should build on the Coordination and Support Action "assessing the state of research infrastructure in Ukraine" resulting from the 2024 topic. Moreover, they should include the provision of remote fellowships for researchers based in Ukraine to collaborate on technology

[32] 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

development with European research infrastructures, building on the model of the EURIZON project[33] (proposals may use financial support to third parties for that purpose).

Proposals should address all of the following aspects:

- Support the design of an early phase implementation plan of the roadmap of the development, reconstruction and reorientation of Ukraine's RI capacity based on the 2024 Coordination and Support Action, and the recommendations of the EURIZON project.
- Foster collaboration and networking with Ukrainian research infrastructures, enabling joint research initiatives via remote fellowships, shared use of facilities, including possible short-term researcher exchanges, and the co-development of scientific methodologies, while supporting initiatives of European research infrastructures donating equipment to Ukrainian research institutions.
- Offer remote access for Ukrainian researchers to European RIs, supporting their participation in scientifically excellent projects across various fields, thereby enhancing their research capabilities and integration into the European scientific community.
- Identify and align investment opportunities, leveraging EU funding mechanisms to prioritise the development and reconstruction of Ukrainian research infrastructures.

Proposals could consider the inclusion of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) research infrastructure offering transnational access to external users to a portfolio of 18 facilities in the nuclear and non-nuclear area. 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 this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**HORIZON-INFRA-2026-DEV-01-06: Strengthening the international dimension of ESFRI and/or ERIC research infrastructures**

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2026** | |
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| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 1.00 and 1.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million. |

[33] EURIZON - European network for developing new horizons for RIs https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/871072

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| *Type of Action* | Coordination and Support Actions |
| *Eligibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:<br>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.<br>The following additional eligibility criteria apply: in order to achieve the expected objectives of the action, consortia must include, as beneficiary, at least one ESFRI Landmark[34] and/or European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC)[35] and, as beneficiary or as associated partner, at least one legal entity established in a non-associated third country. |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>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) [36]. |

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

- New or enhanced, effective cooperation of European research infrastructures with key international partners;
- Strengthened position of European research infrastructures in the global research infrastructure landscape;
- Increased opportunities for the development of global research infrastructures, including proposals expanding the geographical coverage of ongoing collaborations;
- Increased capacity to address societal challenges with a global dimension, including collaborations in areas such as environmental monitoring or health;

34 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).

35 European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) | European Commission (europa.eu)

36 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

- Reinforced global competitiveness and performance of the European Research Area.

Scope: This topic aims at supporting the cooperation of pan-European research infrastructures with their international (non-European) counterparts, and/or fostering the international engagement of ESFRI and ERIC research infrastructures through their involvement in global research infrastructure initiatives[37].

Proposals should describe shared objectives and governance of the collaboration, building on the criteria developed by the Group of Senior Officials on Global Research Infrastructures[38].

Proposals should pay attention to the following aspects:

- The long-term sustainability of joint activities; beyond the immediate results of the project, the prospects for the collaboration to be sustained should be described. Methods and governance models should be explored. Activities leading to agreements on data sharing or co-financing reciprocal activities are welcome.

- Opportunities (access and data sharing) available to European scientists; proposals should elaborate on the data dimension of their activities, and in which way access will be ensured over time.

- Fostering global interoperability and coverage (when appropriate) of data;

- Exchanging best practices between user communities and managers of research infrastructures as regard, for instance, harmonisation of tests, standards, reference materials, interoperability and data handling.

While the main target of this topic is the cooperation between an individual pan-European infrastructure and its international counterparts in one or more third countries, proposals could also involve a set of pan-European infrastructures with their international counterparts if relevant for the chosen research field.

Proposals should describe the EU benefit of any EU contribution requested by non-associated third countries, by explaining the new services or knowledge made accessible to EU researchers via the collaboration.

Proposals should consider the Council Recommendation of 23 May 2024 on enhancing research security[39] and take into account its principles for responsible internationalisation.

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37 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

38 https://www.gsogri.org/

39 Council Recommendation of 23 May 2024 on enhancing research security

## HORIZON-INFRA-2026-DEV-01-07: Risk management, mitigation and contingency for ESFRI/ERIC and other world-class research infrastructures

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2026** | |
|---|---|
| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 1.00 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. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Research and Innovation Actions |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>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) [40]. |

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

- European research infrastructures benefit from more robust risk management plans notably in the climate, biodiversity loss, pollution, health and social science domains and the risks related to access to critical data, equipment or facilities;
- European research infrastructures have implemented mitigation plans and, where needed, contingency plans for the most critical risks such as preservation of critical data, geographical coverage, alternative methods, tools, equipment, new or strengthened collaborations;
- EU and Member States are better informed on critical research infrastructures and critical R&I services and able to develop policy to preserve critical data, knowledge and capacities.

[40] 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

- The European Research Area benefits from more information about critical research infrastructures and R&I services, and from a preserved capacity and research freedom to address its priorities and socio-economic challenges;

- The global competitiveness and attractiveness of the European Research Area is reinforced.

Scope: This topic targets pan-European research infrastructures such as ESFRI research infrastructures[41], ERICs[42] and other world-class research infrastructures in Europe notably in the fields of climate, health and social sciences and aims at supporting these infrastructures in implementing mitigation and contingency plans for critical risks.

Pan-European research infrastructures such as those prioritised by ESFRI, ERICs, and other world-class research infrastructures in Europe often engage in international collaboration in areas where global coverage is essential for knowledge creation, like for example climate understanding and modelling or pandemic preparedness, or where a critical mass is needed.

Proposals should involve research infrastructures that are sharing similar or related risks, which could be better addressed by common or coordinated implementation of mitigation and, where needed, contingency plans. Proposals should pay due attention to the importance of sustaining such plans beyond the project's duration.

Proposed actions under this topic should

- Describe capacities at risk, be it due to shrinking geographical coverage or to loss or interruption of data, limited access or expansive access fees to data, to equipment, to facilities, supply challenges (see ESFRI work[43]) etc. and where relevant update risk management plans. Exchange best practices on risk-assessment and develop guidance.

- Describe where applicable the expected impact of realised risks beyond the research infrastructures concerned i.e. impact on related operational or deployment programme where relevant, on international agreements, on addressing EU priorities, on EU competitiveness, on EU strategic autonomy; in this context, identify which research infrastructures services could qualify as 'critical R&I services'.

- Implement mitigation and, where applicable, contingency plans to address capacities at risk, in order to ensure the sustainability of the research infrastructure concerned as well as to preserve EU capacity and research freedom to address its policy, priorities and socio-economic challenges investments across Europe for trusted and secure storage, processing and sharing of critical data including through EOSC.

41 ESFRI RIs PORTFOLIO https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/

42 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

43 ESFRI Report on Energy and Supply Challenges of Research Infrastructures ESFRI Report on Energy and Supply Challenges of Research Infrastructures | www.esfri.eu

- Develop guidance and disseminate best practices on risk-assessment and research security, taking into account EU recommendations in the field of research security and foreign interference. Where relevant, links to initiatives such as the development of a European centre of expertise on research security should be explored.

**HORIZON-INFRA-2027-DEV-01-01: Preparatory phase of new ESFRI research infrastructure projects**

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2027** | |
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| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 1.50 and 3.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 30.00 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Coordination and Support Actions |
| *Eligibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:<br>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. |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>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) [44]. |

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

- Increased performance, scientific capacity and excellence of the European landscape of research infrastructures enhancing problem-solving capacities of the ERA to address challenges in science, industry and society;

[44] 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

- Legal, financial and technical issues addressed, leading to long-term perspective for research infrastructure investments and the establishment of a new research infrastructure and ensuring commitment of Member States/Associated Countries to their long-term operation and use;

- Solid ground for the decision making on new research infrastructures (or major upgrades), is available to Member States/Associated Countries, their funding bodies and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. international organisations, third countries, foundations);

- Structuring effect on the ERA through a consistent and well-functioning European research infrastructures ecosystem through the development of synergies and complementarities between new and existing research infrastructures, and with other infrastructures such as technology infrastructures and infrastructures financed by ERDF or the Digital Europe Programme.

Scope: This topic supports the preparatory phase of new ESFRI research infrastructure projects identified in the 2026 update of the ESFRI Roadmap. These ESFRI projects have been selected for the excellence of their scientific case and for their strategic importance for the European Research Area and the structuring of the European research infrastructure ecosystem.

Proposal consortia should involve all the stakeholders necessary to move the project forward, to take the decisions, and to make financial commitments, before construction can start (including, but not limited to, national/regional ministries/governments, research councils or funding agencies from the countries that have already declared their commitment in the application to ESFRI). Operators of research facilities, research centres, universities, and industry may also be involved whenever appropriate.

Proposals for research infrastructure preparatory phases should tackle all key questions concerning legal, financial and technical issues leading to the establishment of a new research infrastructure and ensuring commitment of Member States/Associated Countries to their long-term operation and use in all fields of science.

In this respect, proposals should address all of the following aspects:

- the development of legal and financial frameworks/plans relating to the setting-up, construction and/or integration of national resources, operation and decommissioning of the research infrastructure as well as its governance structure; the complementarities between national and EU instruments and/or innovative financing;

- the preparation of legal and financial agreements, including site, governance, internal rules, financing of the new research infrastructures. These are deliverables that should be finalised before the end of the project (e.g.: through a Memorandum of Understanding; a 'signature-ready' document for the setting-up and the actual implementation of the research infrastructure);

- the establishment of plans for logistics and human resources management, in relation to the construction/integration and future operation, including RI service provision as well as for an efficient data curation and preservation and for the provision of access to data collected or produced by the future infrastructure, in line with the FAIR principles;
- the technical challenges concerning the joint development, transfer of knowledge and implementation of key RI technologies and the completion of the final technical design of the infrastructure;
- the development of plans for the provision of RI services to identified scientific user communities;
- the relevance of the RI for science and society, including its socio-economic impacts at local/regional level and links with the smart specialisation strategies at regional level.

Proposals should explain any synergies and complementarities with previous or current EU grants notably under the research infrastructures part of the Horizon Europe work programme.

When relevant, environmental (including climate-related) impacts as well as the optimisation of resource and energy use should be integrated in the preparatory phase of new or upgraded research infrastructures.

**HORIZON-INFRA-2027-DEV-01-02: Consolidation of the research infrastructure landscape – development of complementarities, synergies and/or integration between a set of pan-European research infrastructures**

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2027** | |
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| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 20.00 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Research and Innovation Actions |
| *Eligibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:<br>Due to the scope of this topic, proposals must include at least one of the ESFRI Landmarks [45] or European Research Infrastructure Consortia |

[45] 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).

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| | (ERICs) [46] as beneficiaries. Such beneficiaries, and the research infrastructure(s) that they operate, must be explicitly identified in the proposal. For distributed ERIC the ERIC must be the beneficiary. |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>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) [47]. |

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

- better structured, integrated and strengthened European research infrastructure landscape;
- solid concepts and/or comprehensive plans for the integrated research infrastructures, to support decision making at national and European level, leading to increased sustainability, operational and financial efficiency;
- increased synergies between research infrastructures;
- increased capacity to address EU policy priorities and/or support EU industry;
- reinforced global competitiveness and attractiveness of the European Research Area.

Scope: This topic targets the consolidation and improved functioning of the EU RI landscape through the support to the development of complementarities, synergies and/or integration between a set (two or more) of ESFRI Landmarks and/or other European Research Infrastructure Consortia (ERICs) or, if duly justified, between one ESFRI Landmark or ERIC and other European research infrastructures of European interest[48].

Proposals could address either a tighter operational integration between infrastructures, or instead the feasibility and the planning of a merging between infrastructures, which could be targeted in future by a specific topic. The rationale and the potential benefits of the planned consolidation action should be clearly spelled out in the proposals.

46 European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) | European Commission (europa.eu)

47 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

48 A research infrastructure is of European interest when it is able to attract users from EU or associated countries other than the country where the infrastructure is located.

When addressing an operational integration, projects will develop complementarities and/or synergies between infrastructures, at thematic and/or cross-disciplinary level, to optimise the functioning of the RI landscape. The development of complementarities (e.g. through service level agreements for the sharing of horizontal/common services/tools, including external ones) should lead to increased efficiency and prevent unnecessary duplications. Synergies should be exploited to address complex research challenges and EU priorities and should be implemented through cooperation mechanisms ensuring sustainable and long-term integration of services and resources (e.g. common horizontal services, joint scientific services). The needed joint staff skill development, including exchange programmes among the participating RIs, could also be supported.

When addressing a merging between infrastructures, proposals should provide evidence that the project will effectively involve the funders of the different infrastructures, develop the concept of the merged infrastructure in all its dimensions, including governance, legal form and operation, and define the operational steps and the financial forecast for the actual merging process. Where relevant, pilots for the integration of services and resources (e.g. common horizontal services, joint scientific services) as well as joint staff skill development, including exchange programmes will also be supported.

Proposals should explain any synergies and complementarities with previous or current EU grants notably under the research infrastructures part of the Horizon Europe work programme[49].

**HORIZON-INFRA-2027-DEV-01-03: Consolidation of the research infrastructure landscape – individual support for evolution, long-term sustainability and emerging needs of pan-European research infrastructures**

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2027** | |
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| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 29.50 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Research and Innovation Actions |
| *Eligibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: |

[49] Such as under topic HORIZON-INFRA-2023-DEV-01-04: Consolidation of the RI landscape – development of complementarities, synergies and/or integration between a set of pan- European research infrastructures https://cordis.europa.eu/programme/id/HORIZON_HORIZON-INFRA-2023-DEV-01-04/en

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| | Due to the scope of this topic, proposals must include at least one of the ESFRI Landmarks [50] or European Research Infrastructure Consortia (ERICs) [51] as beneficiaries. Such beneficiaries, and the research infrastructure(s) that they operate, must be explicitly identified in the proposal. For distributed ERIC the ERIC must be the beneficiary. |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>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) [52].<br>The funding rate is 80% of the eligible costs. |

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

- better structured and strengthened European research infrastructure landscape;
- new services available to a wider user community, including participants in other parts of Horizon Europe, allowing to better tackle scientific and societal challenges;
- increased capacity to address EU policy priorities and/or socio-economic challenges;
- reinforced global competitiveness of the European Research Area;
- reduction of environmental (including climate-related) impacts as well as optimisation of resource and energy consumption integrated through the full life cycle of research infrastructures;
- increased long-term sustainability of European research infrastructures.

Scope: This topic targets the consolidation of the EU research infrastructures landscape through the support, together with the countries that are members of the research infrastructures, to the strengthening, long-term sustainability, reorientation or evolution of ESFRI Landmarks or European Research Infrastructure Consortia (ERICs).

50 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).

51 European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) | European Commission (europa.eu)

52 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

The proposed action should justify the specific objectives and focus on activities that are critical for the sustainability and optimised use of the ESFRI Landmarks or ERICs, such as activities aiming at several of the following objectives:

- enlargement of the membership or broadening of the base of participating countries, notably widening countries and candidate countries;
- addressing critical aspects raised following an assessment or monitoring exercise, e.g. in the context of ESFRI activities;
- reinforcing international cooperation;
- revision of business/funding plan;
- development of managerial and technical skills for research infrastructure staff;
- structuring and strengthening of national/thematic nodes;
- extension of remote and/or virtual access;
- management of research data according to the FAIR principles;
- reorientation or evolution of the research infrastructure scope;
- development, update and or implementation of impact assessment of the research infrastructure.

In case of reorientation or evolution of the research infrastructure scope, activities should fill gaps in the research infrastructures landscape[53], enabling the research infrastructure to address new research or societal challenges and/or serve new user communities, increasing and improving service capacity and/or integrating new resources/facilities.

Due attention must be given to related EU initiatives, strategies and priorities and, when relevant, to complementarity and relevance to activities in other parts of Horizon Europe, such as better addressing SRIAs of Horizon Europe partnerships. Proposals should explain any synergies with previous or current EU grants notably under the research infrastructures part of the Horizon Europe work programme e.g. INFRADEV and INFRATECH grants.

Given the funding rate, proposals should ensure a minimum adequate backing by the beneficiaries, who should provide the remaining share for the activities covered by the Grant Agreement and foster the sustainability of the ESFRI Landmark or ERIC.

Specific attention should be given, where relevant, to the greening of technologies and methodologies used by the research infrastructure, to the interaction with industry/SMEs, to

[53] Although the action aims at individual support to a pan-European research infrastructure, applicants should consider the ESFRI Landscape Analysis and liaise during the action with other relevant ESFRI/ERICs to ensure complementarity.

the fostering of the innovation potential of the infrastructures, and to their integration into local, regional and global innovation ecosystems.

## Destination INFRAEOSC - Enabling an operational, open and FAIR EOSC ecosystem (2026-27)

This destination serves the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) ambition of contributing to a web of FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) research data and providing a trusted and secure federated system of research data and services (EOSC Federation) for researchers in the EU and Associated Countries to store, share, process and reuse within and across disciplines and borders FAIR research outputs and tools for research, innovation and educational purposes.

The expected impacts of the activities supported under this destination are in line with objectives of the co-programmed European Partnership for EOSC and its Strategic R&I Agenda[54], in particular:

- Enable the definition of standards, and the development of tools and services, to allow researchers to find, access, reuse and combine results;
- Establish a sustainable and federated infrastructure enabling open sharing and reuse of scientific results;
- Ensure that Open Science practices and skills are rewarded and taught, becoming the norm across the European Research Area.

Activities should continue to transform the research landscape in Europe by bringing cohesion and addressing common needs of the research communities. The programme should catalyse a fully operational environment covering the whole research data lifecycle across borders and communities.

To further advance this ambition, the EU must continue investing in dedicated activities and ensure synergies between EOSC-related actions at the EU, national, institutional and community levels.

All software developed under this destination should be open-source, licensed under a CC0 public domain dedication, EUPL[55] or under an open-source licence as recommended by the Free Software Foundation[56] and the Open-Source Initiative[57].

All projects financed under this destination are expected to participate in concertation activities in the framework of the EOSC Partnership.

Legal entities established in China are not eligible to participate in both Research and Innovation Actions and Innovation Actions falling under this destination. For additional information please see “Restrictions on the participation of legal entities established in China” found in General Annex B of the General Annexes.

54 https://eosc.eu/eosc-about/sria-mar/
55 https://interoperable-europe.ec.europa.eu/collection/eupl/eupl-text-eupl-12
56 https://www.gnu.org/licenses/license-list#SoftwareLicenses
57 https://opensource.org/licenses

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-INFRA-2026-01-EOSC-01: Uptake of FAIR data management practices and of EOSC by research communities and research infrastructures (EOSC Partnership)**

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2026** | |
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| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 40.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 40.00 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Research and Innovation Actions |
| *Award criteria* | The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply:<br>The following additions to the general award criteria apply:<br>For the 'Impact' criterion, the following aspects will also be taken into account:<br>The extent to which the proposed work incorporates the necessary coordination efforts and resources with other relevant projects and the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) governance structure in the context of the EOSC Partnership. |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. Given that the financial support to third parties is one of the primary aims of the action and taking into account the nature of the work to be supported and the cross-RI, cross-domain nature of the intended open science projects and services, the maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 750 000. The selection of the third parties to be supported will be based on an external independent peer review of their proposed work. Research infrastructures which are beneficiaries/affiliated entities of the consortium awarded may exceptionally also be recipients of financial support to third parties. Proposals must explain how they will ensure that such beneficiaries/affiliated entities are not involved in the drafting and selection procedure of the calls, and explain measures, in order to avoid conflicts of interest and equal treatment of applicants and to maintain |

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| | confidentiality.<br>The open calls should respect the conditions laid out in Section B of the General Annexes, including transparency, equal treatment, conflict of interest and confidentiality.<br>Beneficiaries will be subject to the following additional access rights: Each beneficiary must grant royalty-free access to its results to the EOSC Association for monitoring and developing policies and strategies for the European Open Science Cloud. Each beneficiary must also provide directly to the EOSC Association the information the beneficiary deems necessary for monitoring and developing policies and strategies for the European Open Science Cloud.<br>Beneficiaries and supported third parties must deposit the digital results generated in the action in a trusted repository federated in EOSC in compliance with EOSC requirements. |

Expected Outcome:

- Increased adoption of open science and research data management practices in line with the FAIR principles by researchers and across research infrastructures (RIs) in Europe.
- Increased uptake of the EOSC Federation by researchers through the long-term sustainable provision in the Federation of scientific services and high-quality, FAIR research data, and their integration in scientific workflows addressing current gaps and needs of research communities.
- Research communities, as well as ESFRI and other European research infrastructures increase their alignment with EOSC standards and policies, and their capacity to integrate in the EOSC Federation.

Scope: This topic aims to further increase across Europe the adoption of open science and research data management practices in line with the FAIR principles, and to support the development of a user-focused and science-driven EOSC Federation.

It capitalises on the previous work by Science Clusters in enabling open science practices, FAIR implementation and managing open calls for multi-disciplinary science projects. It also builds on the experience by several RIs and other organisations as active participants in building the EOSC Federation, either through the establishment of EOSC nodes or the onboarding of resources to EOSC nodes[58], to support the engagement of underrepresented RIs and research communities into the EOSC ecosystem.

Proposals should cover both the following activities:

[58] Relevant information and documentation about the EOSC Federation can be found in the EOSC Federation Handbook and other relevant documentation adopted by the EOSC Federation.

1) Accelerate FAIR adoption and the contribution to and use of EOSC resources by multiple research communities through open science projects.

This activity should be implemented through open calls that provide grants to third parties for open science projects through a cascading grant mechanism. The open calls should encourage, where applicable, cross-RI and/or cross-domain collaborations, including for data access, use and reuse.

Open science projects should address questions of high scientific impact, adopting best practices for FAIR data and service management and demonstrating their benefits. Their activities may include developing, annotating, curating and making FAIR high-value datasets, developing direct pipelines to integrate large-scale experimental data in repositories federated in EOSC, operationalising data access for AI-based applications, reusing existing datasets, enhancing existing and developing new vocabularies, data standards, metadata mappings and crosswalks, developing software, tools and services, or supporting open science community building.

They should cover a broad range of (academic and/or industrial) research communities and scientific disciplines, including those less represented in the EOSC Federation. They should make use of resources available in the EOSC Federation and adopt existing EOSC policies and standards[59], where possible. Projects should strive to ensure the sustained, beyond the projects' duration, integration, deployment and operation of relevant outcomes in the EOSC Federation.

At least EUR 29 million of the EU contribution to this topic should be used in this activity[60]. The financial support to third parties for the open science projects must be provided in the form of grants that should be between EUR 100 000 and 250 000 per grant for a duration of 12 to 24 months. The consortium shall put in place adequate measures to support the integration of the open science projects' results into the EOSC Federation. These could include mentoring, training and any other activities providing effective linkage to the EOSC Federation and EOSC Nodes, as needed for the specific nature of each project.

2) Support the integration of thematic research and RI communities in the EOSC Federation

The following activities should be included:

- Coordinating, aligning and networking existing community-based competence centres on FAIR and open science practices developed within the EOSC ecosystem.
- Developing training programmes, modules and material on FAIR and open science practices tailored to the specific needs of different thematic research communities. This activity should include feedback mechanisms to ensure that the training services are responsive to the evolving needs of EOSC user communities.

[59] As described in the EOSC Federation Handbook and other relevant documentation potentially adopted by the EOSC Federation.

[60] Including reasonable administrative and management costs related to the open calls for the financial support to third parties.

- Developing frameworks for the provision and continuous evolution of high-impact services and data repositories onboarded to the EOSC Federation, fostering interoperability and integration of data and resources from diverse scientific domains and promoting their sharing through the EOSC Federation.
- Establishing mechanisms for the integration and long-term sustainable provision of all relevant outcomes into the EOSC Federation, as well as for continuous feedback and adaptation, ensuring evolving requirements of researchers and RIs are met within the EOSC ecosystem.
- Engaging underrepresented thematic research and RI communities to increase their integration in EOSC.

Proposals are expected to cooperate and align with activities of the EOSC Partnership and to coordinate with relevant initiatives and projects, including actions awarded under topics HORIZON-INFRA-2025-01-EOSC-01, HORIZON-INFRA-2025-01-EOSC-02 and HORIZON-INFRA-2027-01-EOSC-01. This may include the upgrade, deployment and adoption where appropriate of existing community-endorsed pilot, tools, services and standards developed by past and ongoing INFRAEOSC projects. To this extent, proposals should provide for dedicated activities and earmark appropriate resources.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement. This topic implements the co-programmed European Partnership for the European Open Science Cloud[61].

**HORIZON-INFRA-2026-01-EOSC-02: Trusted frameworks for secure and efficient data sharing in EOSC (EOSC Partnership)**

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2026** | |
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| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Coordination and Support Actions |
| *Eligibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:<br>Subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks. |

[61] https://eosc.eu/partnership/

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| *Award criteria* | The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply:<br>The following additions to the general award criteria apply:<br>For the 'Impact' criterion, the following aspects will also be taken into account:<br>The extent to which the proposed work incorporates the necessary coordination efforts and resources with other relevant projects and the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) governance structure in the context of the EOSC Partnership. |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>Beneficiaries will be subject to the following additional access rights:<br>• Each beneficiary must grant royalty-free access to its results to the EOSC Association for monitoring and developing policies and strategies for the European Open Science Cloud. Each beneficiary must also provide directly to the EOSC Association the information the beneficiary deems necessary for monitoring and developing policies and strategies for the European Open Science Cloud.<br>• Each beneficiary must grant royalty-free access to its intellectual property rights which are part of the results and are needed for further developing the European Open Science Cloud to legal entities identified by the granting authority and established in Member States or countries associated to the Horizon Europe Framework Programme. Such access rights are limited to non-commercial use.<br>Beneficiaries must deposit the digital research data generated in the action in a trusted repository federated in the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) in compliance with EOSC requirements.<br>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] |

[62] 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 the following outcomes:

- Countries, research communities and institutions are equipped with data sovereignty frameworks harmonised within EOSC and aligned with EU legislation and international agreements.
- Improved mechanisms and solutions for effective control over sensitive data and for enabling lawful data use and sharing across EU member states, scientific disciplines and third countries with EU adequacy decision in place.
- More harmonised guidelines, support and training to researchers and data stewards on applying EU and national legislation and international agreements for data access, sharing, reuse, licensing and associated services within EOSC.
- Increased interoperability with relevant solutions of other European data spaces for secure data management and processing.

Scope: Research data sovereignty refers to the possibility for effective control by data owners of data usage and sharing when necessary. Effective and transparent community-driven data sovereignty frameworks are important enablers of open science, in particular ensuring safe and trusted management of personal or sensitive data, safeguarding the quality of curated research datasets and the effective application of related EU and national digital and data legislation. Data sovereignty mechanisms can also improve the resilience and preparedness of research and data infrastructures against risks related to access to and preservation of critical data and services, including risks related to data generated and stored outside the EU/EEA.

The exponential growth of available research data and the increasingly collaborative and cross-disciplinary research has accentuated challenges related to secure, efficient and lawful cross-border data sharing for research purposes. Removing barriers to data sharing while ensuring data sovereignty is crucial to realise the potential of EOSC to foster trusted cross-country and cross-discipline scientific collaboration.

This topic aims to support data sovereignty while enabling seamless and trusted data sharing and access across scientific disciplines, EU Member States and third countries where the EU considers sufficient data protection is in place, tackling different regulatory regimes and procedures.

Proposals should include the following activities:

- Development and implementation of national, community and/or institutional research data sovereignty frameworks, including policies for data sharing and access, harmonised and aligned with EU digital and data legislation and international agreements such as adequacy decisions and digital partnership agreements, as well as best practices from EOSC, related common European data spaces and international data-sharing standards and initiatives.

- Demonstration and validation of concrete adoption cases of data sovereignty policies by national, community or institutional actors, aligned with open science and the FAIR data principles.
- Development of harmonised governance frameworks, ensuring smooth enforcement of data sovereignty policies.
- Development of comprehensive data provenance tools to trace and verify the quality and lineage of data used in research, and demonstration through identified use cases within relevant selected thematic areas.
- Development of templates and guidelines for secure and sovereign data management, including template agreements on data sharing, publication, and reuse, and guidelines for licensing.
- Development of guidelines for classifying critical data and services based on sensitivity and relevance to scientific communities and European policies, and for managing risks related to access to and preservation of such critical data and services.
- Analysis of data categories and definitions across scientific disciplines, incorporating compliance with security requirements set out in EU and national legislation.
- Development of recommendations for the establishment of a support centre, linking with relevant national and thematic competence centres, focused on compliance of data management with EU and national legislation, and proof of concept of its integration and sustainable operation in the EOSC Federation.

Projects are encouraged to explore synergies with relevant EU initiatives such as other common European data spaces that address sensitive data or data critical for research. To ensure complementarity and use of latest research results, proposals should build on ongoing and previous INFRAEOSC projects such as those funded by topics 2023-EOSC-01-06, 2023-EOSC-01-04 and 2024-EOSC-01-04 and align with the EOSC Federation policies and standards [63] . This topic implements the co-programmed European Partnership for the European Open Science Cloud[64].

### HORIZON-INFRA-2027-01-EOSC-01: Expanding and deepening the EOSC Federation (EOSC Partnership)

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2027** | |
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| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per* | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 40.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed |

[63] As described in the EOSC Federation Handbook and other relevant documentation potentially adopted by the EOSC Federation

[64] https://eosc.eu/partnership/

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| *project* | appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 40.00 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Programme Co-fund Action |
| *Eligibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:<br>Subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks. |
| *Award criteria* | The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply:<br>The following additions to the general award criteria apply:<br>For the 'Impact' criterion, the following aspects will also be taken into account:<br>The extent to which the proposed work incorporates the necessary coordination efforts and resources with other relevant projects and the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) governance structure in the context of the EOSC Partnership. |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. Financial support provided by the participants to third parties is the primary activity of the action in order to be able to achieve its objectives. Given the type of action and its level of ambition, as well as that access to certain types of digital services can be costly and that activities other than access will also be supported, the maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 2.00 million.<br>The funding rate is 50% of the eligible costs. This is justified as the provision of digital services to users of the EOSC Federation and the broadening and integration of research communities in the EOSC Federation are activities with strong European added value that are typically not supported by national funding bodies.<br>At least 20% of the total financial support to third parties must be open to entities eligible for funding as described in the General Annex B, therefore it must not have any additional geographic restrictions for eligibility for funding. |

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| | Beneficiaries will be subject to the following additional access rights:<br>• Each beneficiary must grant royalty-free access to its results to the EOSC Association for monitoring and developing policies and strategies for the European Open Science Cloud. Each beneficiary must also provide directly to the EOSC Association the information the beneficiary deems necessary for monitoring and developing policies and strategies for the EOSC.<br>• Each beneficiary must grant royalty-free access to its intellectual property rights which are part of the results and are needed for further developing the EOSC to legal entities identified by the granting authority and established in Member States or countries associated to the Horizon Europe Framework Programme. Such access rights are limited to non- commercial use. |

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

- The EOSC Federation provides to EOSC users with state-of-the-art digital services addressing their needs to store, process and share data, run software, models and workflows, and collaborate with their peers.
- Research and digital infrastructures and other organisations providing scientific services are equipped with appropriate structures and technical, legal and coordination mechanisms to onboard, manage and sustainably operate digital tools and services in the EOSC Federation.
- Investments across Europe in the provision of FAIR scientific data and services within EOSC are more aligned and coordinated, achieving economies of scale and more efficient use of digital resources.

Scope: In order to carry out typical research workflows, researchers need to use a broad range of digital services such as data storage, computing, applications, and collaboration tools. Such services are often cost-intensive and their provision is restricted, e.g. to researchers within a country/region or a specific thematic area. The EOSC Federation aims to provide a trusted, sovereign and secure environment to researchers in Europe to use high-quality, FAIR research data and run research workflows, with a focus on cross-disciplinary and cross-country research collaboration.

The aim of the topic is to set up an EOSC Federation-wide mechanism that enables multiple organisations to seamlessly offer such digital services, and to support the sustained provision of these services to EOSC users. It also aims to enlarge the EOSC Federation by supporting the expansion of Nodes as gateways through which multiple organisations can offer their resources, such as data and services, to EOSC users.

Proposals should cover the following activities:

1) Provide seamless, user-friendly access to EOSC users to digital services for typical research workflows such as data storage, computing, applications, and collaboration tools, through a fully integrated EOSC Federation-wide system.

- Gather requirements and analyse needs of researchers and EOSC users for such services and how they can best complement and integrate with existing resources in the EOSC Federation.

- Support developing and embedding a Federation-wide resource management and accounting system for the efficient provision of such services across the Federation, building on the design principles of the 'virtual credit allocation' system of the EOSC EU Node and any further development in the EOSC Federation.

- Provide access to EOSC users to such services, based on the researchers' and EOSC users' needs and requirements and making use of a Federation-wide resource management and accounting system and harmonised access policies, in line with the principles and guidelines of transnational and virtual access to European Research Infrastructures and related EOSC Federation policies.

- Upgrade the EOSC user experience through deep, back-end, cross-provider integration of key digital services covering the full research lifecycle, achieving a user-friendly and robust environment.

- Develop, test and demonstrate business models for the effective management of the supply and demand of such services, as well as for their long-term sustainable provision in the EOSC Federation, beyond the end of the project's duration.

- Develop guidelines to facilitate a harmonised approach to the acquisition and provision of such services that supports research data sovereignty and research security in Europe, ensuring a trusted, secure and sovereign EOSC Federation.

- Establish mechanisms for continuous feedback and improvement, including indicators for monitoring the quality and usage of the services, building on and further developing existing mechanisms of the EOSC Federation, and ensuring that the evolving needs and requirements of EOSC users are met by the EOSC Federation.

These activities should be fully concerted and aligned with related parallel activities carried out by the EOSC Federation.

2) Support the broadening, integration and structuring of the participation of research communities in the EOSC Federation through

- the development and establishment of intra-Node coordination mechanisms and organisational models to enable EOSC Nodes to effectively represent broad communities and multiple organisations in the EOSC Federation,

- the development and use of digital capabilities, and of options for harmonised legal arrangements, such as contractual or service-level agreements, for onboarding and sustainably provisioning communities' services through EOSC Nodes,

- broadening organisations' engagement with and contribution to the EOSC Federation, including underrepresented thematic research communities or geographic areas.

Proposals should implement the activities through the organisation of joint calls that provide grants to third parties.

The joint calls should be open to organisations that participate or are interested to participate in the EOSC Federation either by operating an EOSC Node or by onboarding their identified resources to the EOSC Federation, in line with the relevant criteria set by the EOSC Federation.

Proposed activities should be driven by current gaps and needs of scientific communities, digital infrastructures and service providers. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how they will contribute to addressing these needs and increasing the uptake of the EOSC Federation by researchers.

The activities should comply with and contribute to the continuous update and upgrade of related EOSC Federation policies and standards, including technical and interoperability standards, the use of open standards, harmonised access and use policies, and cybersecurity[65].

Proposals should include a robust and credible plan for the long-term, beyond the project's duration, sustained operation of the services that they will make available in the EOSC Federation, and any other relevant project results.

For what concerns provision of access to digital services by third parties funded under the joint calls, proposals should include a list of the digital services that will be supported through the joint calls. The third parties funded under the joint calls should identify the specific digital services that they will provide for access and the amount of access made available to EOSC users, allocating budget according to users' demand and making use of the Federation-wide resource management and accounting system. These third parties should also fulfil further conditions and requirements described in the 'Virtual Access Activities' part of the 'Specific Features for Research Infrastructures' section of this Work Programme, for what concerns publicity of the access offered, determining the access costs, and setting criteria for access by EOSC users in line with the EOSC Federation access policies. Proposals are expected to address compliance with these specific conditions and notably ensure that the selected third parties will provide appropriate documentation to support and justify the amount of access provided and corresponding costs.

Projects are encouraged to explore synergies with relevant EU initiatives such as EuroHPC. To ensure coherence and complementarity of outcomes, funded projects are expected to

[65] As described in the EOSC Federation Handbook and other relevant documentation potentially adopted by the EOSC Federation.

cooperate with each other and with relevant initiatives and projects contributing to the development of the EOSC Federation including actions awarded under the topics HORIZON-INFRA-2023-01-EOSC-04, HORIZON-INFRA-2024-EOSC-02-01, HORIZON-INFRA-2025-01-EOSC-01, HORIZON-INFRA-2026-01-EOSC-01 and closely interact with the organisational setup of the EOSC Federation. To this extent, proposals should provide for dedicated activities and earmark appropriate resources. This topic implements the co-programmed European Partnership for the European Open Science Cloud[66].

**HORIZON-INFRA-2027-01-EOSC-02: Strengthening the potential of the EOSC for knowledge valorisation and industry-academia collaboration (EOSC Partnership)**

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2027** | |
|---|---|
| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 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. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Coordination and Support Actions |
| *Award criteria* | The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply:<br>The following additions to the general award criteria apply:<br>For the 'Impact' criterion, the following aspects will also be taken into account:<br>The extent to which the proposed work incorporates the necessary coordination efforts and resources with other relevant projects and the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) governance structure in the context of the EOSC Partnership. |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>Beneficiaries will be subject to the following additional access rights:<br>• Each beneficiary must grant royalty-free access to its results to the EOSC Association for monitoring and developing policies and strategies for the European Open Science Cloud. Each beneficiary must also provide directly to the EOSC Association the information the beneficiary deems necessary for monitoring and |

[66] https://eosc.eu/partnership/

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| | developing policies and strategies for the European Open Science Cloud.<br>• Each beneficiary must grant royalty-free access to its intellectual property rights which are part of the results and are needed for further developing the European Open Science Cloud to legal entities identified by the granting authority and established in Member States or countries associated to the Horizon Europe Framework Programme. Such access rights are limited to non-commercial use.<br>Beneficiaries must deposit the digital research data generated in the action in a trusted repository federated in the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) in compliance with EOSC requirements.<br>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) [67]. |

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

- Better overview of the identified opportunities and barriers of the EU's current legal framework on intellectual property (patents, copyright, licenses etc.) for researchers to valorise knowledge resources provided and/or processed in the EOSC Federation.
- Organisations contributing resources to the EOSC Federation have improved capacity, stronger incentives and better legal and technical conditions to valorise these knowledge resources and engage in open innovation practices and industry-academia collaboration.
- Organisations contributing to the EOSC Federation have clearer frameworks and incentives to offer their resources to innovators, deep-tech startups and startups emerging from academia.
- Organisations contributing to the EOSC Federation have established channels in EOSC to promote knowledge valorisation with the private sector, including SMEs and industry.

Scope: This topic aims to support increasing and exploiting the potential of EOSC as a driver of innovation and a platform for researchers to develop new technologies and solutions that can be brought to the market.

[67] 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

Knowledge valorisation is one of the EU's key priorities for the European Research Area, aiming to ensure that the increasing amount of research results generated in the EU, mostly with full or partial public funding, are transformed to products, services and solutions that benefit society and contribute to economic competitiveness.

Many initiatives have already been taken at EU level to boost knowledge valorisation, including the guiding principles, codes of practice and a platform to build a community to share experiences[68].

The EOSC Federation brings together and makes available to researchers, large volumes of knowledge resources, including data, publications, software, tools and services from different research and data infrastructures and scientific services providers across Europe. It therefore has the potential to facilitate and provide appropriate frameworks for knowledge valorisation, open innovation practices and industry-academia collaboration especially for what concerns results that stem from cross-discipline or cross-country research. Activities funded under this topic should aim to support the capacity of the EOSC Federation and its community to better valorise research results in line with the EU's code of practice on intellectual assets management[69] and standardisation in the European Research Area[70].

A key element in this effort is to clarify the legal conditions to valorise knowledge resources, including resources provided in the EOSC Federation. As knowledge resources have various degrees of copyright protection, it is often challenging for researchers to navigate in what they are allowed to do with the knowledge resources and how they can be used in industry-academia collaboration. A better overview of requirements and more legal clarity will therefore incentivise researchers to valorise the knowledge resources of the EOSC Federation.

This effort should also take into account the specific needs of different research communities contributing to the EOSC Federation, ensuring they have the possibility to set better legal terms for knowledge valorisation through appropriate choice of licenses etc. More guidance is therefore needed to ensure that contributors can share their knowledge resources in the EOSC Federation with fewer legal strings attached.

Proposals under this topic should include the following activities:

- Analyse opportunities and barriers emerging from the provisions of the EU's current legal framework on intellectual property and relevant types of licenses that set the legal conditions for researchers to valorise knowledge resources in EOSC Federation.

- Gather requirements and needs, develop and analyse potential business models and access schemes for innovators and start-ups in Europe to access and use resources available in the EOSC Federation.

68 https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/industrial-research-and-innovation/eu-valorisation-policy/knowledge-valorisation-platform
69 http://data.europa.eu/eli/reco/2023/499/oj
70 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reco/2023/498/oj

- Develop a number of case studies of identified EOSC stakeholders valorising their results and/or establishing collaboration links with the private sector.
- Map out and evaluate the possibilities of relevant types of licenses for knowledge resources to facilitate knowledge valorisation and engage in open innovation and industry-academia collaboration.
- Organise workshops, webinars and awareness-raising campaigns, and develop guiding material targeted at EOSC users and communities contributing to EOSC on how to facilitate and engage in knowledge valorisation and industry-academia collaboration based on the knowledge resources of EOSC Federation.
- Develop recommendations and best practices, based also on the case studies, for further development of the EOSC Federation to facilitate knowledge valorisation and industry-academia collaboration.

To ensure complementarity with and use of the latest EU guidelines and research results, proposals should build on ongoing and previous Horizon Europe-funded projects, including IP4OS, EU guiding principles for knowledge valorisation, Knowledge Valorisation Platform and code of practice for intellectual property management and standards. This topic implements the co-programmed European Partnership for the European Open Science Cloud[71].

[71] https://eosc.eu/partnership/

**Destination INFRASERV - Research infrastructures services to support a healthier future, a global climate and energy vision, a circular and resilient economy, and to advance frontier knowledge (2026-27)**

EU supported transnational access to research infrastructures has radically transformed the availability of state-of-the-art facilities for researchers, reinforcing Europe's strong research performance. Horizon Europe marked a shift towards new types of transnational access grants, awarded to consortia of diverse types of facilities providing access to broad portfolios of installations and scientific services relevant for a large research domain or in support of societal challenge and EU priorities.

Actions under this destination are invited to facilitate a fast-track access for Ukrainian researchers and innovators from government-controlled territories, through specific outreach activities, support in preparing applications to the access calls, selection priority at equal scientific merit, as well as extended ad-hoc training and duration of visits (beyond 3 months).

The expected impact of the activities supported under this destination notably includes:

- Large scale test for a step change in EU transnational access policy in the future, from a short-term project-based approach towards a more integrated, longer-term and cross domain EU access scheme, promoting the vision of a 'one-stop-shop' for access to research infrastructures, their services and resources.

- Effective access of European researchers and innovators to the best research infrastructure services from national and pan- European research infrastructures (such as ESFRI Projects and Landmarks, ERICs), while ensuring both curiosity-driven and challenge-driven access, considering also that challenge-driven access must notably foster the role of research infrastructures in greening society and improving its resilience to crises.

- Improved research infrastructure services to address evolving scientific and societal challenges, including those related to EU priorities, and to reinforce the excellence, attractiveness and competitive edge of the ERA and its capacity to address future challenges and priorities, including through interdisciplinarity and cross-domain collaboration.

- Improved transnational access to new users such as early-stage career researchers, and researchers and innovators from other fields or sectors, while making sure that these new activities do not come at the cost of already overbooked transnational access services.

- New discoveries and knowledge breakthroughs enabled by access provision to the best and in some cases unique state-of-the-art RIs.

- A new generation of researchers trained to optimally exploit all the essential and advanced tools for their research.

Legal entities established in China are not eligible to participate in both Research and Innovation Actions and Innovation Actions falling under this destination. 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-INFRA-2026-SERV-01-01: Implementing digital services to empower neuroscience research for health and brain inspired technology via EBRAINS**

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2026** | |
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| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 32.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 32.00 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Research and Innovation Actions |
| *Admissibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply:<br>The page limit of the application is 100 pages. |
| *Eligibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:<br>Subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks.<br>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:<br>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. |
| *Award criteria* | The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply:<br>The following additions to the general award criteria apply:<br>For the 'Excellence' criterion, the additional following aspects will also be taken into account:<br>• The extent to which the access activities (trans-national and/or virtual access) will offer access to the state-of-the-art |

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| | infrastructures of European interest in the field, high quality services, and will enable users to conduct excellent research.<br>• 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. |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>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:

- A state-of-the-art EBRAINS digital infrastructure for brain research, providing data, digital tools and services to the European research communities in neurosciences, brain medicine, and brain-inspired technologies. The platform will be powered by AI and will integrate innovative AI tools to support intuitive interaction with users, facilitate brain research, data analysis, simulations and modelling of the brain, and support FAIR data indexing and archival to scale-up data integration and curation.

- New services and applications for neuroscience, brain health and cognitive technologies, aligned with national and European research priorities. Workflows that connect and integrate large sets of data, services and tools available at EBRAINS will be in the focus in combination with access to large storage and compute resources.

- Innovative brain-inspired AI tools, that are based on insights from brain research, for example, in learning, decision process, plasticity, with application in research, robotics, and neurotech.

- Detailed, data-driven, multi-scale models of complex behaviour, intelligence, consciousness and language, to study the role of variability in human brain organization during the lifespan, under different conditions.

- Digital brain twins and/or body twins, informed by real-life sensor data, to assist the development of new digital tools for brain medicine, e.g., for diagnostics, rehabilitation, intensive care and surgery.

- A framework for the European Brain Data Space, aligned with the European Health Data Space, in connection to EOSC and linked with common European data spaces in the life science and health sector, to support collaborative digital neuroscience and reproducible brain science, and to bridge basic and clinical research in the context of the European partnership for brain health.

- Strengthened European cooperation advancing brain health research to ensure streamlined efforts, avoiding duplication while maximizing impact particularly in the context of the European Partnership for Brain Health through shared infrastructure, leading to improved diagnostics, innovative therapies, and more personalized treatment plans, ultimately enhancing patient care and public health.

EBRAINS is an integrative, distributed digital research infrastructure (RI) of pan-European relevance, developed under the EU-funded Human Brain Project (HBP), to cross-fertilise progress in neuroscience, medicine and advanced computing including AI. While since 2021 EBRAINS is included in the ESFRI roadmap, EBRAINS continues developing as the reference RI for digital neuroscience to help reach a deeper understanding of the human brain and to catalyse new findings in science, and innovative brain-inspired technologies and computing. Furthermore, EBRAINS, as part of the upcoming European Partnership for Brain Health, will facilitate medical innovation providing value added services and access to world-class EU HPC resources to a wide community of professionals, including clinicians, neuro- and computer scientists. Importantly, EBRAINS has potential to contribute to the novel EuroHPC AI Factories and the planned AI Gigafactories, fostering the translation of insights from neuroscience for novel AI, neuro-inspired computing and neurorobotics into business and industry.

Scope: The scope of this topic is to support the excellence and attractiveness of the EBRAINS Research Infrastructure by operating existing, improved and new services, advancing scientific and technological discoveries in neurosciences, brain medicine and brain-inspired cognitive technologies, and attracting a wide community of users, including industrial users.

Proposals are expected to address all following activities:

- Operate the EBRAINS research infrastructure digital facilities, providing access to a federated supercomputing RI, large data storage, computational capabilities and cloud services, with access to the European HPC capacities towards exascale, and AI Factories and future AI Gigafactories.

- Support the use of EBRAINS digital services by researchers across Europe. Support the development of services involving scientific, medical and industrial stakeholders via co-design approach, including the integration of new data and services from new users and/or EBRAINS national competence nodes, enriching the cloud-based deliveries and facilitating the sharing of produced data and use of national resources.

- Integrate AI tools in EBRAINS services to support intuitive interaction with users, to facilitate brain research, neuroscience data analysis, simulations and biological modelling of the brain, and to support FAIR data indexing and archival to scale-up data integration. This includes developing new foundational models dedicated to the field of neuroscience. The unique multi-scale database with data from the micro to the macro scale hosted by EBRAINS would be one of the essential resources for feeding these models.

- Demonstrate scalability and robustness of the approaches, both technically and operationally. This includes the ability to handle large and complex datasets (e.g., imaging data in the range of terabytes) including associated metadata; the provision of scalable tools and services (e.g., annotation platforms, AI pipelines, secure data handling) that go beyond limited pilot phases or academic prototypes; a clear plan for how the infrastructure or platform proposed will evolve into a robust and continuously available service that can meet the needs of real-world users, including SMEs and clinical stakeholders.

- Develop and integrate in EBRAINS a new collaborative platform for advancing and testing neuro-inspired AI to facilitate brain research, medicine and brain inspired technology, assuring interoperability with other initiatives in the field, and enabling access to strategic brain data.

- Strengthen and build new international collaborations to support digital neuroscience as a global challenge, to ensure that Europe remains at the centre of the global efforts aimed at better understanding the brain, partnering with other main players in the International Brain Initiative, and other initiatives.

- Develop tailored and inclusive training and skills development programmes to facilitate users access, assisting them in their digital experiments and contributing to educating a new generation of scientists and developers at the intersection of neuroscience, computing and AI.

Proposals are expected to outline how they will contribute to and align with European efforts on health data sharing, particularly in the context of the forthcoming European Health Data Space. This includes implementing FAIR data principles and mechanisms to support data discoverability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability, and addressing how the infrastructure will support real-time or near-real-time data flows, including handling of metadata, harmonisation of data formats, and secure access for authorised users.

Proposals are expected to identify and build on synergies with other EU Research Infrastructures such as eBRAIN-Health, EUCAIM, Euro-BioImaging, TEF-Health, and other relevant infrastructures supported under Horizon Europe or previous framework programmes, ensuring sustainability, complementarity and coherence at the European level. Collaborations with relevant infrastructures should address technical and semantic interoperability to avoid further fragmentation, sharing tools, standards, and governance models, and will contribute to the broader European ambition of creating a federated, harmonised, and innovation-enabling health data ecosystem.

**HORIZON-INFRA-2027-SERV-01-01: Access to research infrastructures, their resources and services: large-scale pilots for more integrated scheme across (sub)domains**

**Call: Research Infrastructures 2027**

| **Specific conditions** | |
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| *Expected EU contribution per project* | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 35.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 105.00 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Research and Innovation Actions |
| *Admissibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply:<br>Applicants are not required to include in their proposal a plan for the exploitation and dissemination of the results as the main objective of these actions is the service provision.<br>The page limit of the application is 100 pages. |
| *Eligibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:<br>Subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks.<br>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.<br>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.<br>Considering the Union’s interest to make accessible to its researchers the most advanced research infrastructures, wherever they are in the world, legal entities established in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, India, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Singapore, and USA, which provide, under the grant, access to their state-of-the-art research infrastructures to researchers from Member States and Associated Countries, are exceptionally eligible for funding from the Union under this topic. |
| *Award criteria* | The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply:<br>For the 'Excellence' criterion, the additional following aspects will also be taken into account: |

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| | • 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.<br>• 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. |
| *Procedure* | The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:<br>To ensure a balanced portfolio covering the different areas, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least also to those proposals that are the highest ranked within each area, provided that the applications attain all thresholds. |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>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).<br>Beneficiaries could provide financial support to third parties (FSTP). The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. Given the high operating costs of some state-of-the-art research infrastructures, the maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 300 000, since the objectives of the action cannot be achieved otherwise. For the sake of efficiency, the FSTP calls can be combined with the calls for the access provision activities (see provisions under the section "Specific features for Research Infrastructures" of this work programme part).<br>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 relevant outputs generated by this action 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 beyond the lifespan of the Grant Agreement. |

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

- More efficient access to the best research infrastructures available to researchers and innovators to conduct basic and applied research and foster innovation, irrespective of location. A single-entry point access portal, integrated or interoperable catalogues of services and converging access conditions and selection procedures;

- A step towards a longer-term sustainable access programme harmonised across different ESFRI domains;

- Breakthrough and leading-edge research enabled by advanced research infrastructure services, including from emerging facilities, made available to a wider user community, including in emerging areas of research;

- A new generation of researchers trained to optimally exploit all the essential tools for their research with due attention to early-stage career researchers and researchers from widening countries and candidate countries;

- Interdisciplinarity and sharing of information, knowledge and technologies across scientific fields with due attention to research security; better management, including implementing FAIR data principles, of the continuous flow of data collected or produced by research infrastructures.

Scope: This topic aims at testing 'access programme like' projects providing trans-national access (on-site or remote) and/or virtual access to integrated and customised research infrastructure installations and services for excellent research, from frontier and curiosity-driven to applied research, offered by a wide range of complementary and interdisciplinary research infrastructures with experience in transnational access. Access is provided by a core of state-of-the-art research infrastructures as beneficiaries/affiliated entities and by third party access providers on demand. Proposals should adhere to the guidelines and principles of the European Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures[72]. Proposals are expected to address one of the following areas, based on 'ESFRI scientific domains[73], and must explicitly state which area they address:

Area 1, covering the following domains: Physical Sciences and Engineering; Data, Computing and Digital Research Infrastructures

Area 2, covering the following domains: Health & Food; Social Sciences and Humanities

Area 3, covering the following domains: Environment; Energy.

These areas define in which pilot project a research infrastructure identified as a core access provider should be a beneficiary/affiliated entity. On demand third party access providers should expand access opportunities within the area or across-areas for interdisciplinary research.

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

73 ESFRI domains: 1. Data, Computing and Digital Research Infrastructures; 2. Energy; 3. Environment; 4. Health & Food; 5. Physical Sciences and Engineering; 6. Social Sciences & Humanities. See ESFRI Landscape Analysis 2024 https://landscape2024.esfri.eu/.

Proposals should make available to researchers and innovators a wide, inclusive and comprehensive portfolio of complementary research infrastructure services of European interest[74], including data services. Proposals should include at least two ESFRI Landmark[75] and/or European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC)[76] as beneficiary. Access could also be open, in accordance with the 'Specific Features for Research Infrastructure' section of this Work Programme, to third countries' researchers. Research infrastructures from third countries may be involved as beneficiaries or affiliated entities[77] when appropriate, if the proposal can demonstrate they offer complementary or more advanced services than those available in the EU Member States and Associated Countries.

Access includes ad hoc users' training and scientific and technical support (see Specific Features for Research Infrastructures). Additional training courses, including skills for data stewardship, may also be supported. In addition, proposals should better exploit the training potential of successful transnational access user projects by inviting researchers, notably early-stage career researchers, or research infrastructure technicians from widening and candidate countries to team up with selected user groups. Proposals should reserve sufficient resources for this purpose and should proactively advertise these opportunities. (which should be arranged after the selection of user projects and have no impact on their evaluation).

Access provision to existing services should be clear in the proposed activities and reflected in the allocated resources.

The improvement and development of services can also be supported, provided that the resulting services are offered already under the actions (short-term R&D) and that the long-term sustainability of such services is ensured.

Data management (and related ethics issues), interoperability, as well as the connection of digital services (e.g. data services) to the European Open Science Cloud, should be addressed where relevant. Proposals should take due account of major European or international initiatives relevant in the domain. When appropriate, they should foster the use and deployment of (open) global standards.

Proposals should include an outreach and engagement plan to actively advertise their services to the research communities, notably from widening countries and candidate countries and to relevant industries, including SMEs and, if applicable, provide dedicated support for the development of research partnerships and collaborations with researchers from widening countries and candidate countries. Proposals are expected to exploit synergies and to ensure complementarity and coherence with other EU grants supporting access provision.

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74 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.

75 See lists of ESFRI 'Landmarks' in the 2021 ESFRI Roadmap on https://roadmap2021.esfri.eu/

76 European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) | European Commission (europa.eu)

77 See the Eligibility conditions for this topic.

Proposals should include the list of core services/installations [78] opened by research infrastructures for transnational 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.

Proposals should also present an indicative list of complementary services/installations opened by third party research infrastructures for transnational or virtual access. Proposals should reserve sufficient resources for access notably to these services/installations and allocate budget according to the demand after peer-review evaluation of the user-groups and users' research and innovation projects, the 'user projects'. This complementary part of the access to research infrastructures may be implemented through the mechanism of financial support to third parties (FSTP), provided that the beneficiaries ensure that the conditions and requirements relating to access provisions as given in the "Specific features for Research Infrastructures" are fulfilled. In such case, the relevant conditions and requirements should be included in the FSTP calls and the applicants to the FSTP open calls should be the third party research infrastructures demanded by user-group(s). In the case of transnational access, the beneficiaries select the user-groups according to the conditions and requirements of the "specific features for research infrastructures" section of this work programme. The beneficiaries ensure that the access provider selected through the FSTP calls is a state-of-the-art research infrastructure, and that it will provide appropriate documentation to support and justify the amount of access provided and the information on the users as specified in the "specific features for research infrastructures" section of this work programme. To simplify the selection process, proposals under this topic may combine the calls inviting researchers to apply for transnational access and the FSTP calls so that a one stage selection procedure can be implemented based on a joint application from the user group submitting the 'user project' and the needed third party access provider. The recipient of the financial support is the third party research infrastructure that is providing access to the selected user-group(s). The financial support should cover the costs incurred by the third party to provide access (actual costs, unit costs, or a combination of the two) plus any work for service customisation as well as the travel and subsistence of users if visits are needed to use the infrastructures. Alternatively, proposals may opt for centrally managed travel and or subsistence costs for all or part of the selected user projects. In such case, these costs are excluded from the concerned FSTP.

Access opportunities should be presented in a single-entry point portal for each pilot, building on the experience of past EU projects supporting access in the respective areas. The interoperability and capacity to converge into a common portal should be considered when designing or upgrading the portals as well as the possible connection to EOSC.

To ensure a holistic view from design to implementation of possible access schemes, proposals should ensure strong and continuous collaboration with the cross-domain

[78] "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.

preparatory action on access HORIZON-INFRA-2025-01-DEV-05[79], with the pilots under topic HORIZON-INFRA-2026-01-DEV-02, e.g. making use of the catalogues of services, navigation tool and links to key EU initiatives, and with the actions supported under topic HORIZON-INFRA-2027-01-SERV-02. This collaboration should ensure a common front page to all above actions, set up by one of the pilots, providing at the minimum basic information such as highlighting the common objectives of EU supported access, the main conditions and requirements, providing preliminary guidance on access opportunities and directing to the single-entry point portal of each pilot. The collaboration should also promote simplified access pathways, good practices on call conditions, converging access modalities and selection process, as well as effective governance of the set of projects acting as an access programme with appropriate advisory bodies.

Proposals could consider the inclusion of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) in any of the three areas identified in the call. The JRC is running the "open access to JRC research infrastructures" programme, providing since 2017 access and training and capacity building to a portfolio of 18 different facilities to more than 650 users from 250 institutions in Europe. In this respect, the experience of the JRC in transnational access can be very valuable for exploring new ways of creating large thematic clusters of pan-European research infrastructures. 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.

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 promote in their calls for access the integration of the gender dimension in the research and innovation content of the users applying to these calls.

**HORIZON-INFRA-2027-SERV-01-02: Access to research infrastructure services to enable R&I addressing EU priorities and emerging challenges**

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2027** | |
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| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | 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. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 35.00 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Research and Innovation Actions |
| *Admissibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply: |

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

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| | Applicants are not required to include in their proposal a plan for the exploitation and dissemination of the results as the main objective of these actions is the service provision.<br>The page limit of the application is 100 pages. |
| *Eligibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:<br>Subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks.<br>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.<br>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.<br>Considering the Union’s interest to make accessible to its researchers the most advanced research infrastructures, wherever they are in the world, legal entities established in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, India, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Singapore, and USA, which provide, under the grant, access to their state-of-the-art research infrastructures to researchers from Member States and Associated Countries, are exceptionally eligible for funding from the Union under this topic. |
| *Award criteria* | The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply:<br>The following additions to the general award criteria apply:<br>For the 'Excellence' criterion, the following aspects will also be taken into account:<br>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.<br>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 |
| *Procedure* | The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following |

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| | exceptions apply:<br>To ensure a balanced portfolio covering the different areas, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least also to those proposals that are the highest ranked within each area, provided that the applications attain all thresholds. |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>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 relevant outputs generated by this action 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 beyond the lifespan of the Grant Agreement.<br>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: **For all areas:**

- More efficient access to the best research infrastructures available to researchers and innovators to conduct challenge-driven research, improve responsiveness to emerging challenges 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 enabled by advanced research infrastructure services, including joint research activities, made available to a wider user community, including in emerging areas of research;

- A new generation of researchers trained to optimally exploit all the essential tools for their research with due attention to early-stage career researchers and researchers from widening countries and candidate countries;

- Cross-disciplinary fertilisations and a wider sharing of information, knowledge and technologies across scientific fields fostered by closer interactions between researchers and innovators active in and around research infrastructures, through encouraging cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary joint research activities for customised services and with due attention to research security; better management, including implementing FAIR data principle of the continuous flow of data collected or produced by research infrastructures.

Scope: For all areas:

This topic aims at providing trans-national access (on-site or remote) and/or virtual access to integrated and customised research infrastructure services for challenge-driven research and innovation in each of the areas listed below, offered by a wide range of complementary and interdisciplinary top level research infrastructures. Proposals should adhere to the guidelines and principles of the European Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures[80].

Access also includes ad hoc users' training and scientific and technical support (see Specific Features for Research Infrastructures). Additional training courses, including skills for data stewardship, may also be supported to prepare the new generations of researchers to properly exploit leading-edge research infrastructures. In addition, proposals should exploit the training potential of the successfully selected transnational access user projects by inviting researchers, notably early-stage career researchers, or research infrastructure technical staff from widening and candidate countries. Proposals should reserve sufficient resources for this purpose and should proactively advertise these opportunities (which should be arranged after the selection of user projects and have no impact on their evaluation).

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 improvement and development of services, relevant to the challenges, 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. Further development of new or improved services for use in the mid-term (2-3 years) may also be supported when duly justified e.g. to address well identified needs such as in the ESFRI Landscape Analysis, or in the research agendas of Horizon Europe Missions or Partnerships or for better serving the needs of open EU industrial research and innovation.

Data management (and related ethics issues), interoperability, as well as the connection of digital services (e.g. data services) to the European Open Science Cloud, should be addressed where relevant. Proposals should take due account of major European or international initiatives, of major EU priorities relevant in the domain. When appropriate, they should foster the use and deployment of (open) global standards.

Proposals should make available to researchers a wide, inclusive and comprehensive portfolio of complementary research infrastructure services of European interest[81], including data services, and customised workflows to enable R&I addressing the set challenge. Proposals should include at least one ESFRI Landmark or European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) as beneficiary[82]. In case of a distributed ERIC, as an alternative to the ERIC

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

81 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.

82 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.

participating as a beneficiary, a legal entity that is hosting ERIC facilities, resources or related services may participate as a beneficiary[83].

Access could also be open, in accordance with the 'Specific Features for Research Infrastructure' section of this Work Programme, to third countries' researchers. Research infrastructures from third countries may be involved when appropriate, including, if the proposal can demonstrate they offer complementary or more advanced services than those available in EU Member States and Associated Countries as beneficiaries or affiliated entities[84].

Proposals should include an outreach and engagement plan to actively advertise their services, to targeted research communities, notably from widening countries and candidate countries, and to relevant industries, including SMEs and, if applicable, provide dedicated support for the development of research partnerships and collaborations with researchers from widening countries and candidate countries. Proposals are expected to exploit synergies and to ensure complementarity and coherence with other EU grants supporting access provision.

Proposals should include the list of services/installations[85] 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.

Access opportunities should be presented in the single-entry point portal of the most appropriate pilot under HORIZON-INFRA-2027-01-SERV-01. The interoperability and capacity to converge into a common portal should be considered when designing or upgrading the portals as well as the possible connection to EOSC.

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-05[86], with the pilots under topic HORIZON-INFRA-2026-01-DEV-02, e.g. making use of the catalogues of services, navigation tool and links to key EU initiatives, and with the actions supported under topic

83 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.

84 See the Eligibility conditions for this topic.

85 "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.

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

HORIZON-INFRA-2027-01-SERV-01. This collaboration should ensure a common front page to all above actions, set up by one of the pilots, highlighting the common objectives of EU supported access, the main conditions and requirements, providing preliminary guidance on access opportunities and directing to the single-entry point portal of each pilot. The collaboration should also promote, the implementation of simplified access pathways, good practices on call conditions, converging access modalities and selection process, as well as effective governance of the set of projects acting as an access programme with appropriate advisory bodies.

Proposals could consider the inclusion of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) Nanobiotechnology Laboratory for Area 1 and Area 2 (see below) in their research infrastructure portfolio for its expertise at the interface between the research activities and regulatory aspects, and the European Laboratory for Structural Assessment for Area 4 (see below) for its expertise in testing full-scale structures for safety, and materials and structural components under very fast dynamic loads. 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.

The topic targets the following areas related to scientific challenges and EU priorities. Proposals are expected to address one of the areas and must explicitly state which area they address:

Area 1: Advancing cancer research through integrated biomedical infrastructures

Actions should bring together several complementary and interdisciplinary key research infrastructures relevant for supporting the full cancer research lifecycle, facilitating the development of innovative treatments, including immunotherapies and personalized medicine. Services should include advanced imaging, genomics, and proteomics platforms, as well as clinical trials management, addressing cancer heterogeneity and epigenetics. Proposals should integrate and enable the reuse and sharing of data, samples, and services, and promote the use of artificial intelligence and digital technologies to analyse large datasets and develop predictive models of cancer biology and treatments.

Appropriate links and complementarities will be ensured with the HE Mission on cancer, EU4Health, and other key European and international initiatives, and when appropriate, build on results from past/ongoing projects, such as those funded under Horizon Europe topic HORIZON-INFRA-SERV-2021-01-01.

Area 2: Sustainable and resilient agrifood systems and agroecological transitions contributing to EU policies with a One Health approach and fostering EU competitiveness

Actions should bring together complementary key research infrastructures for enhancing R&I in sustainable agrifood systems and agroecological transitions, consistent with the One Health approach and supporting relevant EU policies and competitiveness. Proposals should encourage big data approaches by promoting trans-national access to similar or complementary genetic resources across several installations, adhering to FAIR principles,

developing and applying AI and statistical applications and techniques. Links and complementarities with relevant initiatives should be established, such as with the EU Partnership on Agroecology and Agriculture of Data, the Mission Soil, where living-labs should promote agroecological practices and a holistic approach to sustainable and resilient agrifood systems. When appropriate, proposals should also build on results from past/ongoing projects such as the ones funded under Horizon Europe topic HORIZON-INFRA-SERV-2021-01-02[87] and avoid overlap with them.

Area 3: Resilient and sustainable polar ecosystems: understanding and managing climate, biodiversity, and human activity interactions

Proposals should provide access to a wide range of services, supporting R&I in polar regions and addressing key areas such as climate change impacts, biodiversity, ecosystem management, pollution, tourism, geo-political changes, and impacts on indigenous and local communities. The services should be adaptable, allowing for the integration of new technologies and methodologies, and should promote science diplomacy. They should, whenever relevant, involve indigenous and local communities into research activities, and consider traditional knowledge. Proposals should link with relevant European and international initiatives, such as the European Polar Board, the EU Polar Cluster, Copernicus, GEOSS, EMODNET, Antarctica InSync, the Greenland-EU partnership where relevant. Proposals should also build, if appropriate, on results from past/ongoing projects, such as those funded under Horizon Europe topic HORIZON-INFRA-2023-SERV-01-01[88].

Area 4: Increasing material circularity and improving materials' environmental performance

Actions should bring together several complementary and interdisciplinary key research infrastructures relevant for materials research and innovation for circularity and improved environmental performance of materials e.g. to achieve the goals of the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation and the Critical Raw Materials Act. The services should address different TRLs and they should be relevant for stakeholders along the whole value chain and in view of possible industrial applications. Services provided should help achieving the Green Deal's ambitions for zero pollution and a toxic-free environment. When appropriate, proposals should also build on results from past/ongoing projects such as the ones funded under Horizon Europe topic HORIZON-INFRA-2021-SERV-01-04[89] and avoid overlap with them.

Area 5: Semiconductors: sustainable development of next-generation and future semiconductor chips and related technologies.

In line with the European Chips Act, actions should aim at providing research infrastructure service that contribute to R&I activities that help strengthening manufacturing activities in the Union, stimulating the European design ecosystem, and supporting scale-up and innovation across the whole semiconductor value chain. Proposals should ensure appropriate links,

87 https://cordis.europa.eu/programme/id/HORIZON_HORIZON-INFRA-2021-SERV-01-02
88 https://cordis.europa.eu/programme/id/HORIZON_HORIZON-INFRA-2023-SERV-01-01
89 https://cordis.europa.eu/programme/id/HORIZON_HORIZON-INFRA-2021-SERV-01-04

synergies and complementarities, also in terms of TRLs, with relevant activities in other parts of Horizon Europe and other initiatives at EU level in this field. When appropriate, proposals should also build on results from past/ongoing projects such as the ones funded under Horizon Europe topic HORIZON-INFRA-2023-SERV-01-01[90]and avoid overlap with them.

Area 6: Geosphere research infrastructures for advanced research on geohazards driven by the dynamics of the Earth and their dependency on human-induced changes.

Actions should bring together complementary and interdisciplinary geosphere research infrastructures that are key for understanding the dynamics of the Earth driving natural hazards (earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides, tsunamis …) and their dependency on human-induced changes (such as climate and exploration, storage and exploitation of resources) and for strengthening science-policy-society interfaces, contributing to evidence-based decision-making.

**HORIZON-INFRA-2027-SERV-01-03: Connecting research infrastructures and a wider user community across the European Research Area through access to advanced research infrastructure services**

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2027** | |
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| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | 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. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Research and Innovation Actions |
| *Admissibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply:<br>Applicants are not required to include in their proposal a plan for the exploitation and dissemination of the results as the main objective of these actions is the service provision.<br>The page limit of the application is 100 pages. |
| *Eligibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:<br>The following additional eligibility criteria apply due to the specific nature of this topic:<br>• Access provision activities must be included in the proposal. |

[90] https://cordis.europa.eu/programme/id/HORIZON_HORIZON-INFRA-2023-SERV-01-01

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| | Please read carefully the provisions under the section "Specific features for Research Infrastructures" at the end of this work programme part before preparing your application.<br><br>Due to the scope of this topic, proposals must include at least two of the ESFRI Landmarks [91] or European Research Infrastructure Consortia (ERICs) [92] as beneficiaries. Such beneficiaries, and the research infrastructure(s) that they operate, must be explicitly identified in the proposal. For distributed ERIC the ERIC must be the beneficiary.<br><br>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. |
| *Award criteria* | The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply:<br>The following additions to the general award criteria apply:<br>For the 'Excellence' criterion, in addition to its standard sub-criteria, the following aspects will also be taken into account:<br><br>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. |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>Beneficiaries will be subject to the additional access rights:<br>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br><br>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).<br><br>Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. Given the high operating costs of some state-of-the-art research infrastructures, |

[91] 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).

[92] European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) | European Commission (europa.eu)

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| | the maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 100 000, since the objectives of the action cannot be achieved otherwise. For the sake of efficiency, the FSTP calls can be combined with the calls for the access provision activities (see provisions under the section "Specific features for Research Infrastructures" of this work programme part). |

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

- Better connection of research infrastructures across the European Research Area reinforcing and spreading excellence throughout the European Research Area;
- mitigating scattered national and regional research infrastructures and pockets of scientific excellence, and increasing the circulation of knowledge;
- wider, simplified, and more efficient access to the best research infrastructures available to researchers to conduct curiosity-driven excellent research, irrespective of location;
- breakthrough and leading-edge research enabled by advanced research infrastructure services made available to a wider user community;
- enhanced integration of a wider user community in the European research infrastructure ecosystem; enhanced capacities of a wider user community to address research challenges and EU policy priorities; enhanced convergence of research capacities and increase of Europe's competitiveness;
- a new generation of researchers trained to optimally exploit all the essential tools for their research; better management, including implementing FAIR data principle, of the continuous flow of data collected or produced by research infrastructures.

Scope: The topic targets the further integration of a wider user community in the European RI ecosystem and the strengthening of this ecosystem across the entire European Research Area through access to research infrastructures and other activities. The proposed action should provide trans-national access (on-site or remote) and/or virtual access to services offered by a set of similar or complementary advanced national or pan-European research infrastructures, to enable curiosity-driven excellent interdisciplinary research. Proposals should adhere to the guidelines and principles of the European Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures[https://op.europa.eu/publication-detail/-/publication/ec4692ae-ac6f-11ef-acb1-01aa75ed71a1. Research infrastructures or laboratories from across the European Research Area should be consortium members and contribute to the offering of transnational access to services. Financial support to third parties may be used to extend the portfolio of services from access providers that are not beneficiaries, provided that the beneficiaries ensure that the conditions and requirements relating to access provisions as given in the "Specific features for Research Infrastructures" are fulfilled. Transnational access activities should be designed to

stimulate excellence and impact and enhance convergence of research skills and capacities throughout Europe, with due attention to early-stage researchers.

Proposals should address all the following aspects:

- Availability to researchers of a broad portfolio of research infrastructure services, including research infrastructures financed from funds under Union Cohesion Policy, which are relevant for frontier research in the chosen scientific area, including data services; all of the transnational access provisions should be led by the target of enhancing integration of a wider community in the European RI ecosystem;

- Bi-directional exchanges within a wide user community of researchers/research groups across the European Research Area, including also networking activities, all of which potentially leading to longer term collaboration (including short-term exchange programmes, favouring direct interaction over online interaction);

- Pro-active outreach measures to increase awareness about research infrastructure services among researchers in targeted countries; Activities targeting specifically early-stage researchers.

In the case of financial support to third parties (FSTP), the relevant conditions and requirements of the "Specific features for research infrastructures" of this work programme should be included in the FSTP calls and the applicants to the FSTP open calls, should be the third party research infrastructures demanded by user-group(s). In the case of transnational access, the beneficiaries select the user-groups according to the conditions and requirements of the "specific features for research infrastructures" section of this work programme, with the above mentioned further condition. The beneficiaries ensure that the access provider selected through the FSTP calls is a state-of-the-art research infrastructure, and that it will provide appropriate documentation to support and justify the amount of access provided and the information on the users as specified in the "specific features for research infrastructures" section of this work programme. To simplify the selection process, proposals under this topic may combine the calls inviting researchers to apply for transnational access and the FSTP calls so that a one stage selection procedure can be implemented based on a joint application from the user group submitting the 'user project' and the needed third party access provider. The recipient of the financial support is the third party research infrastructure that is providing access to the selected user-group(s). The financial support should cover the costs incurred by the third party to provide access (actual costs, unit costs, or a combination of the two) plus any work for service customisation as well as the travel and subsistence of users if visits are needed to use the infrastructures. Alternatively, proposals may opt for centrally managed travel and or subsistence costs for all or part of the selected user projects. In such case, these costs are excluded from the concerned FSTP.

Data management (and related ethics issues), interoperability, as well as the connection of digital services (e.g. data services) to the European Open Science Cloud, should be addressed where relevant. Proposals should consider major European or international initiatives relevant in the domain. Whenever appropriate, they should foster the use and deployment of (open)

global standards. Proposals are expected to exploit synergies and to ensure complementarity and coherence with other EU grants supporting access provision. Proposals should include the list of services/installations[93] made available by the action for transnational 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.

Proposals could consider the inclusion of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) research infrastructures offering access to external users, that facilitates access and provides training and capacity building to users from user institutions in the European Research Area. 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.

93 "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.

**Destination INFRATECH - Next generation of scientific instrumentation, tools, methods, and advanced digital solutions of research infrastructures and fostering innovation and co-creation with industry (2026-27)**

Research infrastructures require constant technology development to maintain and upgrade their services and to create new ones. The manufacturing capacity of industry is often required for this, and the co-creation of technological components is a defining feature of many research infrastructures.

The expected impact of the activities supported under this part of the destination notably includes:

- Reinforced EU resilience with respect to the availability of critical technical research infrastructure components, considering that research infrastructure operations rely in many cases on technical components or material for which Europe is strongly dependent on third countries.

- More robust research infrastructure innovation ecosystems, building also on activities funded in the past on the development of research infrastructure technology roadmaps and co-creation activities with industry.

- Reinforced scientific, technological and industrial competitiveness through piloting of new modes of co-creation and co-innovation between research infrastructures and industry, including SMEs, startups and scaleups.

- Accelerated digitalisation of research infrastructures throughout their entire life cycle, with due attention to research security.

- Greening of research infrastructures, by advancing and accelerating the reduction of the environmental footprint of research infrastructures operations, while at the same time contributing to increasing their resilience towards energy crises or other resource restrictions such as water. Benefits of developments, notably digitalisation, should be balanced against possible costs for the environment.

Destination Earth (DestinE) is a Union flagship initiative developing a highly accurate, interactive digital model of the Earth to model, monitor and simulate natural phenomena, hazards and the related human activities. The DestinE system[94] provides an operational system to support decision-makers in designing accurate and actionable climate change adaptation strategies and mitigation measures and in addressing related complex societal problems and it is accessible for Horizon Europe projects.

The expected impact of the activities supported under this part of the destination notably includes:

[94] https://platform.destine.eu/services/

- Exploitation of the rapid advances in modelling, observations, digital technologies and ML/AI, including as foreseen in the AI Continent Action Plan[95], ensuring that European leadership in this field is maintained;

- Verification of modelling results by using observations of the research infrastructures in relevant fields;

- Development, testing and validating digital twins and their cross-sectoral use by utilising Destination Earth system to cover unexplored areas/domains in addressing EU priorities and evolving end-user needs through multi-disciplinary solutions, pilots and demonstrators.

Legal entities established in China are not eligible to participate in both Research and Innovation Actions and Innovation Actions falling under this destination. 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-INFRA-2026-TECH-01-01: R&D for the next generation of scientific instrumentation, tools, methods, digitalisation and solutions for research infrastructure upgrades**

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2026** | |
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| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 5.00 and 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. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 110.00 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Research and Innovation Actions |
| *Eligibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:<br>Subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks. |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>The specific conditions for actions with PCP/PPI procurements in |

[95] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: AI Continent Action Plan ((COM(2025) 165 final of 9.4.2025).

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| | section H of the General Annexes apply to grants funded under this topic. |

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

- enhanced scientific competitiveness of European research infrastructures;
- enhanced research infrastructure capacity to address research challenges and EU policy priorities;
- increased greening and resilience of research infrastructures;
- increased efficiency of research infrastructures through digitalisation;
- increased collaboration of research infrastructures with universities, research organisations and industry, fostering an innovation ecosystem that provides the foundations for the development of innovative companies and startups while considering EU technological sovereignty;
- fostering the uptake of innovation outside the scientific research market, through co-development with industry of advanced technologies for research infrastructures;
- integration of research infrastructures into local, regional, national and global innovation systems and promotion of entrepreneurial culture.

Scope: The aim of this topic is to deliver innovative scientific instrumentation, tools, digitalisation, methods and solutions which advance the state-of-art of research infrastructures (RIs) in the EU and Associated Countries and show transformative potential in RIs operation. The related developments, which underpin the provision of improved and advanced services, should lead RIs to support new areas of research and/or a wider community of users, including industrial users.

Cutting-edge technologies will also enhance the potential of RIs to contribute to addressing EU policy objectives and socio-economic challenges.

Proposals should be complementary with actions funded under topics HORIZON-INFRA-2022-TECH-01-01 [96] and HORIZON-INFRA-2024-TECH-01-01 [97], targeting different instrumentation, tools, methods, digitalisation, and solutions. The complementarity with previous actions should be clearly explained in the proposal.

Proposals should address the following aspects, as relevant:

- research and development of new scientific instrumentation, tools, digitalisation, and methods for research infrastructures;

[96] https://cordis.europa.eu/programme/id/HORIZON_HORIZON-INFRA-2022-TECH-01-01
[97] https://cordis.europa.eu/programme/id/HORIZON_HORIZON-INFRA-2024-TECH-01-01

- their technology validation and prototyping;
- training of RI staff for the operation and use of these new solutions; when relevant, developing skills on technical validation to industrial standards;
- the innovative potential for industrial exploitation of the solutions and/or for the benefits of the society, including technology concept or validation in laboratory for use by SMEs startups or scaleups.

To minimise the research infrastructures' environmental footprint and increase resilience e.g. with respect to energy consumption, climate-related aspects or use of critical components and materials, greening and resilience aspects should be addressed for all proposed scientific instrumentation, tools, methods, digitalisation, and solutions.

Developments for the specific use case of research infrastructures are expected to go beyond TRL 4. When proposed developments have the potential to lead to applications beyond the specific use case of research infrastructures, the TRL of these additional developments should go up to TRL 3-4.

Proposals should include at least two different research infrastructures as beneficiaries[98] each of them being an ESFRI research infrastructure [99] a European Research Infrastructure Consortium[100] (ERIC) or another research infrastructure that is an international European research organisation[101].

Other technological partners, including industry, SMEs, startups or scaleups should also be involved, thus promoting innovation and knowledge sharing through co-development of new technical solutions for research infrastructures with due consideration of EU technological sovereignty.

Proposals may include PCP[102] subcontracting activities as described in part H of the General Annexes of the work programme. This option encourages the use of public procurements for

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98 The participation of two nodes of the same ESFRI infrastructure or ERIC does not count as two different research infrastructures.

99 See the list of ESFRI 'Landmarks' and 'Projects' in the 2021 ESFRI Roadmap: https://roadmap2021.esfri.eu/

100 European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) | European Commission (europa.eu)

101 An 'international European research organisation' means an international organisation, the majority of whose members are Member States or associated countries, whose principal objective is to promote scientific and technological cooperation in Europe.

102 *'Pre-commercial procurement'* is defined as procurement of R&D services involving *risk-benefit sharing under market conditions* and *competitive development in phases*. PCP focuses on the R&D phase before wide commercialisation.
*'Risk-benefit sharing under market conditions'* refers to the PCP approach in which procurers share with suppliers at market price the risks and the benefits related to the IPR resulting from the R&D.
*'Competitive development in phases'* refers to the competitive approach to buy the R&D from several competing R&D providers in parallel and to compare and identify the best value for money solutions on the market to address the PCP challenge. To reduce the investment risk for the procurer, reward the most competitive solutions and facilitate the participation of smaller innovative companies, the R&D is also split into phases (solution design, prototyping, original development and validation / testing of the first products), with the number of competing R&D providers being reduced after each phase.

the competitive development of new specific solutions, whilst opening market opportunities for industry and researchers active in the EU and Associated Countries. By establishing the procurement process in consecutive phases, the PCP activity can support the development of competing designs, prototypes, and solution testing. This ensures that investment risks do not prevent tackling specific scientific and technological issues and allows a problem to be approached from different angles and to test different solutions.

Proposals are encouraged to incorporate in the development and deployment of innovation, where applicable, principles in line with the EU's environmental policies such as Safe and Sustainable-by-Design (SSbD), circular-by-design and others.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement. However, where applicable in the proposed developments, proposals should consider the integration of the gender dimension in the research and innovation content.

**HORIZON-INFRA-2026-TECH-01-02: Digital twins and/or their major components for environment, climate and security**

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2026** | |
|---|---|
| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 5.00 and 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. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 15.00 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Research and Innovation Actions |
| *Eligibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:<br>Subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks.<br>Beneficiaries must make use of the European Commission's Destination Earth system[103].<br>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). |
| *Technology* | Activities are expected to achieve TRL 7 or higher by the end of the |

[103] https://platform.destine.eu/

| | |
|---|---|
| *Readiness Level* | project – see General Annex B. |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>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) [104]. |

Expected Outcome:

- Improved security and preparedness for the Union and more disaster resilient society facing the adverse effects of climate change;
- Improved capacity of key users and decision-makers to anticipate, mitigate and contain risks at the vulnerable societal sectors at the intersection of climate change, environment and security;
- Further development of the data lab infrastructure around Destination Earth in line with the AI continent Action Plan[105]

Scope: Climate change has both direct and indirect consequences to the security of our societies. To be able to address the intricate connections between climate change and security to various impact sectors, Europe needs to be equipped with adequate tools, technologies and methods that enable addressing these complex issues and exploit the recent advances in AI, high-performance computing and other new digital technologies.

Digital twins for civil security require the development of high-accuracy and fast-response models at local and regional levels to strengthen preparedness and resilience, protect EU citizens and raise risk awareness both inside and outside the EU. The topic focuses on new digital twins, or major new components of existing digital twins, to strengthen foresight and anticipation capabilities at the intersection of environment, climate and security. In addition to climate and environmental issues, possible security related impact sectors include, but are not limited to, natural or human-induced disasters, health and related emergencies, energy sustainability and management, migration, or resource scarcity (e.g. food and water). The proposed cross-disciplinary solutions should cover risk mitigation, prevention and foresight, and make use of the Destination Earth system capabilities. The focus is on local and/or regional models, primarily in Europe and its neighbourhood. If necessary, some indicators can also be provided at regional / global levels.

104 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

105 AI Continent Action Plan, COM(2025)165 of 9 April 2025

The work should benefit from rapid advances in modelling, observations and data fusions, artificial intelligence and machine learning, state-of-the art processing and visualisation capabilities, and enable workflows to support users in key impact sectors.

The proposals should cover the following aspects:

- Development of new digital twins, or major new components of existing digital twins, to strengthen foresight and anticipation capabilities at the intersection of environment, climate and security in short (operational), medium (tactical) and long-term (strategical) scenarios;

- Demonstrated usability through Minimum Viable Products (MVP) in at least three application areas linking to climate, environment and security, with the involvement of real users;

- Advancing the state-of-the-art in modelling, observations and data fusions, artificial intelligence and machine learning, processing, advanced visualisation capabilities and detection features, and workflows to support users in key impact sectors;

- High computational capacity to implement responsive visualization interfaces that allow advanced visualization capabilities (e.g. 3D, virtual reality, interactive simulations) for decision-makers;

- Coherent integration between satellite and other data (e.g. statistics, in situ, UAV Earth Observation data), and at least two sources in a modular architecture that guarantee the progressive injection of the additional data sources, including high quality observational and other data from the research infrastructures. In case of sensitive datasets, a coherent and comprehensive plan is needed, explaining how the data access will be granted to develop the proposed models and services and how these data will be progressively integrated;

- Clear pathway towards integration with the Destination Earth system, and further development of the data lab infrastructure around Destination Earth for new AI-enabled digital twins using the Data Labs of the AI Factories and integrating them in the DestinE system;

- Enable informed decision-making by non-technical experts and policy makers through assistance of (generative) AI models enabling user requirements analysis and narrowing down vast amounts of data and information into actionable and understandable scenarios;

- Clear pathway towards integration with the Destination Earth system regarding the infrastructure architecture, data and services, and identifying which capacities - depending on the scenario - can be directly used in Destination Earth, and which ones would need to be adapted to deal with sensitive issues;

- Demonstrated trustworthiness in the ethical use of AI;

- Robustness and accuracy of the models to be reliable for security usage.

The proposals should demonstrate clearly and with measurable indicators how they contribute to key Union priorities on adapting and preparing for a changing climate, crisis preparedness and disaster resilient society. They should leverage on the relevant parts of the EU's AI Continent Action Plan.

The proposals should demonstrate a clear and credible pathway towards collaboration with the implementing entities of Destination Earth initiative (European Space Agency (ESA), European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) and European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT)).

Proposals will need to adhere to the standards and best practices set by the Destination Earth initiative of the European Commission to allow coupling with the existing Destination Earth system. The proposed work is expected to ensure synergies with major European digital twin developments related to security (in particular those of the European Union Satellite Centre[106] (SatCen)), and other digital twin developments relevant to the chosen application fields. They should also leverage the knowledge and solutions generated in the relevant Horizon Europe projects, in particular those selected from HORIZON-INFRA-2021-TECH-01, HORIZON-INFRA-2024-TECH-01 and HORIZON-INFRA-2025-TECH-01). Synergies with the Common European Data Spaces[107] and in particular with the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) are also encouraged.

Proposals should also aim to address the possible use of the project outcomes in existing or new service offers by the Member States, Associated Countries or the European Union, like the relevant Copernicus services.

**HORIZON-INFRA-2027-TECH-01-01: Testing and optimising models of co-creation of advanced research infrastructure technologies**

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2027** | |
|---|---|
| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 10.00 and 15.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 30.00 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Research and Innovation Actions |
| *Eligibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: |

106 https://www.satcen.europa.eu/
107 https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/data-spaces

| | |
|---|---|
| | The following additional eligibility criteria apply: due to the specific nature of this topic, consortia must include at least two different research infrastructures as beneficiaries, each of them being an ESFRI infrastructure[108], and/or a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) [109] or another research infrastructure that is an international European research organisation[110]. Such beneficiaries, and the research infrastructure(s) that they operate, must be explicitly identified in the proposals[111]. |
| *Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:<br>Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP). The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants.<br>The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 500,000. This amount is justified since the projects funded will support the creation of an innovation ecosystem through concrete collaborative R&I projects, and research infrastructures will be engaged in different technological collaborations. Due to the nature of this action, a threshold lower than EUR 500,000 would hinder the engagement of research infrastructures with different partners; this would not allow for the creation of an ecosystem supporting the take up of technological innovations resulting from the use of research infrastructures.<br>The specific conditions for actions with PCP/PPI procurements in section H of the General Annexes apply to grants funded under this topic. |

Expected Outcome: The objective of this topic is strengthening the European research infrastructure landscape as a pillar of Europe's innovation-based competitiveness and reinforcing its role in the overarching policy priority of making Europe the top region for deep-tech startups and scaleups. Project results are expected to contribute to several of the following expected outcomes:

- Enhanced scientific and technological competitiveness of European research infrastructures, through the co-development of innovative technologies and solutions that

108 See the list of ESFRI 'Landmarks' and 'Projects' in the 2021 ESFRI Roadmap: https://roadmap2021.esfri.eu/

109 European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) | European Commission (europa.eu)

110 An 'international European research organisation' means an international organisation, the majority of whose members are Member States or associated countries, whose principal objective is to promote scientific and technological cooperation in Europe

111 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). For ESFRI Projects without an established legal entity, the beneficiary must be a legal entity from the lead country, typically the one coordinating the development of the ESFRI Project.

improve the performance of RI services, addressing common needs across different types of research infrastructures, where applicable.

- Increased cooperation and coordination between European research infrastructures, and between them and other public and private research performing organisations, in order to create a coherent and supportive ecosystem for deep-tech innovation in Europe.

- A strengthened role of research infrastructures as centres of gravity for deep-tech innovation ecosystems.

- Strengthened EU innovation capacity and technological sovereignty.

Scope: The topic focuses on supporting research infrastructures in developing and implementing innovative technologies and solutions improving the performance of their scientific services, while fostering cooperation with other research organisations, industry, and start-ups and scaleups to maximise the spillover effects of new RI technologies. Proposals should address all of the following aspects:

- Co-creation of advanced technologies that address research infrastructures needs, considering resource efficiency and environmental impacts as well as technological sovereignty.

- Development of partnerships and collaborations between research infrastructures and different types of research performing organisations including industry, to co-create technological solutions and promote their uptake and exploitation outside of the science market.

- Shared understanding of the commercial potential of innovative technologies, and support from RI technology transfer teams as early as necessary.

Developments for the specific use case of research infrastructures are expected to go beyond TRL 4. When proposed developments have the potential to lead to applications beyond the specific use case of research infrastructures, the TRL of these additional developments should go up to TRL 3-4. Proposers should clearly describe which TRL will be reached at the end of the project for each proposed development.

Projects are expected to share experiences about co-creation models with the project funded under HORIZON-INFRA-2025-01-DEV-05, area 3.

Proposals may include PCP[112] subcontracting activities as described in part H of the General Annexes of the work programme. This option encourages the use of public procurements for

[112] *'Pre-commercial procurement'* is defined as procurement of R&D services involving *risk-benefit sharing under market conditions* and *competitive development in phases*. PCP focuses on the R&D phase before wide commercialisation. *'Risk-benefit sharing under market conditions'* refers to the PCP approach in which procurers share with suppliers at market price the risks and the benefits related to the IPR resulting from the R&D. *'Competitive development in phases'* refers to the competitive approach to buy the R&D from several competing R&D providers in parallel and to compare and identify the best value for money solutions on the market to address the PCP challenge. To reduce the investment risk

the competitive development of new specific solutions, whilst opening market opportunities for industry and researchers active in the EU and Associated Countries. By establishing the procurement process in consecutive phases, the PCP activity can support the development of competing designs, prototypes, and solution testing. This ensures that investment risks do not prevent tackling specific scientific and technological issues and allows a problem to be approached from different angles and to test different solutions.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**HORIZON-INFRA-2027-TECH-01-02: Pioneering Destination Earth for a Sustainable Future: Large-Scale Pilots and Demonstrators**

| **Call: Research Infrastructures 2027** | |
|---|---|
| **Specific conditions** | |
| *Expected EU contribution per project* | The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 7.00 and 12.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts. |
| *Indicative budget* | The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 30.00 million. |
| *Type of Action* | Research and Innovation Actions |
| *Eligibility conditions* | The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:<br>Subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks.<br>Beneficiaries must make use of the European Commission's Destination Earth system[113].<br>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). |
| *Technology Readiness Level* | Activities are expected to achieve TRL 5 or higher by the end of the project – see General Annex B. |
| *Legal and* | The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions |

for the procurer, reward the most competitive solutions and facilitate the participation of smaller innovative companies, the R&D is also split into phases (solution design, prototyping, original development and validation / testing of the first products), with the number of competing R&D providers being reduced after each phase.

[113] https://platform.destine.eu/

| | |
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| *financial set-up of the Grant Agreements* | apply:<br>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) [114]. |

Expected Outcome:

- Actionable and widely tested research-to-action pilot solutions in addressing complex cross-sectoral problems caused and/or exacerbated by climate change in key socio-environmental and socio-economic sectors.
- Innovative use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by further development of the data lab infrastructure around Destination Earth in line with the AI continent Action Plan[115].
- Multi-country approach with real end user engagement to ensure solutions that are accessible, and effectively integrated into real policy, preparedness and response efforts.

Scope: The focus is on large-scale pilots and demonstrators to enable researchers, expert and non-expert users, including decision-makers, to experiment with and through the existing Destination Earth system and harness it to widespread cross-societal use through new innovative methods, practices, tools and services. It will also leverage on the recent AI Continent Action Plan and the further development of the data lab infrastructure by bringing together and federating data from different AI Factories, linking to the corresponding Common European Data Spaces and making this data available to AI developers and ensuring their access to large volumes of high-quality data.

The proposals should cover all following aspects:

- Planning, designing, and overseeing large-scale experimental pilots and demonstrators by using Destination Earth capabilities in critical impact sectors linked to public policy areas, tackling real-world challenges in relation to climate change adaptation and risk mitigation, and foster solutions that address clearly specified needs at European, national, regional and local scale.
- The pilots and demonstrators should improve the models and enable the coupling of models used in different sectors to combine cross-sectoral research and practice. They should consider the complex interrelationships emerging from the challenges caused and/or exacerbated by climate change, like for example climate-induced health effects or

[114] 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

[115] AI Continent Action Plan COM(2025)165 of 9 April 2025

changes in the energy, agri-food or mobility sectors, and propose, test and analyse adaptation and risk mitigation measures in real-life scenarios to be able to respond effectively to these complex challenges in the future.

- The pilots should contribute to the data infrastructure around Destination Earth for new AI-enabled digital twins by using the Data Labs of the AI Factories and integrating them in the DestinE system. Involvement of SMEs and/or startups, active in AI and/or deep tech and working in close collaboration with scientific research community is strongly encouraged.

- The pilots and demonstrators should be co-designed and experimented in at least three Member States and/or Associated Countries in close collaboration between research scientists, AI developers, public sector policy experts and decision-makers.

- The solutions need to demonstrate sustainable set-ups, including through interactivity with digital twins, adapting to changing data and on-demand visualisation capabilities and answering to existing and emerging socio-environmental and socio-economic challenges and the use of AI in solving them.

The pilots and demonstrators should fully integrate place-based governance, socio-economic and identity characteristics and other context-specific data to ensure tailored, effective, and actionable responses. They should enable authorities to implement targeted, data-driven measures that enhance resilience, preparedness, and decision-making in their respective territorial contexts.

Proposals will need to adhere to the standards and best practices set by the Destination Earth initiative to enable interoperability with the Destination Earth system. To the extent possible, the Destination Earth platform should be used as to facilitate the deployment and scalability of the proposed solutions, while enhancing their accessibility and impact across multiple sectors and user communities across Europe.

To maximize impact, the work plan should include a scalability plan that drives the widespread adoption of the innovative use and solutions powered by Destination Earth, latest technologies, and scientific developments. It should be developed in close collaboration with the relevant public authorities and outline a clear, actionable pathway aiming to secure long-term commitments, including funding, governance and policy framework to ensure lasting impact beyond the projects' duration.

The proposals should demonstrate a clear and credible pathway towards collaboration with the implementing entities of Destination Earth initiative (European Space Agency (ESA), European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) and European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT)), and other key initiatives active in the intended impact sectors, like Mercator Ocean International, leading the European Digital Twin Ocean initiative.

The proposals should also leverage the knowledge and solutions generated in the relevant Horizon Europe projects, in particular those selected from HORIZON-INFRA-2021-TECH-

01, HORIZON-INFRA-2024-TECH-01 and HORIZON-INFRA-2025-TECH-01. Strong links with the aims, actors and projects serving the Horizon Europe missions, in particular the Climate Adaptation Mission, are encouraged. Synergies with the Common European Data Spaces [116] and in particular with the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) are also encouraged.

Proposals should also aim to address the possible use of the project outcomes in existing or new service offers by the Member States, Associated Countries or the European Union, like the relevant Copernicus services.

116 https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/data-spaces

## Destination INFRANET – Network connectivity in research and education - enabling collaboration without boundaries

In today's world, ultra-fast hyperconnected networks, robust security, trust and identity solutions, and integrated above-the-net services reshape the context in which scientific and educational activities are conducted. High-performance computing (HPC), cloud-based environments, AI-driven solutions and other new and emerging technologies are key enablers of scientific progress. These technologies offer unprecedented potential to accelerate discovery and innovation, yet they also introduce new challenges in data accessibility and findability, advanced trust and identity frameworks, and resilient high-capacity connectivity. Looking ahead, the ability to adapt to disruptive technologies, integrate quantum-secure architectures, and expand AI-driven services will be critical to maintaining high standards of reliability and trust in Europe's digital research environment.

National Research and Education Networks (NRENs) should address these evolving demands by delivering on high-speed connectivity, solid trust frameworks, and scalable digital services for advanced scientific collaboration. Through GÉANT (Gigabit European Academic Network), the NRENs will continuously improve their infrastructure, broaden innovative services, and address emerging challenges, enabling Europe's knowledge communities to exchange resources swiftly, securely and on a global scale, and reinforcing Europe's position as a competitive, resilient, and forward-looking digitally empowered research and innovation ecosystem.

The target of the Destination under this work programme is to carry on building upon the Framework Partnership Agreement's expected outcomes, delivering state of the art network connectivity, above-the-net innovative services and operational excellence for the NRENs.

This Specific Grant Agreement (SGA) under the current Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) will build upon and complement the foundations and achievements of the previous SGAs. It ensures both continuity with the past activities and alignment with new emerging priorities in digital resilience and security, strategic autonomy, and technological competitiveness. It will seamlessly bridge the activities towards the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) in enhancing the scalability, sustainability and adaptability, and will endow NRENs with the necessary capabilities to deliver state-of-the-art solutions to European research and education community.

The Specific Grant Agreements (SGAs) implementing the FPA action plan are included under "Other actions". Therefore, there is no call for topics under this Destination.

Legal entities established in China are not eligible to participate in both Research and Innovation Actions and Innovation Actions falling under this destination. For additional information please see "Restrictions on the participation of legal entities established in China" found in General Annex B of the General Annexes.

# Other Actions not subject to calls for proposals

## Grants to Identified Beneficiaries

### 1. Sustaining the EOSC monitoring mechanism

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

- Operation, maintenance and development of a policy intelligence tool for monitoring policies, investments, digital research outputs, skills and infrastructure capacities related to Open Science and the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC);
- Investigation, preparation and handover of the developed tool to a willing EOSC-related entity based on the developed sustainability plans during the EOSC Track project, potentially subject to approval by the responsible governance (e.g. EOSC Tripartite or EOSC Federation governance);
- Coordination and alignment with and contribution to the monitoring of the EOSC Federation and the monitoring of the EOSC Partnership;
- Support to the alignment of surveys and monitoring initiatives related to Open Science in Europe.

Expected impact:

- Continued support to the EOSC Tripartite governance as a monitoring data aggregator to cover trends in Open Science policies, practices, and impact across Europe and fulfil Open Science monitoring requirements arising from the European Research Area (ERA) Policy Agenda.
- Long-term sustainability of the policy intelligence tool based on the developed sustainability plan, e.g. by (partial) integration into the governance and financing structure of the EOSC Federation.

Scope:

The ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024 includes the action to enable the open sharing of knowledge and the re-use of research outputs, including through the development of the EOSC. A corresponding action is included in the Commission proposal for the ERA Policy Agenda 2025-2027, by enabling open science via sharing and re-use of data, including through the EOSC.

To continuously assess progress on this action, a monitoring mechanism is required to collect data and benchmark policies, investments, digital research outputs, skills and infrastructure capacities related to the EOSC. This monitoring mechanism shall provide the Commission, the Member States and Associated Countries and the EOSC European Partnership with the baselines, trends, and best practices along the three levels of EOSC implementation

(European, national, and institutional). It shall provide FAIR monitoring data allowing the EOSC governance to pursue statistical analyses on-demand to assess the impact of EOSC related policies and investments

A first version of a policy intelligence tool was implemented in 2023 in the context of the 'EOSC Future' project, to help assessing EOSC implementation at various levels and to contribute to the monitoring of the uptake of Open Science in Europe.

In the context of the 'EOSC Track' project from 2024 to 2026, OpenAIRE AMKE continues to operate, maintain and further develop the policy intelligence tool for monitoring policies, investments, digital research outputs, skills and infrastructure capacities related to EOSC, and to ensure the necessary links to the new ERA monitoring mechanism. This particularly includes a relaunch of the corresponding platform "EOSC Open Science Observatory" to collect, analyse and visualise data on the implementation and uptake of open science across Europe. For this purpose, the platform also collects data automatically from trusted data sources, leveraging on the OpenAIRE established resources and through continuous surveys to the EOSC stakeholders.

The platform should moreover calculate and make available specific indicators to monitor the open sharing of knowledge and the re-use of research outputs across the ERA and beyond, and the EOSC readiness of Member States and Associated Countries and their actions and investments (financial and in-kind contributions) contributing to the EOSC Partnership and the EOSC implementation, for the first time reflecting on trends and impact of Open Science principles. The EOSC Track project in addition shall create a sustainability plan for operating and maintaining the tool beyond the project duration.

The identified beneficiary will:

- continue to operate and maintain the policy intelligence tool for monitoring policies, investments, digital research outputs, skills and infrastructure capacities related to EOSC, and ensure the necessary links to the new ERA monitoring mechanism;
- align with and contribute to the uptake of the monitoring of the EOSC Federation and the monitoring of the EOSC Partnership. This might include mild developments in the existing policy intelligence tool during the project duration.
- on the basis of the sustainability plan developed throughout the EOSC Track project, investigate, prepare and execute the handover of the policy intelligence tool to a willing EOSC-related entity. A corresponding handover might be subject to approval by the EOSC Tripartite governance or EOSC Federation governance to ensure continuous operations.

The Commission considers that a duration of 2 years for this action would be appropriate. If necessary to implement the action, the beneficiary may award subcontracts covering the implementation of certain action tasks that will be described in the proposal.

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.

In addition, OpenAIRE AMKE is uniquely positioned to provide European wide information on research and scholarly digital outputs and to run and analyse surveys on the subject of Open Science. OpenAIRE is a participatory infrastructure via its established network of 34 National Open Access Desks (NOADs) in the Member States and Associated Countries. It harvests information of open scholarly results and data and provides services for discoverability, accessibility, and monitoring of data-driven research results. The OpenAIRE AMKE legal entity is established as a non-profit partnership to ensure a permanent presence and structure for a European-wide policy and open scholarly communication infrastructure.

Specific conditions: Procedure: The evaluation committee will be fully composed by representatives of EU institutions.

Legal entities:

OpenAIRE AMKE, 6 Artemidos Str & Epidavrou, 15125 Marousi – Greece

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: Second quarter 2026

Indicative budget: EUR 0.40 million from the 2026 budget

**2. Coordination and Monitoring of the European Research Infrastructure Consortia (ERICs)**

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

1. European and national authorities, funding agencies, ESFRI, research infrastructures, and other ERA stakeholders have access to updated and consolidated data and information on ERICs;

2. The impact and visibility of the ERICs and the role of the ERIC Forum are enhanced; compliance with the ERIC Regulation can be further assessed and strengthened; assessment of the implementation of the ERIC Regulation is facilitated;

3. Evidence for future strategic development of the ERICs, best practices, a common approach for monitoring such as that developed by ESFRI, identification of key performance indicators including indicators on impact.

Expected Impact: Proposals should set out a credible pathway to contribute to several of the expected impacts of Destination INFRADEV.

Scope: The European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) [117] legal framework facilitated the establishment and operation of more than thirty pan-European research infrastructures [118], enhanced trust among funding countries to jointly invest in these infrastructures and contributed to integrating and structuring the research infrastructure landscape.

The Regulation requires each ERIC to produce an annual report covering the scientific, operational and financial aspects of its activities. However, the level of details of these reports is not defined. The ERIC Forum, set up to ensure coordination and secretariat support for the ERICs, has successfully delivered in its objectives and corresponds to a well-needed support activity.

In this context, the proposal should address, inter alia, all following aspects:

*Monitoring and reporting*

1. Further collecting and maintaining basic data and information on the ERICs (such as ERIC statutes, memberships, annual reports, links to Commission Decisions, to ERICs websites);

2. Further development, maintenance and optimisation of the online platform developed by the ERIC Forum 2 project reflecting data and knowledge on the ERICs, compliant with FAIR principles with appropriate management of access rights. The platform should notably enable easy upload and update of relevant data and information by the ERICs or their members. The platform should provide effective and tailored access to data and information to the Commission, ESFRI and ERIC stakeholders and the general public;

3. Continued collection of detailed data and information beyond basic information, taking into account the work of the assessment of the Commission expert group on the implementation of the ERIC Regulation[119], the Commission report on the application of the ERIC Regulation[120], the EU priorities including the renewed ERA and appropriate consultation of stakeholders such as the ESFRI Stakeholder Forum; including the use of key performance indicators, which may be tailored to each ERIC, to track issues such as industrial collaboration;

*Analysis in support of research infrastructure policy*

1. Ensuring in particular synergies and compatibility with the activities and outcomes of the ERA Policy Agenda 2025-2027 on strengthening sustainability, accessibility and resilience of research infrastructures in the European Research Area;

117 https://www.eric-forum.eu/
118 https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-research-and-innovation/our-digital-future/european-research-infrastructures/eric_en
119 https://op.europa.eu/publication-detail/-/publication/cdbe5c78-353b-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1
120 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2023:488:FIN

2. Assessing and reporting on the needs and progress of ERICs towards the green and digital transition;

3. Reporting on consistency and complementarity of ERIC developments with ESFRI as relevant;

4. Providing guidance and recommendations to ERICs as a whole on issues such as sustainability and access models, internationalisation, industrial collaboration, and employment models.

*Secretariat and back-office services*

1. Supporting the network of ERICs ('ERIC Forum'), including a secretariat, in strengthening the structured cooperation between ERICs, the external representation of the ERICs as relevant stakeholders in consultations and other policy actions that could affect them, and by identifying and promoting best practices including for the support of ERICs in preparation;

2. Implementation of potential shared administrative back-office services among the ERICs, such as standard protocols, templates, reporting, HR, IT, communication or other services, to streamline coordination, optimise resources and support the ERICs in preparation.

The proposal should ensure close coordination with the Commission including liaising with ESFRI and relevant stakeholders. It should build strongly on the expertise of the individual ERICs as well as on the experience gained as a network in the context of the ERIC Forum.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposals according to Article 195(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 24(3)(b) of the Horizon Europe Regulation as, due to the scope of this action, the potential beneficiaries are uniquely identified as the existing ERICs set up on the basis of the Council Regulation (EC) No 723/2009. They are free to organise themselves as regards which of them will be beneficiaries to achieve the necessary objectives of this action.

Specific conditions

*Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements*: The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:

1. 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 relevant outputs generated by this action to the EU institutions and to the beneficiaries of related projects funded by the EU. This access shall be provided through a well-defined mechanism, during and beyond the lifespan of the Grant Agreement for the continuity of the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the ERIC legal framework.

2. 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)[121].

*Procedure:* The evaluation committee will be fully composed by representatives of EU institutions.

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.

Legal entities:

ACTRIS ERIC, Erik Palmenin Aukio 1, 00560, Helsinki, Finland

Analysis and Experimentation on Ecosystem ERIC (AnaEE-ERIC), 1 Avenue de la Terrasse, 91190, Gif Sur Yvette, France

Biobanks and Biomolecular Resources Research Infrastructure Consortium (BBMRI-ERIC), Neue Stiftingtalstrasse 2/B/6, 8010, Graz, Austria

Central European Research Infrastructure Consortium ERIC (CERIC-ERIC), SS. 14, km 163.5 in Area Science Park, 34149, Trieste, Italy

CESSDA ERIC, Parkveien 20, 5007, Bergen, Norway

CLARIN ERIC, Drift 10, 3512 BS, Utrecht, Netherlands

Cherenkov Telescope Array Observatory ERIC (CTAO ERIC), Via Piero Gobetti 93/3 40129 Bologna, Italy

International Centre for Advanced Studies on River-Sea Systems European Research Infrastructure Consortium (DANUBIUS-ERIC), Murighiol, Tulcea County, Romania

Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities (DARIAH ERIC), Avenue de France 190-198, 75013, Paris, France

EATRIS ERIC, De Boelelaan 1118, 1081 HZ, Amsterdam, Netherlands

ECCSEL European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ECCSEL ERIC), Kolbjorn Hejes Vei 1A, 7491, Trondheim, Norway

ECRIN European Clinical Research Infrastructure Network (ECRIN-ERIC), 5 Rue Watt, 75013, Paris, France

European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI-ERIC)

[121] 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

European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science (E-RIHS ERIC)

Extreme Light Infrastructure ERIC (ELI ERIC), Za Radnici 835, 252 41, Dolni Brezany, Czechia

European Marine Biological Resource Centre European Research Infrastructure Consortium (EMBRC-ERIC), 4 Place Jussieu, 75005, Paris, France

European Multidisciplinary Seafloor and Water Column Observatory - European Research Infrastructure Consortium (EMSO ERIC), Via di Vigna Murata 605, 00143, Roma, Italy

European Plate Observing System — European Research Infrastructure Consortium (EPOS ERIC)

European Social Survey European Research Infrastructure Consortium, ESS ERIC, Headquarters City, University of London, Northampton Square, EC1V 0HB, London, United Kingdom

European Infrastructure of Open Screening Platforms for Chemical Biology European Research Infrastructure Consortium (EU-OPENSCREEN ERIC), Robert-Rossle-Str. 10, 13125, Berlin, Germany

EURO-ARGO ERIC, Zi de la Pointe du Diable Technopole Brest Iroise, 29280, Plouzane, France

EURO-BIOIMAGING ERIC, PL 123, 20521, Turku, Finland

European Spallation Source ERIC , Odarslovsvagen 113, 224 84, Lund, Sweden

European Solar Research Infrastructure for Concentrated Solar Power (EU-SOLARIS ERIC), Carretera A Senes Km 4, 04200, Tabernas, Spain

Integrated Carbon Observation System European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ICOS ERIC), Erik Palmenin Aukio 1, 00560, Helsinki, Finland

INFRAFRONTIER ERIC, Ingolstaedter Landstrasse 1, 85764, Neuherberg, Germany

INSTRUCT-ERIC, Oxford House, Parkway Court, John Smith Drive, OX4 2JY, Oxford, United Kingdom

Joint Institute for Very Long Baseline Interferometry as a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (JIV-ERIC), Oude Hoogeveensedijk 4, 7991 PD, Dwingeloo, Netherlands

E-SCIENCE European Infrastructure for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research (LifeWatch ERIC), Plaza de Espana S/N, Sector II-III, 41071, Sevilla, Spain

Low Frequency Array European Research Infrastructure Consortium (LOFAR ERIC), Oude Hoogeveensedijk 4, 7991 Pd, Dwingeloo, Netherlands

Microbial Resource Research Infrastructure - European Research Infrastructure Consortium (MIRRI-ERIC), Universidade Do Minho Campus De Gualtar Cp 3 Piso, 4710-057, Braga, Portugal

European Research Infrastructure Consortium for the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE-ERIC), Amalienstrasse 33, 80799, München, 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: Fourth quarter 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 3.50 million from the 2027 budget

**3. Reinforcing the coordination and support to the EOSC Federation**

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

- continued support towards the implementation and further development of the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) Federation of existing and new EOSC Nodes;
- continued coordination between the EOSC Nodes, the EOSC Association and the overall EOSC Federation governance, for what concerns the implementation and further development of the EOSC Federation;
- continued implementation of communication activities and community-engagement activities in relation to the EOSC Federation;

Expected impact:

- ensuring adequate support and coordination of an enlarging EOSC Federation and effective interactions within its organisational structure.
- ensuring effective concertation of complementary support provided by related INFRAEOSC projects and securing continuation of coordination and support activities beyond their end.

Scope:

The launch of the EOSC EU Node in 2024 and the inclusion of additional candidate EOSC Nodes as of 2025 kick-started the building of the EOSC Federation as an interconnected,

distributed system of existing research and data infrastructures and scientific service provides across Europe.

The EOSC Federation is being developed and implemented through the communities' own contributions and the EU's contribution through Horizon Europe, on the basis of the common understanding under the EOSC co-programmed Partnership. The own contributions of the communities participating in the EOSC Federation have been instrumental for ensuring their readiness and capacity to serve EOSC users and for adopting Federation-wide standards and policies. At the same time, since the beginning of the building of the EOSC Federation there was a clear need for adequate coordination and support activities to ensure the efficient interaction among the EOSC Nodes, and the coordination of their activities towards achieving the Federation's objectives. To this end, the EOSC Tripartite Governance, a forum that provide the overall strategic steering of EOSC and where the European Commission, the EOSC Steering Board consisting Members from the EU Member States and countries associated to Horizon Europe and the EOSC Association are represented, endorsed the implementation of such coordination and support activities during the building of the EOSC Federation by the EOSC Association, in concertation with related INFRAEOSC projects, in particular EOSC United and EOSC Gravity [122]

As the EOSC Federation enlarges and increases its reach to multiple communities and users, so will the needs for adequate coordination and support activities. Moreover, as the duration of the co-programmed EOSC Partnership approaches its end, it is crucial to ensure the sustained implementation and smooth transition of the EOSC Federation towards any potential decision about its future after 2027.

The aim of the funded project should be to reinforce the support and coordination activities of the EOSC Federation and to ensure their sustained implementation beyond the duration of relevant INFRAEOSC projects. In the context of this project, the identified beneficiary will:

- continue and reinforce its contribution to the coordination, support, communication and community-engagement activities for the development and implementation of the EOSC Federation (including but not limited to providing secretarial support and collaboration tools to different groups and task forces, organising workshops, meetings and webinars, communication and awareness raising campaigns) ensuring complementarity with activities by relevant EOSC projects, in particular EOSC United [123] and EOSC Gravity[124], and ensure the smooth continuation of relevant activities beyond the end of the projects;

- continue and reinforce its support to the effective interaction between the different organisational bodies, including those charged with the overall strategic decision-making, the implementation and the coordination and support of the EOSC Federation.

122 https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101188045

123 EOSC United includes activities that 'help shaping the EOSC Federation governance and operational framework'.

124 EOSC Gravity includes activities that 'support the transition of the European co-programmed Partnership for EOSC into its new governance and funding framework'.

The Commission considers that a duration of 2 years for this action would be appropriate. If necessary to implement the action, the beneficiary may award subcontracts covering the implementation of certain action tasks that will be described in the proposal.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposals according to Article198(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 24(3)(b) of the Horizon Europe Regulation.

Given its current role in the context of the development and implementation of the EOSC Federation and in related INFRAEOSC projects, the EOSC Association AISBL is uniquely positioned to ensure optimal implementation of the outlined activities for the above duration. The EOSC Association AISBL is an international non-profit organization established to represent the research community in the coordination and implementation of EOSC and the Commission's partner under the EOSC co-programmed Partnership.

Specific conditions: Procedure: The evaluation committee will be fully composed by representatives of EU institutions.

Legal entities:

EOSC Association

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: Second quarter 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 0.60 million from the 2027 budget

**4. Strengthening the international dimension of ESFRI and/or ERIC research infrastructures – consolidating the SESAME facility**

Expected outcomes:

- Higher-quality user support with enhanced and more diverse services using the existing and near-term future SESAME facilities and expertise;
- A better trained and wider user base with knowledge and skills in light source use in the Middle East and neighbouring countries;
- Visibility of SESAME and stronger membership base in the Middle East for SESAME;
- Increased scientific capacity in the Middle East;

- Development of a community of light source aware African researchers, engineers and technicians;
- Stronger international role of the EU's light sources, through enhanced collaboration with Middle East and African researchers;
- Increased capacity to address societal challenges with a global dimension.

Scope:

This topic aims at strengthening the scientific capacity and service provision of the SESAME light source and strengthening its position as an international research infrastructure and excellence hub in the Middle East and beyond, through networking and collaboration with EU-based facilities and enlarging its user base.

This topic contributes to fostering the international dimension of European research infrastructures, through their engagement with facilities and user communities in other world regions.

This activity will:

- Foster existing and new scientific user communities in the Middle East and neighbouring regions to exploit the facilities available at SESAME. This will be achieved through mobility and training schemes, both for junior and more senior researchers and RI staff;
- Promote outreach and visibility of the SESAME light source in the Middle East and beyond. Activities should include in-person fora and workshops with high-level stakeholder representatives;
- Strengthen scientific services and capabilities of the SESAME beamline portfolio. Activities should include secondment of EU experienced light source staff specialists (scientists, engineers, technicians) to SESAME. Attention will be paid to improving workflows and data management on the beamlines, setting up remote access systems, enabling more diverse science through sample conditioning and environments and supporting the hands-on training of the SESAME user communities;
- Capacity and skills building for African researchers. Activities should include workshops, mobility and access support programmes to SESAME and European light source facilities.

The proposal should convincingly be able to demonstrate significant efforts towards assuring the longer-term sustainability of SESAME and exploit its potential to support capacity building in Africa. Africa may be the origin of new SESAME user communities and will acquire experience in light source use and operation.

The proposal should build on previous EU-funded work through grants OPEN SESAME, BEATS and SUNSTONE.

The conditions are described in General Annex B.

The following exceptions apply: Legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action as beneficiaries (or affiliated entities).

Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in non-associated third countries are exceptionally eligible for Union funding.

Legal entities:

ALBA-CELLS, Consorcio para la construcción, equipamiento y explotación el laboratorio de luz sincrotrón, Carrer de la Llum 2-26 68, 08290, Cerdanyola de Valles, Barcelona (ES)

CYI, The Cyprus Institute, Constantinou Kavafi 20 000, 2121, Nicosia (CY)

DESY, Stiftung Deutsches Elektronen - Synchrotron DESY, Notkestrasse 85, 22607, Hamburg (DE)

ELETTRA, Sincrotrone Trieste SCPA, SS 14 km 163.5 Area Science Park, 34149, Basovizza Trieste (IT)

ESRF, European Synchrotron Radiation Facility, 71 Avenue Des Martyrs, 38000 Grenoble (FR)

INFN, Istituto Nazionale di Fisica Nucleare, Via Enrico Fermi 54, 00044, Frascati (IT)

LEAPS AISBL (BE)

LUNDS UNIVERSITET, Paradisgatan 5c 117, 22100, LUND (SE)

PAUL SCHERRER INSTITUTE, Forschungstrasse 111 000, 5232, VILLIGEN PSI (CH)

SESAME, Synchrotron-Light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East, Princess Rahma University College, Al-Salt Greater Municipa, Allan (JO)

SOLEIL, Synchrotron Soleil Société Civile, L’Orme des Merisiers 000, 91190, Saint Aubin (FR)

UNIWERSYTET JAGIELLONSKI, Ul Golebia 24 000, 31-007, Krakow (PL)

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: Second quarter 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 1.50 million from the 2027 budget

**Specific Grant Agreements to the FPA**

**1. SGA to the FPA for Research and Education Networks (2027)**

The consortium under the selected Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) for Research and Education Networks (HORIZON-INFRA-2021-NET-01-FPA) is invited to submit a proposal for a Specific Grant Agreement (SGA-RIA) covering the FPA final period. Activities should align with the FPA objectives and action plan. Proposals shall be evaluated in accordance with the action's specific conditions and the requirements set forth in the Commission's invitation letter.

Expected Outcomes:

The concrete expected outcomes per area of activities should be:

Increase core network capacity and coverage:

- Progress towards delivering low-latency, Terabit-scale connectivity to meet evolving demand for secure network resources and underpin Europe's digital science and computational infrastructures over the coming decade. Strengthen resilience by establishing uniform connectivity, ensuring multiple diverse routes to interconnect each Point of Presence (PoP) and minimize the risk of isolation.

- Further develop the fibre-optic backbone to the edges of Europe, adopting dark-fibre or spectrum solutions where technically and economically feasible, to ensure seamless, high-capacity connectivity. Incorporate scalable network equipment and robust topologies capable of handling extreme data volumes, enabling effective collaboration on large-scale scientific initiatives.

Improve and expand connectivity and collaboration service catalogue offering:

- Continue to enhance mature above-the-net-services, including the use of the underlying connectivity infrastructure and its core building blocks, security and authentication and authorisation Infrastructure (AAI), integrating cloud-based frameworks and adopting AI/ML-driven solutions where relevant.

- Advance by designing and implementing new demand-driven, reliable, secure, and multi-domain services for GÉANT's R&E community. Focus on meeting the needs of data-intensive research across different domains (e.g., AI, advanced analytics) while maintaining smooth interconnections with other large-scale data environments.

- Continue strengthening interoperable frameworks and services for data-centric collaboration and sharing in line with findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable (FAIR) principles. Evaluate emerging approaches to enhance the transparency and

traceability of data exchanges, ensuring reliable and efficient data sharing across Europe's R&E ecosystem.

Leverage Trust and Identity Services:

- Continue extending interoperability to public and private digital identity platforms by consolidating ongoing eIDAS integration efforts (including advanced group access rights management).
- Further contribute to national, European and global standardisation and regulation of trust and identity services to maximise the impact of privacy-by-design and sustainable solutions developed in the R&E community; align with evolving data protection regulations and adopt best practices for robust and compliant identity management.
- Collaborate with Trust & Identity Services and standards in the public sector to continue developing interoperable solutions that uphold privacy by design and a robust trust framework across Europe.

Take GÉANT's network and partners security to the next level:

- Enhance GÉANT's network resilience by continuously updating and integrating robust practices and validated solutions—both tailored off-the shelf or developed in-house - to ensure the security of high-speed networks across the entire NREN community, while leveraging mature solutions and further advancing emerging approaches - such as AI-driven threat detection and adaptive monitoring - to effectively address evolving cybersecurity challenges.
- Adopt and evolve a next-generation framework for fast, federated incident responses across European NRENs and GÉANT, integrating automation, machine learning threat intelligence, dynamic orchestration, and regular simulations. Deepen cooperation with global Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) and Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs), to deliver innovative threat management.
- Provide partner organisations with an extensive training program—for experts and non-experts—to enhance their security posture and respond promptly to threats, while building on existing dashboards to create a dedicated NREN security compliance mechanism for real-time standards monitoring.
- Embed robust security principles into every stage of activity design and execution. Continuously invest in innovative security methodologies emerging from both industrial and commercial sectors to address evolving challenges such as AI-driven threats, quantum risks, and supply chain vulnerabilities.
- Ensure GÉANT's network remains secure for processing sensitive and GDPR-compliant data, while proactively managing risks to adapt to evolving threats and regulatory requirements.

Develop collaboration in new fronts:

- Establish and maintain a project-wide framework for software service releases that incorporates the latest industry standards for quality, maintenance, and deployment, ensuring coherence and applicability across the entire GÉANT community collaboration. Define robust interface specifications to ensure seamless integration and ongoing interoperability of all delivered services.

- Ensure safe, secure, and cost-effective service delivery through pan-European procurement frameworks. This includes maintaining an up-to-date, collectively managed portfolio of commercial infrastructure-cloud platforms—such as those established under the OCRE2024 framework—to provide European research and education institutions with state-of-the-art, future-proof cloud services that uphold digital autonomy and data sovereignty.

- Leverage the NREN federation as an open pan-European platform for collaborative development, proof-of-concept trials, rigorous testing, and deployment of advanced research technologies and services—such as Fibre Acoustic Sensing, SMART Cables, Time and Frequency networks, and Quantum Communication Infrastructure—to foster innovation and enhance research collaboration.

- Advance global connectivity and foster Europe’s international cooperation by enhancing competitiveness, digital autonomy, resilience, and security—while supporting a sustainable, high-performance digital transformation for research and education.

Expected impact:

The proposals should set out a credible pathway to contributing to all the following impacts:

- State-of the art, uniform dark-fibre and spectrum-based backbone networks, are deployed and maintained across all NRENs, providing equitable, resilient, and ubiquitous secure connectivity across Europe to its edges, and enabling seamless connection beyond Europe with the global research and education community; sustainable, green IT principles are embedded into hardware procurement and infrastructure design.

- Advanced AI/ML solutions are adopted to enhance network automation and service orchestration ensuring detailed, real-time visibility, managing exponential traffic growth from new devices and services, and reducing downtime and repair intervals, all while supporting data-intensive research workflows.

- GÉANT’s advanced connectivity, trust, and security infrastructures are leveraged enabling robust, scalable cross-sectoral research collaboration and accelerating Europe's digital transformation; cybersecurity resilience is scaled up by advancing AI-driven cybersecurity frameworks and federated incident response mechanisms, complemented by robust identity solutions (eduGAIN and eIDAS).

- Europe’s research and education networks are at the forefront of the fast-evolving landscape on quantum, AI, HPC, cloud, time and frequency networks (TFN) and other new technologies enabling network innovations.
- Cloud infrastructures are expanded and consolidated under the Open Clouds for Research Environments (OCRE) initiative, ensuring comprehensive and secure data orchestration, and cloud service frameworks, to effectively reduce reliance on non-European service providers while reinforcing Europe's digital sovereignty.
- GÉANT’s incubator pathways are expanded through bottom-up experimentation and user-centric approach to sustain and drive European innovation capacity; and tools and services based on emerging technologies, such as distributed acoustic sensing, quantum-based tools and integrated HPC solutions are evaluated and, where appropriate, operationalised.
- The governance, decision-making, multi-stakeholder coordination frameworks, and strategic oversight of GÉANT are streamlined to maintain agile and continuous engagement among all NRENs.
- Europe's global connectivity leadership is supported through international research collaboration.

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.

Specific conditions:

6-years Framework Partnership Agreement for Research and Education Networks with identified beneficiary and specific grants awarded to identified beneficiary for Research and Innovation Action under the Framework Partnership Agreement.

In this action the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

Purchases of equipment, infrastructure, services or other assets used for the action must be declared as depreciation costs.

Equipment, infrastructure, services or other assets (such as IRUs) purchased specifically for the action (or developed as part of the action tasks) may exceptionally be declared as full capitalised costs taking into account that their life span may extend after the duration of the action and beyond the FPA coverage.

The standard evaluation criteria, thresholds, weighting for award criteria and the maximum rate of co-financing for this type of action are provided in parts D and G of the General Annexes. with the following exceptions for the evaluation criteria:

"The following additions to the general award criteria apply:

For the criterion Excellence:

- Clarity and pertinence of the project's objectives, including their relevance to the overarching goals of the FPA. Extent to which the proposed work is ambitious, and goes beyond the state-of-the-art.
- Soundness of the proposed methodology, including the business model approach on service delivery and provision of innovative services and the related metrics.
- Effectiveness and agility in developing new services according to the needs of a wide user base across multiple disciplines for excellent science and research.

Eligibility conditions: The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: Subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks.

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Specific grant agreement awarded without call for proposals in relation to a Framework Partnership Agreement

Indicative timetable: First quarter 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 60.00 million from the 2027 budget

**Expert contract actions**

**1. External expertise 2026**

This action will support:

- The use of appointed independent experts for the evaluation and monitoring of actions (grant agreement, grant decision, public procurement actions, financial instruments, evaluation) funded under Horizon Europe and previous Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation and where appropriate, include ethics checks as well as compliance checks regarding the Gender Equality Plan eligibility criterion. A special allowance of EUR 450/day will be paid to the experts appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest.
- The use of individual experts to advise on, or support, the design and implementation of EU policies on research infrastructures. The activities carried out by the experts will be essential to the development and monitoring of the Union policy and initiatives in this area. The individual experts' tasks will include attending bilateral meetings with Commission services, remote drafting and possible preparatory work. The experts will be highly qualified, specialised, independent experts selected on the basis of their competence and knowledge of the field. A special allowance of EUR 450/day will be

paid to the experts appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest. This amount is considered to be proportionate to the specific tasks to be assigned to the experts, including the number of meetings to be attended and possible preparatory work.

- The use of individual experts for the assessment of ERIC applications, as required under the ERIC Regulation [125]. The experts will be highly qualified independent experts selected on the basis of their specific competence. The experts will provide a report for each of the assessed ERIC application. A special allowance of EUR 450/day will be paid to the experts appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest. This amount is considered to be proportionate to the specific tasks to be assigned to the experts.

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

Indicative budget: EUR 0.40 million from the 2026 budget

**2. External expertise 2027**

This action will support:

- The use of appointed independent experts for the evaluation and monitoring of actions (grant agreement, grant decision, public procurement actions, financial instruments, evaluation) funded under Horizon Europe and previous Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation and where appropriate, include ethics checks as well as compliance checks regarding the Gender Equality Plan eligibility criterion. A special allowance of EUR 450/day will be paid to the experts appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest.

- The use of individual experts to advise on, or support, the design and implementation of EU policies on research infrastructures. The activities carried out by the experts will be essential to the development and monitoring of the Union policy and initiatives in this area. The individual experts' tasks will include attending bilateral meetings with Commission services, remote drafting and possible preparatory work. The experts will be highly qualified, specialised, independent experts selected on the basis of their competence and knowledge of the field. A special allowance of EUR 450/day will be paid to the experts appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest. This amount is considered to be proportionate to the specific tasks to be assigned to the experts, including the number of meetings to be attended and possible preparatory work.

[125] Council Regulation (EC) No 723/2009 of 25 June 2009 on the Community Legal Framework for a European Research Infrastructure Consortium.

- The use of individual experts for the assessment of ERIC applications, as required under the ERIC Regulation [126]. The experts will be highly qualified independent experts selected on the basis of their specific competence. The experts will provide a report for each of the assessed ERIC application. A special allowance of EUR 450/day will be paid to the experts appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest. This amount is considered to be proportionate to the specific tasks to be assigned to the experts.

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

Indicative budget: EUR 0.60 million from the 2027 budget

**Procurement**

**1. Managed services for the EOSC Platform (EOSC EU Node)**

This procurement action will ensure the continuous improvement, operations, maintenance and support of the managed services for the EOSC EU Node[127] platform, providing access to a rich portfolio of FAIR data and professional quality FAIR services in all relevant domains from data handling to computing, processing, analysis and storing.

The infrastructure should be robust, secure, scalable, flexible and user-centric. It is constantly improved and upgraded following user feedback and the state-of-the-art of the underlying core technologies. It offers high quality of service management compliant with industrial standards, providing for a superior user experience, usability and ease of use for a very large number of users (i.e. hundreds of parallel user sessions per day), with the functionalities available 24/7. It offers seamless access to data, software and services through customized user interfaces, allowing users to navigate with built-in guidance tools and analytics for (re)use and service composition. It builds on the key concept of federation, standards and processes for Open Science, such as the EOSC Interoperability Framework and FAIR-by-design data and services.

Expected Results:

- Continuously operational, secure cloud-based EOSC infrastructure (EOSC EU Node) offering high quality professional services available 24/7.
- Rich set of innovative, modular, customizable and composable services for a wide variety of users from the research communities and beyond.
- A large number of data and service communities aligned in terms of standards and consolidated at subdomain, domain and interdisciplinary levels.

126 Council Regulation (EC) No 723/2009 of 25 June 2009 on the Community Legal Framework for a European Research Infrastructure Consortium.

127 https://open-science-cloud.ec.europa.eu/

- Established links with Common European Data Spaces via Simpl[128] and with the HPC federation[129].

- Increased discovery and reuse of European research output as a result of FAIR data and services provided through EOSC, and cross-fertilization and a wider sharing of knowledge and technologies.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Second quarter 2026

Indicative budget: EUR 14.50 million from the 2026 budget

**2. Support for EOSC EU Node Service Verification and Validation activities**

In close collaboration with other Commission services and its customers, the Operating DG/Unit builds and operates solutions for a fully operational enabling infrastructure for EOSC – referred to as the EOSC EU Node – providing access to a rich portfolio of FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) data and professional quality interoperable services in all relevant domains from data handling to computing, processing, analysis and storing.

The main tasks for the external contractors are on one hand to support the Operating DG/Unit internally managing the service delivery, deployment and operations with special focus on the IT Governance process of the Commission and relevant policy and security compliance tasks, and on the other hand to monitor the third-party contractors directly, verifying and validating the services delivered against KPIs, SLR/SLA requirements (fit for use), as well as users' needs (fit for purpose).

Expected Outcome:

The requested personnel of the external service provider shall contribute to the evaluation and validation of the service components against the defined requirements and agreed roadmaps, verification and validation of the service, and system integration against defined industry standards and EOSC Platform specifications (upon which the EOSC EU Node has been built), examination of outputs produced by the implementation Contractor(s) as well as testing activities to confirm that system components are functional as designed.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Second quarter 2026 & second quarter 2027

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128 Simpl programme: https://simpl-programme.ec.europa.eu/

129 HPC federation: https://www.eurohpc-ju.europa.eu/paving-way-eurohpc-federation-platform-2024-12-19_en

Indicative budget: EUR 1.00 million from the 2026 budget and EUR 1.00 million from the 2027 budget

## 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 access**[130] **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 nature and quantity of access provided to them. To this extent, a unit of access to each infrastructure service/installation [131] 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

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

131 “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.

Research Centre (JRC), an ERIC or similar legal entities with international membership. User teams where all or the majority of users work in 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 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*[132] 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:

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*[133] incurred by the infrastructure in providing access under the project, including the technological and scientific

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132 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.

133 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

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.

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.

## Budget[134]

| | Budget line(s) | 2026 Budget (EUR million) | 2027 Budget (EUR million) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Calls** | | | |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2026-01 | | 294.90 | |
| | *from 01.020103* | *294.90* | |
| HORIZON-INFRA-2027-01 | | | 339.50 |
| | *from 01.020103* | | *339.50* |
| **Other actions** | | | |
| Grant awarded without a call for proposals according to Financial Regulation Article 198(e) | | 0.40 | 5.60 |
| | *from 01.020103* | *0.40* | *5.60* |
| Specific grant agreement | | | 60.00 |
| | *from 01.020103* | | *60.00* |
| Expert contract action | | 0.40 | 0.60 |
| | *from 01.020103* | *0.40* | *0.60* |
| Public procurement | | 15.50 | 1.00 |
| | *from 01.020103* | *15.50* | *1.00* |
| **Estimated total budget** | | 311.20 | 406.70 |

134 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.