



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Deputy Director-General 2 - "OPEN INNOVATION & CHIEF NEGOTIATOR FOR THE ASSOCIATION"

Associated Countries
Brussels,
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Your Excellency,

Subject: European Partnerships under Horizon Europe – Information for Associated Countries

In light of the steady progress with association processes to Horizon Europe, we would like to ensure that all Associated Countries have the necessary information to facilitate their continued and active participation in the new European Partnerships, which are an important part of the EU Framework Programme for Research & Innovation,

With this objective in mind, we would like to bring the following to your attention:

First, annexed to this note you will find an overview of the European Partnerships, including general background information, the types of partnerships and their functioning, resources requirements as well as the procedures for participation, etc.

Second, at the beginning of 2022 with the tentative date of 1 February DG Research & Innovation, in collaboration with the ERA-LEARN consortia, we will organise a workshop dedicated to the participation of Associated Countries in the European Partnerships. It will be an opportunity to explain the European Partnerships from the perspective of an Associated Country and address your specific questions. We will share the invitations and the agenda of the event in the coming weeks.

Finally, in case of general or specific questions about individual Partnerships, please do not hesitate to contact the following colleagues in DG Research & Innovation:

- Davide Valitutti (davide.valitutti@ec.europa.eu) in Unit RTD.G4, Common Missions & Partnerships Service.
- Natalija Dolya (natalija.dolya@ec.europa.eu) in RTD.04 Horizon Association Unit.

We are looking forward to engaging with you and hoping for the active involvement of Associated Countries in the European Partnerships.

Yours sincerely,

Signe Ratso

Annex I

European Partnerships: what they are, how they started and why they are important

Article 2(3) of the Horizon Europe regulation:

'European Partnership' means an initiative, prepared with the early involvement of Member States and Associated Countries, where the Union together with private and/or public partners (such as industry, universities, research organisations, bodies with a public service mission at local, regional, national or international level or civil society organisations including foundations and NGOs) commit to jointly supporting the development and implementation of a programme of R&I activities, including those related to market, regulatory or policy uptake.

The concept of large-scale partnerships between public and private funders of research and innovation (R&I) was launched together with the European Research Area in 2000. The idea of creating partnerships originated from the realisation that R&I efforts (and funding in particular) was fragmented across Europe, while pooling this funding and aligning the R&I agendas that accompany it would lead to more impactful R&I.

Since their launch during FP6, with e.g. the popular ERA-NET scheme, European Partnerships have slowly evolved in terms of budget, implementation modes and areas of activity, providing ever more opportunities for researchers and innovators to collaborate internationally. After nearly 20 years and with over 200 partnerships launched in the course of FP7 and H2020 combined, partnerships have now become a cornerstone of the EU's R&I funding programmes.

Under Horizon Europe, European Partnerships have undergone an in depth rationalisation and simplification process aiming at increasing their impact during Horizon Europe.

As a result, Horizon Europe will launch a **portfolio of 49 ambitious and politically relevant partnerships** for the duration of its first strategic plan (2021-24). Compared to Horizon 2020, the new generation of European Partnerships will benefit from common criteria covering their entire lifecycle (from selection to phasing out), larger budgets, and a simplified architecture. Additionally, European Partnerships were designed to be as open as possible to **international cooperation** in line with Article 7(4), as well as Article 10 and Annex III of the Horizon Europe Regulation.

Overview of 49 candidate European Partnerships



Up to 49,9% of Horizon Europe’s Pillar II can be dedicated to European Partnerships. With this significant budget and by pooling the resources of participating states and the private sector, the new generation of European Partnerships aims to make an important contribution to the EU’s transitions towards sustainability (Green Deal), digitalisation (Europe’s Digital Decade), and the creation of a resilient society.

As such, partnerships will address some of society’s most pressing challenges from an R&I perspective. They will also perform activities aimed at creating the correct framework conditions for innovation, e.g. encouraging market uptake, skills development or regulatory standardisation. In addition, they will act as hubs for EU R&I policy programming in their respective policy areas.

Types of Partnerships

As a result of the rationalisation of the partnership landscape, Horizon Europe will support only three types of European Partnerships.

1. Co-programmed European Partnerships

These are partnerships between the Commission and private and/or public partners represented by an association. They are based on Memoranda of Understanding, which define the governance of the partnership and the commitments of all the partners. In these partnerships, the Commission implements its commitments through Horizon Europe calls (included in the regular work programmes), while other partners implement their commitments (investments, etc.) independently and report on them on a regular basis.

2. Co-funded European Partnerships

These are partnerships with participating states in the lead. Co-funded partnerships are based on a grant agreement signed between the Commission and a consortium of partners generally composed of research funders and other public authorities. In these partnerships, the members of the consortia will implement a joint programme of R&I activities co-designed at EU level, including joint transnational calls, with 30% or 50% co-funding from Horizon Europe.

3. Institutionalised partnerships

These are partnerships with their own legal basis, based on Articles 185 and 187 of the TFEU, or the EIT Regulation. In these partnerships, which can involve participating states as well as the private sector, independent structures are created to implement parts of Horizon Europe with a certain degree of autonomy..

What kind of resources will you have to commit in order to become a member?

Resources in European Partnerships are divided into two categories that will be covered in more detail during the workshop.

1. **Financial contributions** :*these are cash contributions used for transnational calls for proposals in co-funded and institutionalised partnerships. Private members (but not Participating States) also contribute in cash to the administrative expenses of Joint Undertakings (JUs).*

How does a Participating State contribute financially in tripartite Joint Undertakings?

When a State wishes to join a tripartite Joint Undertaking as a “Participating State”, it can only commit financial resources. . To ensure that their national funding only goes to national beneficiaries, Participating States (PSs) provide their financial contributions in the framework of a close administrative cooperation with the relevant JUs.

In practical terms, this means that PSs have to choose between two approaches to administer their financial contributions. In both cases, national funds can only go to national beneficiaries:

- Centralised Management of Financial Contributions (CMFC): PS delegate the administration of their financial contributions to the relevant Joint Undertaking (i.e. call publication, selection, award, contracting, payments, closure and ex post audits). In case of CMFC, PSs will get a right of veto over the use of their financial contributions.
- Close coordination: PSs contribute financially awarding grant agreements to national beneficiaries that have successfully participated in calls for proposals launched by the JU. The schedule for payments, reporting, etc. that follow will be based rules agreed with the Joint Undertaking, and on EU selection criteria.

2. **In-kind contributions**: *any contribution that is not in cash is considered an in-kind contribution.*

➤ For co-funded partnerships, this includes the following cost categories:

- Personnel costs
- Subcontracting costs
- Purchasing costs
- Travel and subsistence costs
- The purchase of equipment, infrastructures and other assets
- Purchase of other goods and services
- In-kind contributions provided free of charge by third parties

It should be clear that these types of in-kind costs or contributions, just like the financial contributions, are eligible for co-funding by the Union in the case of a co-funded partnership.

- For Joint Undertakings, in-kind contributions apply only to private partners , except in the case of EDCTP3, and are divided into two categories:
 - **‘in-kind contributions to operational activities’**: these are the costs incurred by the partners when implementing actions that are a result of a actions launched by a JU (e.g calls for proposals), minus the contribution of the JU and of the participating states of that JU to the costs of the action. For example, if a founding or associated members of a JU is part of a consortium that signs a grant agreement with a JU, and that the grant agreement leads to a project receiving 70% funding from the JU, the remaining 30% of the costs that are incurred by the partners will count as an in-kind contribution to operational activities.
 - **‘in-kind contributions to additional activities’**: additional activities in the context of a JU are activities undertaken outside the main part of the work programme (i.e that are not the result of calls for proposals) and hence do not receive financial support from the JU. Yet, these activities still contribute to JU’s objectives and are either linked to the uptake of the projects’ results under that JU, to the preceding initiatives or have a significant Union added-value. Costs incurred by the JU partners in implementing these additional activities, minus any contributions they might receive from the EU or participating states, is considered an in-kind contributions to additional activities.

How can you participate in a European Partnership?

This section outlines how entities based in Associated Countries, or the Associated Countries, as Participating States, - can engage in European Partnerships depending on their implementation type. This concerns three aspects:

- Becoming a partner
- Participating in the activities organised and funded through the partnership; and
- Receiving funding for participating in the activities funded through the partnership.

1. Co-programmed partnerships

Becoming a partner: All current co-programmed European Partnerships are established between the Commission and associations representing their members. Private and/or public entities can become partners by joining the respective association. A complete list of co-programmed partnerships is available on the [dedicated Commission webpage](#).

Participating in the partnership’s activities: Entities based in Associated Countries can participate in the calls launched by the Commission as part of The Commission’s commitment to these partnerships. Membership in the associations is not mandatory, and successful members of consortia will be eligible to receive funding. However, entities that respond to the calls without joining the associations will not have any influence over the objectives of the partnership and the objectives of the calls for proposals.

Receiving funding: Entities based in Associated Countries are eligible to receive Horizon Europe funding if they are part of a consortium that has successfully applied to a call linked to a co-programmed partnership.

2. Co-funded partnerships

Becoming a partner: Co-funded partnerships are implemented through a Horizon Europe Programme Co-fund Action. This means that all partners are members of successful consortia linked to the Commission by a Horizon Europe grant agreement. To become a partner, a country (generally represented by a Ministry or research agency) needs to be listed as a beneficiary in the proposal submitted to the Commission in response to the open calls for proposals that will lead to a co-funded partnership. If a country is not part of the selected consortia at the launch of a partnership (for instance if association to Horizon Europe is not yet complete), it can still join the consortium at a later stage, with the agreement of the consortium coordinator, by requesting an amendment of the grant agreement.

Participating in the partnership's activities: The only way of participating in the activities of a co-funded partnership without being a partner is to apply to the transnational calls that most of those partnerships will launch. As the consortium members that will receive cascading grants at national level will be selected based on national rules, this means that in most cases only beneficiaries based in partner countries will be able to apply.

Receiving funding: Entities established in Member States and Associated Countries that are part of the consortia implementing the co-funded partnerships (i.e. those signing the grant agreement with the Commission) will be able to receive EU funding in these partnerships. Please note that the EU contribution to a co-funded partnership cannot be changed after a grant agreement is signed. Therefore, if an Associated Country joins a co-funded partnership after a grant agreement is signed, the EU contribution to that grant agreement will remain the same.

3. Institutionalised partnerships

- ***Art.185 & Art.187***

Becoming a partner: All the founding members of institutionalised partnerships are listed in the regulations adopting these partnerships. It is still possible to join after the institutional partnership is launched but the rules vary depending on the partnership's institutional set-up and their members.

To clarify what these differences are, you will find a simplified guideline below.

- **For EuroHPC and Key Digital Technologies (tripartite Joint Undertakings):** These two JUs are the only ones with direct involvement of the Participating States, the Commission and the private sector (hence the 'tripartite'). Once the association process is finalised, Associated Countries not listed in the regulation but wishing to become partners need to express their intention to join the partnership officially in writing, and commit the necessary resources for their participation as members. More details on the necessary conditions to become a Participating State in a tripartite JU can be found in the Single Basic Act text.
- **SESAR3, Europe's Rail, and Clean Aviation:** Following their launch, these JUs will launch dedicated calls for expressions of interest to "recruit" new members (associated members). Associated members will have the same rights and obligations as founding members.

- *Metrology*: To join the Metrology partnership, Associated Countries not listed in its basic act need to officially express their interest to join the partnership in writing and commit the necessary resources for their participation as members. More details on these financial resources and other conditions to be recognised as Participating States can be found in the respective regulation, in particular Article 4(1).
- *Other Joint Undertakings*: the Commission partners with associations representing private and public members in all other JUs. In order to become a partner, a candidate needs to join the relevant association.

Participating in the partnership's activities: The calls launched by the institutionalised partnerships will follow Horizon Europe rules, and therefore will be open to all entities based in Associated Countries (in rare and justified cases this may exceptionally not be the case).

Receiving funding: Entities based in an associated country are eligible to receive Horizon Europe funding if they are part of consortia that successfully applied to a call launched by an institutionalised partnership.

In tripartite JUs, only entities eligible at the level of the Participating state will receive funding from it, therefore no Participating State will fund participants from other countries.

- ***EIT-KICs***

Becoming a partner: New partners from Associated and Third Countries, that add value to the partnership, are able to join based on excellence and innovation relevance (i.e. when their participation benefits the strategic development and objectives of the KIC). KICs have substantial autonomy to establish their partnerships. They also have transparent, clear and consistent accession and exit criteria for new partners. Depending on the KICs, there could be various types of partners (e.g. core partner, associated partner, project partner, etc.) with different rights and obligations. KICs also have membership fees that vary depending on the KICs, and on the partner status and size (SME, large company, university, etc.).

Participating in the partnership's activities: KICs run their activities through calls for proposal for identifying and selecting their projects. Unless otherwise specified in the call criteria, these calls and activities are open to entities based in Associated Country, including entities that are not part of the partnership.

Receiving funding: Entities that are partners in KICs and included in the Grant Agreement, can receive funding once the country where they are based is officially associated. KICs can also provide financial contributions to entities that are not KICs partners, including those based in Associated Countries, if they have been eligible and successful under the calls.

Next steps

At the beginning of 2022 all Associated Countries and candidate Associated Countries will receive a letter from Commissioner Mariya Gabriel requesting commitments for co-funded partnerships that involve the direct participation of States. A complete list of partnerships involving the direct participation of States can be found in Annex II.

Useful sources of information

Please click on the titles listed below to access useful sources of information.

[1. European Partnerships website](#)

This is the corporate webpage dedicated to European Partnerships under Horizon Europe. This page gives you access to general information on policy developments linked to European Partnerships.

[2. ERA-LEARN](#)

ERA-LEARN is a consortium funded by the European Commission. Its role is to support research funding organisations, policy makers and researchers by providing general information and services related to European Partnerships. Their website is a comprehensive source of practical information on the implementation of European Partnerships, in particular co-funded partnerships.

[3. Horizon Europe regulation](#)

The Horizon Europe regulation is the legal base of the 9th Framework Programme. Articles 2(3), Art.10 and Annex III are dedicated to European Partnerships.

[4. Model Grant Agreement](#)

This link will lead you to the Model Grant Agreement (MGA) for grants under Horizon Europe. It is a must read document for any organisation wishing to take part in European partnerships, in particular co-funded partnerships. We advise you to read articles 6 to 9 closely, as the answers frequently asked can often be found in those articles.

[5. Annotated Model Grant Agreement](#)

The Annotated Model Grant Agreement (AGA) provides you with detailed explanations on the meaning of all articles contained in the Model Grant Agreement (MGA).

[6. Single Basic Act](#)

This link will lead you to the text of the Single Basic Act proposal adopted by the Commission on 23 February 2021. The objective of this regulation will be to create 9 Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe.

[7. Metrology Basic Act](#)

This link will lead you to the text of the Metrology Basic Act proposal adopted by the Commission on 23 February 2021. The objective of this regulation will be to create the Metrology partnerships, based on Article 185 TFEU, under Horizon Europe.

[8. EuroHPC regulation](#)

This link will lead you to the regulation establishing the EURO HPC Joint Undertaking.

Annex II

List of European Partnerships involving the participation of States or public entities

INSTITUTIONALISED EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIPS:

1. European Partnerships for EU-Africa Global Health (EDCTP3)
2. European Partnerships for Key Digital Technologies
3. European Partnership for High Performance Computing
4. European Partnership on Metrology

CO-FUNDED EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIPS:

1. European Partnership for Risk Assessment of Chemicals
2. European Partnership for Fostering a European Research Area for Health Research (ERA for Health)
3. European Partnership for Transformation of Health Care Systems
4. European Partnership for Personalised Medicine
5. European Partnership for Rare Diseases
6. European Partnership for One Health / Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)
7. European Partnership for Driving Urban Transitions to a Sustainable Future
8. European Partnership for Clean Energy Transition
9. European Partnership for Accelerating Farming Systems Transition: Agroecology living labs and research infrastructures
10. European Partnership for Animal Health and Welfare
11. European Partnership for Agriculture of Data
12. European Partnership for Rescuing Biodiversity to Safeguard Life on Earth
13. European Partnership for a Climate Neutral, Sustainable and Productive Blue Economy
14. European Partnership for Safe and Sustainable Food Systems for People, Planet and Climate
15. European Partnership Water4all: Water security for the planet
16. European Partnership for Innovative SMEs

CO-PROGRAMMED EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIPS:

1. European Partnership for European Open Science Cloud (EOSC)

PARTNERSHIPS WHERE THE IMPLEMENTATION FORM REMAINS TO BE DETERMINED:

1. European Partnership for Pandemic Preparedness