



Horizon Europe's first strategic plan 2021-2024: Commission sets research and innovation priorities for a sustainable future

Brussels, 15 March 2021

Today, the European Commission adopted the first strategic plan for [Horizon Europe](#), the new EU research and innovation programme worth €95.5 billion in current prices. The strategic plan is a novelty in Horizon Europe and sets the strategic orientations for the targeting of investments in the programme's first four years. It ensures that EU research and innovation actions contribute to [EU priorities](#), including a climate-neutral and green Europe, a Europe fit for the digital age, and an economy that works for people.

Margrethe **Vestager**, Executive Vice-President for a Europe fit for the Digital Age, said: *"This Plan provides a frame for top quality, excellence-based research and innovation to be delivered with the Horizon Europe Work Programme. With this strategic orientation we ensure that research and innovation investments can contribute to a recovery process based on the twin green and digital transition, resilience and open strategic autonomy."*

Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: *"The strategic plan's orientations will ensure that our common EU policy priorities benefit from new knowledge, ideas and innovation. This new approach is another way to make sure that the research and innovation funded by the EU will address the challenges faced by Europeans."*

An ambitious plan for an ambitious programme

The strategic plan sets out four strategic orientations for research and innovation investments under Horizon Europe for the next four years:

- Promoting an open strategic autonomy by leading the development of key digital, enabling and emerging technologies, sectors and value chains;
- Restoring Europe's ecosystems and biodiversity, and managing sustainably natural resources;
- Making Europe the first digitally enabled circular, climate-neutral and sustainable economy;
- Creating a more resilient, inclusive and democratic European society.

International cooperation underpins all four orientations, as it is essential for tackling many global challenges.

The strategic plan also identifies the [European co-funded and co-programmed partnerships](#) and the [EU missions](#) to be supported through Horizon Europe. The partnerships will cover critical areas such as energy, transport, biodiversity, health, food and circularity, and will complement the ten [Institutionalised European Partnerships](#) proposed by the Commission in February. EU missions will address global challenges that affect our daily lives by setting ambitious and inspirational but achievable goals like fighting cancer, adapting to climate change, protecting our oceans, making cities greener and ensuring soil health and food. Employing a large portfolio of instruments across diverse disciplines and policy areas, the EU missions will tackle complex issues through research projects, policy measures or even legislative initiatives.

The plan's orientations also address a number of horizontal issues, such as [gender](#). The integration of the gender dimension will be a requirement by default in research and innovation content across the whole programme, unless it is specified that sex or gender may not be relevant for the topic at stake.

Next steps

The priorities set out in Horizon Europe's strategic plan will be implemented through the Horizon Europe work programme. It sets out funding opportunities for research and innovation activities through thematic calls for proposals and topics. The first [calls for proposals](#) will be launched in the spring of 2021 and will be presented at the [European Research and Innovation Days](#) on 23-24 June.

Background

Following the political agreement on Horizon Europe of March-April 2019, the Commission began a strategic planning process. The results are set out in the strategic plan.

The strategic plan has been prepared following an extensive co-design process involving the European Parliament, Member States, stakeholders and the public at large. More than 8000 contributions have been submitted in various stages of the strategic planning process. The inclusive co-design process aims to ensure the broadest possible ownership and optimise the overall impact of Horizon Europe.

For more information

[Factsheet: Horizon Europe Strategic Plan](#)

[Horizon Europe Strategic Plan](#)

[Horizon Europe](#)

[EU Missions](#)

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