



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Directorate-General for Research and Innovation
Directorate G – Common Support Centre

INFORMAL COMMISSION EXPERT GROUP
MISSION BOARD FOR CANCER MISSION
TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. BACKGROUND

EU Missions were launched in September 2021 as one of the main novelties in Horizon Europe¹. They are high-profile initiatives, rooted in research and innovation, which are tasked to deliver a transformative impact for society, the economy, and the environment by addressing the challenges that are faced by European citizens. Missions provide a clear target to measure success and a systemic approach which combines, for example, new knowledge and technology with innovations in business, finance, regulation, forms of governance, skills and social aspects.

Missions operate as portfolios of actions and contribute extensively to EU policy goals, such as the European Green Deal, Europe's Beating Cancer Plan as well as to the Sustainable Development Goals. Through this approach, EU Missions engage Member States and incentivise them to align their efforts in areas that are of high concern to citizens.

Five EU Missions were defined and designed with the assistance of Commission expert groups ('the Mission Boards'), established by the Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation ('DG RTD') in 2019. These Mission Boards, which operate in compliance with the Commission's horizontal rules on expert groups² ('the horizontal rules'), advised the Commission on the identification of specific missions. The Mission Boards were set up as a result of a public call for applications in 2019³. The first phase of the Mission Boards, ending in December 2021, focused on the identification and design of possible specific missions.

As Missions entered into their implementation phase in September 2021, the membership of the Mission Boards was reviewed following a new public call for the composition of Mission Boards to reflect this changed role. In this ongoing second phase, Mission Boards play a vital role in advising on the implementation of the Missions, building on the work done during the first phase. The five EU Missions are:

- Adaptation to Climate Change Mission
Target by 2030: support at least 150 European regions and communities to become climate resilient by 2030.
- Cancer Mission

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_21_4747

² C (2016)3301

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/core/api/front/calls-application/30788/download>

Targets by 2030: working with Europe's Beating Cancer Plan to improve more than 3 million lives, through prevention, cure and for those affected by cancer including their families, to live longer and better; achieve a thorough understanding of cancer, prevent what is preventable, optimise diagnosis and treatment, support the quality of life of all people exposed to cancer, and ensure equitable access to the above across Europe.

- Restore our Ocean and Waters Mission

Targets by 2030: deliver on the European Union's 2030 quantified and measurable targets for protecting and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity, for zero pollution, and for decarbonisation and reduction of net greenhouse gas emissions towards climate-neutrality, within the EU's ocean, seas and waters. The Mission has launched "lighthouses" in major sea/river basins: 1) Atlantic-Arctic, 2) Mediterranean Sea, 3) Baltic-North Sea, and 4) Danube-Black Sea. Mission lighthouses are sites to pilot, demonstrate, develop and deploy the Mission activities across EU seas and river basins. Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission

- 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission

Targets by 2030: to deliver at least 100 European climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030 and to ensure that these cities also act as experimentation and innovation hubs for others to follow, to enable all European cities to become climate-neutral by 2050.

- Soil Deal for Europe Mission

Target by 2030: 100 living labs and lighthouses have been established as places for the co-creation, testing and deployment of solutions for healthy soils across European regions and thereby support meeting ambitious Green Deal targets, e.g. for agriculture and forestry, food systems, rural areas, biodiversity, climate resilience and zero-pollution. The Mission funds an ambitious research and innovation programme, contributes to developing a harmonised framework for soil monitoring in Europe and raises people's awareness on the vital importance of soils.

2. TASKS

According to article 7 (3) of the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe⁴, the task of the Mission Boards shall be to advise the Commission upon all or some of the following aspects:

- (a) the identification and design of one or more missions in the respective mission area according to the provisions and criteria set out in Article 8 of Regulation (EU) 2021/695;
- (b) content of work programmes and their revision as needed for achieving the mission objectives, with input from stakeholders and, where relevant, the general public;
- (c) the characteristics of project portfolios for missions;
- (d) adjustment actions, or termination, if appropriate, based on implementation assessments according to the defined objectives of the mission;

⁴ Council Decision (EU) 2021/764 of 10 May 2021 establishing the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, and repealing Decision 2013/743/EU

- (e) the selection of independent external experts in accordance with Article 49 of Regulation (EU) 2021/695, briefing of these independent external experts and evaluation criteria and their weighting;
- (f) **framework conditions which help achieve the objectives of the mission;**
- (g) **communication, including on the performance and the achievements of the mission;**
- (h) **policy coordination between relevant actors at different levels, in particular regarding synergies with other Union policies;**
- (i) **key performance indicators.**

Within the frame of these tasks, the Mission Board shall focus more specifically on points (f), (g), (h) and (i).

From June 2025 until June 2026, the Mission Board shall focus its activities on advising the Commission upon all of the following aspects below and deliver a written report (of max 20 pages), notably on its activities and the advice it has prepared, by 18 May 2026.

The Mission Board shall:

- assist the Commission in implementing the recommendations of the Communication on the EU Missions⁵, including the implementation of an Action Plan;
- provide advice on indicators to be used for assessing EU Mission progress and achieved impact.
- upon Commission's request, support the Commission in its exchanges with the EU Institutions, including the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions, on the implementation of the EU Missions;
- help the Commission in interacting with the Member States on questions relating to the promotion and implementation of EU Mission at national, regional and local levels including, for example, bringing new stakeholders, promoting and/or supporting national mirror groups;
- support the Commission in collecting evidence of progress, impact and success stories about the EU Missions' implementation;
- engage with other Mission Boards on cross-cutting topics, especially focusing on mobilising and aligning funding beyond Horizon Europe;
- assist the Commission in preparing an assessment report on the implementation of EU Missions, to take stock of progress, assess the adequacy and impact of funding on mission objectives, identify achievements and propose recommendations on the way forward by end of April 2026;
- assist the Commission in its communication efforts about EU Missions by producing at least 7 communication pieces, for instance, op-ed's, scientific articles, newspaper articles, TV/radio discussions, regarding the EU Mission and the results of its activities. The development of these communication pieces must be initiated during the contract period, and the publication date may follow thereafter.

The contents of all Mission Board reports, recommendations and other deliverables, including any public statements, shall be discussed with the Commission before finalisation.

Being Commission expert groups, i.e. advisory bodies, the Mission Boards will not have a decision-making or executive role.

⁵ COM(2023) 457 final, EU Missions two years on: assessment of progress and way forward

3. MEMBERSHIP

1. Each of the five Mission Boards shall be composed of up to 15 members.
2. Members shall be individuals appointed in a personal capacity who shall act independently and in the public interest.
3. Members who are no longer capable of contributing effectively to the Mission Boards' deliberations or tasks, who resign or who, in the opinion of Commission services, do not comply with the conditions set out in Article 339 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union shall no longer be invited to participate in any meetings of the group and may be replaced for the remainder of their term of office.

4. SELECTION PROCESS

1. The selection of the Mission Boards' members was carried out via a public call for applications, and was published on the Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities ('the Register of expert groups'). In addition, the call for applications was published through other means, including on dedicated websites. The call for applications outlined the selection criteria, including the required expertise in relation to the work to be performed.
2. Mission Board members shall disclose any circumstances that could give rise to a conflict of interest. In particular, Commission services shall require those individuals to submit a declaration of interests ('DOI') form on the basis of the standard DOI form for expert groups⁶, together with an updated *curriculum vitae* (CV), as part of their application. Submission of a duly completed DOI form shall be necessary in order to be eligible to be appointed as a member in a personal capacity. The conflict of interest assessment shall be performed in compliance with the horizontal rules⁷. In addition, members will need to respect the conflict of interest rules described in the Code of Conduct⁸ annexed to their contract and be subject to the contractual measures in case of their breach. Given that the composition of the board is confirmed, members will have to update their DOI at the beginning of the contract. Furthermore, members must update their DOI whenever appropriate, due to a change in their work situation, to ensure that their declaration remains accurate and up-to-date throughout the duration of their contract.
3. The members, including Vice-Chairs, shall be appointed by the Director-General of DG RTD in agreement with other relevant Commission services from applicants with competence in the areas referred to in point 2 and who have responded to the call for applications.
4. DG RTD, in agreement with other Commission services, established a reserve list of suitable candidates that may be used to appoint members' replacements.
5. Members shall be normally appointed for 3 years. Their term of office may be renewed to a further 2 years.⁹

⁶ C (2016) 3301, Article 11 and Annex 4.

⁷ C (2016) 3301, Article 11

⁸ The [code-of-conduct_en.pdf](#) is linked in the model contract for expert (page 8), published on [Work as an expert | EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#)

⁹ Council Decision (EU) 2021/764 of 10 May 2021 establishing the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, and repealing Decision 2013/743/EU

5. CHAIR

The Mission Boards Chairs shall not be members of the Mission Board which they are chairing and shall be appointed separately by the Director-General of DG RTD in agreement with other relevant Commission services. The appointment of the Mission Board Chairs will be carried outside the call for applications.

DG RTD in agreement with other relevant Commission services shall appoint Vice-Chairs from among the members of the Mission Boards. Should the position of Mission Board Chair become vacant, the Vice-Chair may be asked to serve as Acting Chair of the Mission Board.

6. OPERATION

1. The Mission Boards shall act at the request of Commission services in compliance with the horizontal rules¹⁰.
2. In principle, the Mission Boards shall meet at least 3 times per year. Additional ad-hoc meetings can be called for by the Chair with the agreement of Commission services. In total, Mission Board members will be expected to work up to 25 days per year.
3. Meetings of the Mission Board shall, in principle, be held on Commission premises or virtually, depending on the circumstances.
4. Commission services shall provide secretarial services when necessary. Commission officials from other departments with an interest in the proceedings may attend meetings of the Mission Boards.
5. In agreement with Commission services, the Mission Boards may, by simple majority of their members, decide that deliberations shall be public.
6. Minutes on the discussion on each point on the agenda and on the opinions delivered by the Mission Boards shall be meaningful and complete. Minutes shall be drafted by the secretariat under the responsibility of the Chair.
7. As far as possible, the Mission Boards shall adopt its opinions, recommendations or reports by consensus. In the event of a vote, the outcome of the vote shall be decided by simple majority of the members. Members who have voted against or abstained shall have the right to have a document summarising the reasons for their position annexed to the opinions, recommendations or reports.

7. SUB-GROUPS

1. Commission services may set up sub-groups for the purpose of examining specific questions on the basis of terms of reference defined by Commission services. Sub-groups shall operate in compliance with the horizontal rules and shall report to the Mission Boards and Commission services. They shall be dissolved as soon as their mandate is fulfilled.
2. The members of sub-groups that are not members of the Mission Boards shall be selected via a public call for applications, in compliance with point 4 and the horizontal rules¹¹.

¹⁰ C (2016) 3301, Article 13.1.

¹¹ C (2016) 3301, Articles 10 and 14.2.

8. INVITED EXPERTS

Commission services may invite experts with specific expertise with respect to a subject matter on the agenda to take part in the work of the Mission Boards or their sub-groups on an *ad hoc* basis.

9. RULES OF PROCEDURE

On a proposal by and in agreement with Commission services, the Mission Boards shall adopt their rules of procedure by simple majority of their members, on the basis of the standard rules of procedure for expert groups, in compliance with the horizontal rules¹². Sub-groups shall operate in compliance with the Mission Boards' rules of procedure.

10. PROFESSIONAL SECRECY AND HANDLING OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

The members of the Mission Boards as well as invited experts, are subject to the obligation of professional secrecy, which by virtue of the Treaties and the rules implementing them applies to all members of the institutions and their staff, as well as to the Commission's rules on security regarding the protection of Union classified information, laid down in Commission Decisions (EU, Euratom) 2015/443¹³ and 2015/444¹⁴. Should they fail to respect these obligations, the Commission may take all appropriate measures. In addition, members will need to respect the confidentiality rules described in the Code of Conduct annexed to their contract and be subject to the contractual measures in case of their breach.

11. TRANSPARENCY

1. The Mission Boards and sub-groups shall be registered in the Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities ('the Register of expert groups').
2. The name of the individuals appointed in a personal capacity shall be published on the Register of expert groups and on DG RTD's website on Europa.
3. All relevant documents, including the agendas, the minutes and the participants' submissions, shall be made available on the Register of expert groups. In particular, Commission services shall publish the agenda and other relevant background documents in due time ahead of the meeting, followed by timely publication of minutes. Exceptions to publication shall only be possible where it is deemed that disclosure of a document would undermine the protection of a public or private interest as defined in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) N° 1049/2001¹⁵.

12. SPECIAL ALLOWANCES

Members of the group shall be granted a special allowance of EUR 450/day for each full working day spent assisting the Commission, in accordance with Article 21 of the horizontal

¹² C (2016) 3301, Article 17.

¹³ Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/443 of 13 March 2015 on Security in the Commission (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 41).

¹⁴ Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/444 of 13 March 2015 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 53).

¹⁵ These exceptions are intended to protect public security, military affairs, international relations, financial, monetary or economic policy, privacy and integrity of the individual, commercial interests, court proceedings and legal advice, inspections/investigations/audits and the institution's decision-making process.

rules. The expert group will be financed according to the provisions of Horizon Europe Main Work Programme 2025¹⁶.

13. MEETING EXPENSES

Travel and subsistence expenses incurred by participants in the activities of the Mission Boards and their sub-groups shall be reimbursed by the Commission in cooperation with the European Health and Digital Executive Agency. Reimbursement shall be made in accordance with the provisions in force within the Commission and within the limits of the available appropriations allocated to the Commission departments under the annual procedure for the allocation of resources. Furthermore, for the purpose of reimbursement, the time spent traveling shall not be considered as part of the working time.

Done in Brussels, on 16 May 2025

¹⁶ [Horizon Europe main Work Programme 2025 - C\(2025\)2779](#)