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Horizon Europe
Work Programme 2021-2022

1. General Introduction

DISCLAIMER

This draft has not been adopted or endorsed by the European Commission. Any views expressed are the preliminary views of the Commission services and may not in any circumstances be regarded as stating an official position of the Commission. The information transmitted is intended only for the Member State or entity to which it is addressed for discussions and may contain confidential and/or privileged material.

General introduction

Welcome to Horizon Europe!

Horizon Europe is the new EU flagship programme for research and innovation – which sets the best minds in Europe and the rest of the world to work to deliver excellent solutions to the key issues of our time, supporting the EU’s policy priorities and building a better future for the next generation in Europe.

With Horizon Europe, the EU will invest EUR 95.5 billion in research and innovation that will shape the future of Europe, making it the most ambitious research and innovation programme ever introduced by the EU.

A significant part of this funding will be dedicated to targeted actions to foster excellence in research and support fellowships, training and exchanges for researchers through Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, build more connected and efficient European innovation ecosystems, create world-class research infrastructures, support the green and digital transition and target global challenges while supporting European industrial competitiveness, as well as widening participation in the programme and strengthening the European Research Area.

However, for this first work programme, Horizon Europe will focus on one priority only: to harness the full power of research and innovation to beat the COVID-19 pandemic and secure the continued effectiveness of our vaccines.

Focused action to target COVID-19 variants, securing the safety and effectiveness of our vaccines

The current COVID-19 outbreak was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020 and a global pandemic on 12 March 2020. One year later, the pandemic is still not under control. While vaccines are now becoming available and being used, COVID-19 variants are increasingly of concern – because of their effect on transmissibility, severity of disease and vaccine effectiveness. As outlined in the Commission Communication ‘HERA Incubator: Anticipating together the threat of COVID-19 variants’¹, an additional concerted EU effort is therefore needed to further speed up the process of understanding the occurrence and spread of variants and their effect on disease severity and vaccine effectiveness.

This work programme therefore comprises an emergency package of EUR 123 million, covering the following elements:

- Health
 - Support for the development of large scale, COVID19 cohorts and networks beyond Europe’s borders, forging links with European initiatives as a global response to the pandemic;
 - Conduct of vaccine & therapeutic trials to boost prevention and further inform public health policy and clinical management.
- Infrastructures
 - Last year the European Research Infrastructures were able to promptly react to the pandemic emergency and set up a wide range of tailored and innovative services to support research and innovation against this pandemic (e.g. distribution of reference materials, support to vaccine development, ...) as well as to develop, in the framework of the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC), the European COVID-19 Data Platform, with the support of and in partnership with the Commission and Member States.
European Research Infrastructures are now called to continue contributing to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic as well as to rapidly support, with their innovative and customised services including the provision of relevant integrated data, research linked to identifying, assessing and combatting newly emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants and to help monitoring variant spread.

As part of the EU response to the COVID-19 pandemic, for activities specifically linked to COVID-19, grants may be awarded without a call for proposals since that pandemic constitutes an exceptional emergency within the meaning of Article 195(b) of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046. Further conditions may be set out in the different work programme parts.

¹ COM(2021) 78 final of 17 February 2021

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Specific derogations and additional conditions may be also announced or communicated to the potential applicants. Such conditions that are set out in the different work programme parts may include additional exploitation obligations to ensure that the resulting products will be available and accessible as soon as possible, additional dissemination obligations, such as open access for research data needed to address the public health emergency, and justified derogations from the standard limits to financial support to third parties. The Commission will assess how the applicants propose to fulfill these conditions.

The implementation of these conditions will be appropriately monitored. Where applicable, the relevant grant agreement options will be applied.

This first work programme will be amended in due course to roll out the full breadth of the Horizon Europe programme for 2021 and 2022. Calls and other actions under the European Research Council (ERC) and the European Innovation Council (EIC) are covered by separate work programmes.

What you will find in this Work Programme

This special first work programme will contain the following parts;

- This General introduction
- Research Infrastructures
- Health
- General Annexes

Getting started

Are you interested in applying for funding through the Horizon Europe? On the [Funding and Tenders Portal](#) you can see which topics are currently open for applications. The network of National Contact Points [link to be added] stands ready to answer any questions you might have on the application process in your own language.

You can also read more about the Horizon Europe programme at the [Horizon Europe web page](#).

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