WIDERA
Work Programme 2026-2027

Destination: Reforming and enhancing the European research and innovation system

WIDERA Info Day
11 December 2025

Moderator: Dr Jörg Niehoff,
RTD.A.2 - ERA, Spreading Excellence and Research Careers

ERA work programme 2026-2027: Morning agenda

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09:30	**Introduction:** ▪ Welcome by Magda de Carli (European Commission) and Minna Wilkki (Research Executive Agency) ▪ Policy context and architecture of work programme 2026-2027	
09:50	**Pillar I – Institutional changes for ERA**	
	HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-01	Accelerating open access and research assessment reforms in ERA
	HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-ERA-01	Facilitating development of institutional open access policies through the retention of intellectual property rights
	HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-02	Building institutional capacities for ethical, equitable, open, and inclusive ERA
11:15	**Pillar II – Ecosystems for ERA**	
	HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-03	Strengthening ecosystems for open, ethical, and sustainable ERA
	HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-04	Piloting innovative approaches to support academic startups and spinoffs
	HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-ERA-02	Talent ecosystems for attractive early research careers

ERA work programme 2026-2027: Afternoon agenda

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14:00	**Pillar III – Citizens and Science in ERA**	
	HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-05	Fostering citizen engagement for more responsible and democratic R&I
	HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-ERA-04	Promoting public engagement in R&I and scientific literacy
	HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-06	European Citizens' Hackathon Championship
	HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-07 HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-ERA-03	Science comes town (2028 and 2029 editions)
15:20	**Pillar IV – New Knowledge for ERA**	
	HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-08	Advancing Knowledge for ERA
	HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-ERA-05	Upgrading the EU's independent knowledge on China's Science, Technology and Innovation system

ERA work programme 2026-2027: Support of ERA Policy Agenda 2025-2027

ERA Structural Policies	ERA Actions
1. Enabling open science via sharing and re-use of data, including through EOSC: 2. Research infrastructures in the ERA; **3. Strengthening gender equality and inclusiveness in the ERA;** **4. Making research careers more attractive and sustainable, and support mobility;** **5. Reforming research assessment;** **6. Upscaling knowledge valorisation capacities and activities;** **7. Implementing the Global Approach to R&I;** 8. SET plan as a key component of the ERA; 9. Improving the articulation between R&I and higher education within ERA unleashing the full potential of European R&I ecosystems; **10. Enhancing trust in science through citizen participation, engagement and science communication;** 11. Improve EU access to excellence.	**1. Applying equity in open science;** 2. Advancing the European Science for Policy ecosystem; 3. AI in science in the EU; 4. Enhancing research security; 5. Accelerating R&I investments for Europe's industrial transformation and competitive sustainability; 6. Accelerating new approach methodologies to advance biomedical research and testing for medicinal products and medical devices; **7. A coordinated framework responding to emerging challenges for ethics and integrity in R&I** 8. A new era in research management.

ERA work programme 2026-2027: Simplification measures

Simpler, **shorter**, **more strategic**:

✓ Less prescriptive, providing directionality and openness

✓ Shorter topic descriptions, fewer topics

✓ Disclose draft work programmes

✓ Strengthen the use of lump sum funding*

* https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/horizon/lump-sum

ERA work programme 2026-2027: Architecture

	Pillar I: Institutional changes for ERA	Pillar II: Ecosystems for ERA	Pillar III: Citizens and Science for ERA	Pillar IV: New knowledge for ERA
Type	CSA	CSA	CSA	RIA
Focus	Capacity building and support to foster adoption of ERA policies/practices within institutions	Building and reinforcing networks and partnerships to foster broad uptake of ERA policies/practices	Connecting R&I with citizens and other stakeholders	Creating new knowledge that supports design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies & practices
Activity type	Tools, resources, training, services, policy advice	Exchange of knowledge and practice, networking and cooperative actions	Implementing and promoting participatory approaches, such as citizen engagement and citizen science	Conducting analyses, developing and testing new methods & practices
Expected impact	Effective and sustainable structural institutional changes aligned with ERA priorities	Sustainable ecosystems established around ERA priorities	Increased trust in science and alignment of R&I with society's needs	Strengthened evidence base for advancing the implementation of the ERA
Policy areas	▪ Equity in open science ▪ Inclusive gender equality ▪ Research assessment reform ▪ Research ethics and integrity ▪ Open access policies	▪ Research ethics and integrity ▪ Environmentally sustainable science ▪ Knowledge valorisation ▪ Open science ▪ Research careers	▪ Trust in science ▪ Knowledge valorisation ▪ Citizen and societal engagement	▪ Open science ▪ Research ethics and integrity ▪ Inclusive gender equality ▪ Research careers ▪ Global cooperation to R&I

ERA work programme 2026-2027: 2 calls and 13 topics

Call opening & closing dates:
2026 call: 10 (12) December 2025 – 12 March 2026
2027 call: 8 December 2026 – 11 March 2027

Call year	Pillar I: Institutional changes for ERA	Pillar II: Ecosystems for ERA	Pillar III: Citizens and Science for ERA	Pillar IV: New knowledge for ERA
2026	▪ Accelerating open access and research assessment reforms in ERA ▪ Building institutional capacities for ethical, equitable, open, and inclusive ERA	▪ Strengthening ecosystems for open, ethical, and sustainable ERA ▪ Piloting innovative approaches to support academic startups and spinoffs	▪ Fostering citizen engagement for more responsible and democratic R&I ▪ European Citizens' Hackathon Championship ▪ Science comes town 2028	▪ Advancing knowledge for ERA
2027	▪ Facilitating development of institutional open access policies through the retention of intellectual property rights	▪ Talent ecosystems for attractive early research careers	▪ Science comes to town 2029 ▪ Promoting public engagement in R&I and scientific literacy	▪ Upgrading the EU's independent knowledge on China's Science, Technology and Innovation system

Specific condition: Portfolio approach

“To ensure a balanced portfolio covering different ERA policy areas, as outlined in the expected outcomes and scope, grants will be awarded to proposals not only in order of ranking, but at least also to proposals that are the highest ranked within each area, provided that proposals pass all thresholds.”

- Address **multiple policy areas** within one call topic.
- Create a coherent portfolio of policy-relevant projects with **cooperation and synergies** between the funded projects, supported by the Commission and the REA.

European Research Area Platform

HOME | About ERA | ERA Governance | ERA Policy Agenda | ERA Monitoring | ERA in Horizon Europe | ERA Repository

https://european-research-area.ec.europa.eu/era-horizon-europe

Resources and tools

The Embassy of Good Science

A community platform that promotes research integrity among all those involved in research and fosters understanding, collaboration, sharing of resources, and awareness around Good Science. It hosts a repository of materials that help in every-day research practice of Good Science.

ENERI Classroom

A training and capacity-building resource on research integrity and ethics for research integrity advisory boards, committees handling allegations or working with research integrity policy development, research integrity officers and advisors, research integrity ombudspersons, research ethics committees, and experts and officers in EU-bodies. By Horizon Europe project iRECS.

ROSiE Knowledge Hub

Guidance on how to conduct Open Science responsibly in everyday research practice, following established ethical and integrity principles and values. The guidelines primarily apply to research but may also be suitable to processes leading to innovation. By Horizon2020 project ROSIE.

Toolbox for Research Integrity

A structured collection of easy-to-use Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines that research performing and research funding organisations can use to develop their own research integrity promotion plans. By Horizon Europe project SOPs4RI.

Global Code of Conduct for Research During Pandemics

A resource for researchers, research ethics committees, and research integrity offices who want to work ethically and responsibly during pandemics. By Horizon Europe project PREPARED.

Ethics and Integrity Results Pack

Highlights EU projects that promote training, education, and capacity-building in research integrity, and support the ethical analysis of emerging technologies.

Listen to stakeholders

Explore how Horizon Europe supports ERA priorities

- Explainer on links between Horizon Europe and ERA policy priorities
- Showcase of key resources and tools
- Videos about funded activities
- Past/Ongoing projects and new calls

ERA priorities

Research careers	Open science
Gender equality	Research assessment reform
Universities	Research management
Research infrastructures	Citizen engagement
Knowledge valorisation	Ethics and integrity
Science for Policy	Access to excellence

European Commission

More information

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- ✓ See all calls and topics: Horizon Europe | WIDERA Work Programme 2026-2027
- ✓ Ask questions about research and Horizon Europe: Research Enquiry Service (europa.eu)
- ✓ Submit your proposal: Funding & Tenders Portal | European Commission
- ✓ Build project consortia: ERA Brokerage Event – 17 December 2025

European Commission

Pillar I – Institutional changes for ERA

Type	CSA
Focus	Capacity building and support to foster adoption of ERA policies/practices within institutions
Activity type	Tools, resources, training, services, policy advice
Expected impact	Effective and sustainable structural institutional changes aligned with ERA priorities
Policy areas	▪ Equity in open science ▪ Inclusive gender equality ▪ Research assessment reform ▪ Research ethics and integrity ▪ Open access policies
2026 call	HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-01: Accelerating open access and research assessment reforms in ERA HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-02: Building institutional capacities for ethical, equitable, open, and inclusive ERA
2027 call	HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-ERA-01: Facilitating development of institutional open access policies through the retention of intellectual property rights

Pillar I - Institutional changes for ERA

Accelerating open access and research assessment reforms in ERA

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-01

Victoria Tsoukala, Matteo Marenco,
RTD.A.4 - Open Science and Research Infrastructures

European Commission

Main elements

Through cascading grants, implement a variety of capacity-building activities to foster effective and sustainable structural institutional changes within R&I organisations.

Key principles:

- **Openness**: Select one area and develop pre-defined activities and additional activities that contribute to the expected outcomes.
- **Broad reach**: Large communities of stakeholders with broad geographical reach and participation.
- **Synergies**: Coordinate and collaborate with other projects funded under this call.

Call opening / closing:
10 December 2025 / 12 March 2026

Type of action: CSA

Budget: EUR 6 million

Indicative number of projects: 2-3

Maximum financial support to third parties: EUR 60 000 (cascading grants)

Evaluation: Balanced portfolio

Area 1: Supporting the transition of scholarly societies to non-profit open access publishing models

Supporting transition of scholarly societies through cascading grants to transition in non-profit open access publishing models without author fees.

ERA policy: contributes to ERA Action “Applying equity in open science”

Expected outcomes:

- Publishing activities of scholarly societies in diverse fields transitioned into non-profit open access publishing models without author fees;
- Improved capacities, skills, and resources for scholarly societies for sustainable transition to such models;
- Greater awareness of and commitment to open science principles and practices among scholarly; societies, support to the reform of research assessment and the European Charter for Researchers
- 20-30 actions expected.

Target groups: Scholarly societies, research performing and funding organisations, libraries, non-profit scholarly publishers, other research-relevant organisations.

Area 1: Supporting the transition of scholarly societies to non-profit open access publishing models

Key elements in scope:

- Journals/books/monographs of national and/or European scholarly societies;
- All six Frascati fields of science & technology should be addressed;
- At least 2/3 of funding for cascading grants; at least 1/3 of grants for the social sciences and the humanities.

Project activities, targeting scholarly societies, should comprise at least the following:

- Business models to support sustainable non-profit open access publishing for scholarly societies beyond the project;
- Guidelines, training materials and lessons learnt to support capacity-building for such transitions of scholarly societies in the future;
- Open call(s) for grants supporting pilot actions for transitioning at least 30 scholarly societies across Europe to open access non-profit publishing models.

Area 2: Sustainable institutional reforms to improve research assessment systems

Systemic reform of research assessment through the recognition of diverse outputs, practices and activities maximising quality and impact, in line with Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment (ARRA).

ERA policy: contributes to ERA Structural Policy "Reforming research assessment"

Expected outcomes:

- Institutional changes in research performing and funding organisations in favour of more responsible research assessment systems (in line with ARRA);
- Implementation of Action Plans of signatories of the ARRA;
- Increased awareness and trust among researchers and research organisations about reforms of research assessment.

Target groups: Higher education institutions, research performing and funding organisations, research evaluation agencies, accreditation and quality assurance agencies, notably those engaged in the CoARA approach.

Area 2: Sustainable institutional reforms to improve research assessment systems

Key elements in scope:

- Support institutional changes, raise awareness, and assess the level of progress made in terms of reforming research assessment, in line with the ARRA;
- Distribute cascading grants to effect changes in 40-50 institutions of different types and geographical areas;
- Build on past or ongoing relevant initiatives and projects at European or national level.

It should address at least the following complementary activities:

- Launch open call(s) providing grants that support institutional changes;
- Develop or reform research assessment and evaluation criteria and processes (COARA);
- Implement reforms aiming to establish qualitative peer-review at the center of research assessment practices and to move away from the use of traditional bibliometrics;
- Implement institutional changes that recognize the diversity of activities and roles of researchers; and enhance the recognition of diverse research practices as part of assessment systems;
- Analyse the outcomes of research assessment reforms and identify relevant barriers and impact indicators, as well as quantify the progress of action plans.

Pillar I - Institutional changes for ERA

Facilitating development of institutional open access policies through the retention of intellectual property rights

HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-ERA-01

Victoria Tsoukala,
RTD.A.4 - Open Science and Research Infrastructures

European Commission

Expected outcomes

Facilitate open access through rights retention policies.

ERA policy: contributes to ERA Structural Policy "Enabling open science via sharing and re-use of data, including through the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC)"

Expected outcomes:

- Increased number of EU research performing organisations with well-developed policies on open access publications with clause(s) for rights retention;
- Higher share of research publications in open access across the EU and Associated Countries, especially in low-performing countries with respect to open access;
- Increase of access to and preservation of scientific information through institutional infrastructures, such as repositories.

Call opening / closing:
8 December 2026 / 11 March 2027

Type of action: CSA

Budget: EUR 2 million

Indicative number of projects: 1

Funding approach: Lump sum

Target groups: Research performing organisations, libraries, policy-makers, funders, others.

Scope

Key elements in scope:

At least the following activities should be covered:

- Develop networks of research institutions working towards aligned institutional policies to enable open access through rights retention;
- Produce comprehensive guidance, tools and training materials, and document lessons learnt and best practice to support RPOs to adopt and expand policies on rights retention;
- Design strategies to maximise approval and adoption of rights retention and open access policies by researchers.

Pillar I - Institutional changes for ERA

Building institutional capacities for ethical, equitable, open, and inclusive ERA

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-02

Mihalis Kritikos, RTD.02 - Science Policy, Advice and Ethics
Hana Tenglerova, RTD.D.4 - Democracy, Equality & Culture
Victoria Tsoukala, Georgios Papanagnou,
RTD.A.4 - Open Science and Research Infrastructures

European Commission

Main elements

Implement a variety of capacity-building activities to foster effective and sustainable structural institutional changes within R&I organisations.

Key principles:

- **Openness**: Select one area and develop pre-defined activities and additional activities that contribute to the expected outcomes.
- **Broad reach**: Large communities of stakeholders with broad geographical reach and participation.
- **Synergies:** Consider links to other topics in the Call.

Call opening / closing:
10 December 2025 / 12 March 2026

Type of action: CSA

Budget: EUR 9 million

Indicative number of projects: 6

Evaluation: Balanced portfolio

Funding approach: Lump sum

Area 1: Capacity booster for ethics and integrity: addressing digital transition and ensuring digital inclusion for all

Enhance inclusive digital transition and ensure digital inclusion for all.

ERA policy: contributes to ERA Action “A coordinated framework responding to emerging challenges for ethics and integrity in R&I”

Expected outcomes:

- A reinforced institutional ethics and integrity framework that supports researchers and ethics and integrity bodies in addressing challenges related to AI/the digitalisation of research, ensuring a high level of protection for children and seniors;
- Establishment of multidisciplinary networks, fostering responsible/ethical digital research
- Increased awareness of the ethical challenges of digital research and the strategies needed to overcome them.

Target groups: Researchers, research integrity/ethics committees, European networks in research ethics, research management/integrity offices, ethics officers in research performing organisations, as well as policymakers.

Area 1: Capacity booster for ethics and integrity: addressing digital transition and ensuring digital inclusion for all

Key elements in scope:

- Develop an institutional ethics and integrity framework based on standard operating procedures and operational guidance;
- Develop training programmes for researchers, ethics experts, and local ethics bodies/committees to safeguard responsible and trustworthy research in a digital context;
- Conduct targeted communication and dissemination actions on ethical challenges in the digital domain in order to build understanding among researchers, developers, and the broader public about risks, through workshops, surveys, communication campaigns, and tailored ethics dialogues;
- Build on the results of relevant past or ongoing projects at European and/or national level;
- Develop structured cooperation with the Embassy of Good Science/other European networks.

Area 2: Mutual learning and mentoring for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of inclusive gender equality plans

Enhance gender equality and inclusiveness in R&I through peer-mentoring.

ERA policy: contributes to ERA Structural Policy "Strengthening gender equality and inclusiveness in the ERA"

Expected outcomes:

- Increased capacity of R&I organisations to design, implement, monitor and evaluate inclusive GEPs;
- Increased uptake, quality and effectiveness of inclusive GEPs and policies in organisations that are less advanced in their implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Target groups:

- Research performing organisations
- Higher education institutions
- Public bodies

Area 2: Mutual learning and mentoring for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of inclusive gender equality plans

Key elements in scope:

- Project consortia are expected to justify their collaboration based on their alignment in terms of common challenges, similar contexts and/or specific thematic focus.
- Activities to be addressed:
  - Implement specific actions in less advanced organisations, including those addressing intersectionality and diversity;
  - Ensure an update or set-up of thorough monitoring and evaluation of inclusive GEPs in less advanced organisations;
  - Exchange good practices and materials, build capacities and network with relevant projects, initiatives and stakeholders.

Area 3: Address equity and inclusion in capacities for open science

Support capacities for open science by prioritising equity.

ERA policy: contributes to ERA Action “Applying equity in open science”

Expected outcomes:

- Support for researchers with diverse profiles and needs in adopting open science practices;
- Consolidated evidence base on equity and inclusion in open science;
- Training material for the practice of open science addressing specific equity needs and profiles.

Target groups:

- Research performing and funding organisations
- Research assessment agencies
- Research infrastructures
- Universities
- Researchers
- Innovators
- Policymakers

Area 3: Address equity and inclusion in capacities for open science

Key elements in scope:

- Take stock of equity and inclusion barriers in relation to open science practices and access to open science infrastructures, notably in connection to scientists’ personal circumstances.
- Develop and disseminate shared tools, training methods, and services tailored to equity needs.
- Support the professionalisation of open science-related profiles, such as data stewards, non-profit academic editors, and non-profit academic journals' reviewers.
- Recommendations for developing a common ERA approach to equity in open science in its different practice.

Area 4: Improving quality, efficiency and equity in peer-review for scientific publishing

Improved peer-review processes for efficiency, transparency, equity and non-bias, and AI considerations.

ERA policy: contributes to ERA Action "Applying equity in open science"

Expected outcomes:

- Improved quality and increased transparency, recognition, equity, and non-bias in the peer-review process and editorial review system in different disciplines among publishers (including non-profit, institutional, scholarly societies, and commercial publishers) and editors/editorial boards;
- Increased awareness among researchers, research performing organisations, scholarly societies, editors/editorial boards and publishers, of the need for a transparent and equitable peer review process as an integral part of high-quality research.

Target groups:

- Publishers
- Editors/editorial boards
- Scholarly societies
- Research performing organisations
- National research evaluation agencies

Area 4: Improving quality, efficiency and equity in peer-review for scientific publishing

Key elements in scope:

- Proposals should cover disciplines from at least two of the six Frascati fields of science & technology and consider the emerging challenge of AI in peer-review.
- Project activities should involve actors such as editors/editorial boards, scholarly societies, research performing organisations, and national research evaluation agencies.

At least the following activities should be addressed:

- Pilot policies and processes in different scientific fields that will improve the peer-review process, mindful of the challenges introduced by AI;
- Draft recommendations for transitioning scholarly publishing in different scientific fields to improved, more efficient, transparent, equitable, and non-biased peer-reviewed processes;
- Address new forms of peer-review, such as open peer-review, and innovative publishing models, including “publish-review-curate”, where the review is conducted on publicly available preprints;
- Address attitudes to and effectiveness of peer review practices in different scientific fields, considering geographic, gender, and career stage biases in the process.

Pillar II – Ecosystem for ERA

Type	CSA
Focus	Building and reinforcing networks and partnerships to foster broad uptake of ERA policies/practices
Activity type	Exchange of knowledge and practice, networking and cooperative actions
Expected impact	Sustainable ecosystems established around ERA priorities
Policy areas	▪ Research ethics and integrity ▪ Environmentally sustainable science ▪ Knowledge valorisation ▪ Open science ▪ Research careers
2026 call	HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-03: Strengthening ecosystems for open, ethical, and sustainable ERA HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-04: Piloting innovative approaches to support academic startups and spinoffs
2027 call	HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-ERA-02:Talent ecosystems for attractive early research careers

Pillar II - Ecosystems for ERA Strengthening ecosystems for open, ethical, and sustainable ERA

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-03

Mihalis Kritikos, RTD.02 - Science Policy, Advice and Ethics
Javier Lopez Albacete, RTD.A.4 - Open Science and Research Infrastructures
Kaia Kert, RTD.A.2 - ERA, Spreading Excellence and Research Careers

European Commission

Main elements

Create new or enhance existing ecosystems to promote the adoption of ERA policies and practices.

Key principles:

- **Openness**: Select one area and develop pre-defined activities and additional activities that contribute to the expected outcomes.
- **Broad reach**: Large communities of stakeholders with broad geographical reach and participation.
- **Self-sustainability:** Propose a viable plan for after the end of the grant agreement.

Call opening / closing:
10 December 2025 / 12 March 2026

Type of action: CSA

Budget: EUR 6 million

Indicative number of projects: 3

Evaluation: Balanced portfolio

Funding approach: Lump sum

Area 1: Equitable, sustainable, and ethical research

Safeguarding and promoting equitable, sustainable, and ethical research.

ERA policy: contributes ERA Action “A coordinated framework responding to emerging challenges for ethics and integrity in R&I”.

Expected outcomes:

- A reinforced research ethics and integrity ecosystem that supports sustainable and equitable research partnerships across lower- and high-income settings, based on the values of the TRUST Code;
- Enhanced expertise in benefit sharing and practical methods to prevent ‘ethics dumping’;
- Creation of an international community of practice to promote “ethics-by-design" in support of researchers, research participants, local communities and, local/national ethics committees.

Target groups: Researchers, local/national research integrity and ethics committees, European networks of (early career) researchers and educators in research ethics, research management and integrity offices, ethics officers in research performing organisations and policy-makers.

Area 1: Equitable, sustainable, and ethical research

Key elements in scope:

- Develop toolkits to facilitate partnerships that guarantee the premise of ‘do no harm’ as well as fair and just practice from conception to the implementation of actions;
- Develop training programmes, including a quality assurance system, for researchers and for ethics experts and committees to promote the coherence of the ethics review process;
- Increase awareness and disseminate knowledge of ethical values and norms for responsible R&I, including at the local level;
- Proposals should build on the results of relevant past or ongoing projects at European/national levels;
- Structured cooperation with the Embassy of Good Science should be included. Cooperation with university or research networks to enrich ethics-related curricula is desirable.

Area 2: Global cooperation for the uptake of open science practices

Support an open and trusted global ecosystem for the sharing and re-use of FAIR research data.

ERA policy: contributes to contributes to ERA Structural Policy "Enabling open science via sharing and re-use of data, including through the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC)"

Expected outcomes:

- Strengthened international collaboration supporting the open, secure and trusted sharing and re-use of digital research objects in line with the FAIR principles;
- New methodologies for the application of the FAIR principles, supporting the global alignment of EOSC;
- Improved interoperability of digital research objects, and services across data and digital research infrastructures worldwide.

Target groups:

- Research organisations and their associations
- Research community-driven associations
- Research infrastructures
- Service providers, and higher education institutions

Area 2: Global cooperation for the uptake of open science practices

Key elements in scope:

- Initiatives to facilitate cooperation and connections between developments within the European context and international initiatives that promote the reusability of digital research outputs;
- Engagement with international stakeholders to contribute to the development and adoption of globally recognised data practices and standards;
- Provide support for defining and developing EOSC policies and technical specifications by aligning with global, community-driven initiatives and scientific best practices;
- Promote knowledge sharing, capacity building, and skills acquisition, enabling researchers and organisations to actively contribute to open science and the development of **Global Open Research Commons**.

Area 3: Environmentally sustainable science

Create a network dedicated to driving the transformation of research practices and research organisations toward environmental sustainability.

ERA policy: contribute to green transition – a priority of the Pact for Research and Innovation.

Expected outcomes:

- Effective knowledge sharing and support for researchers and R&I organisations in implementing environmentally sustainable practices and policies;
- Enhanced culture and awareness of environmental sustainability within the scientific community;
- Increased integration of environmental sustainability considerations in European and national research funding programmes and other initiatives.

Target groups:

- Higher education institutions
- Research performing and funding organisations
- Industry
- Policymakers
- Grassroot initiatives

Area 3: Environmentally sustainable science

Key elements in scope:

- Consider various measures, with special attention to energy-intensive digital technologies like AI;
- Map existing approaches for assessing and reducing environmental footprint and develop sustainability guidelines, considering various disciplines and research contexts;
- Build on existing approaches and methodologies and collaborate with relevant projects, networks and initiatives;
- Offer evidence-based recommendations to integrate sustainability into research funding and evaluation, with attention to different institutional frameworks and engagement at all institutional levels;
- Promote awareness and adoption of sustainability policies and practices through knowledge exchange, collaboration, and trainings that leverage existing resources and expertise.

Pillar II - Ecosystems for ERA Piloting innovative approaches to support academic startups and spinoffs

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-04

Iphigenia Pottaki,
RTD.E.2 - Knowledge Valorisation and Technology Infrastructures

European Commission

Expected outcomes

Supporting academic startups and spinoffs to benefit from end-user feedback and links to industry and society through testing the desirability of products and services.

ERA policy: contributes to ERA Structural Policy "Upscaling knowledge valorisation capacities and activities"
Also supports the objectives of the Startup and Scaleup Strategy

Expected outcomes:

- Upgraded guidance and services for supporting early-stage academic spinoffs and startups;
- Tested and shared innovative valorisation best practices addressing the needs of early stage academic spinoffs and startups for engaging with industry, societal actors and end-users.

Call opening / closing:
10 December 2025 / 12 March 2026

Type of action: CSA

Budget: EUR 4 million

Indicative number of projects: 2

Funding approach: Lump sum

Target groups:

- Intermediaries: science parks, technology parks, living labs, hubs, and practitioners in citizen engagement…
- Academic startups and spinoffs

Scope

Strengthen ecosystems for knowledge valorisation and innovation by supporting academic startups and spinoffs to benefit from end-user feedback and links to industry and society. **Beyond technology validation, there is a need to test the desirability of their products and services** with a broader public, learn from citizens' feedback, and adapt and improve their value propositions to improve their prospects for collaborating with industrial partners, attracting investors, and growing locally and internationally.

Activities:

- At least **20 pilot actions across Europe** enabling university spinoffs and technology startups to link up to end-users, societal actors, industry, and other stakeholders to boost market uptake and growth.
- Development of guidance and services, including methodologies and best practices.

Need to have/Expected

- Clear target group, wide geographical coverage, support to gender equality.
- Contribution to EU Knowledge Valorisation Platform, synergies with ongoing projects under the topic "Experimentation and exchange of good practices for value creation".

Pillar II - Ecosystems for ERA
Talent ecosystems for attractive early research careers

HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-ERA-02

Dario Capezzuto,
RTD.A.2 - ERA, Spreading Excellence and Research Careers

European Commission

Expected outcomes

Creation of intersectoral talent ecosystems bringing organisational change, flows between public and private sector, and better employment and working conditions for researchers and other R&I staff.

ERA policy: contributes to ERA Structural Policy "Making research careers more attractive and sustainable and support mobility"

Expected outcomes:

- Creation of stable talent ecosystems, i.e. integrated networks of cross-sectoral public and private organisations;
- Organisational changes based on the European framework for research careers and the European Charter for Researchers;
- Attractive careers for researchers and other R&I staff.

Call opening / closing:
8 December 2026 / 11 March 2027

Type of action: CSA

Budget: EUR 29 million

Indicative number of projects: 12

Funding approach: Lump sum

Target groups: Training providers and employers of researchers, including:

- Universities
- Research and technology organisations and infrastructures
- SMEs/Industry
- Government entities
- Civil society organisations

Scope

Key elements:

- Focus on large pool of researchers (especially early-career), but spillover effects expected on other R&I staff;
- Talent ecosystems in specific sector or comprehensive in nature, and cooperating with each other;
- Intersectoral cooperation to close gap between R&I talents and the labour market;
- Potential activities: developing action plans to bring the organisations in line with the Charter for Researchers, upskilling (including on the basis of ResearchComp and RM Comp), involving non-academic sector in training programmes, career development and mentoring services, outreach activities to attract international researchers to the ecosystem;
- Build on outcomes by projects of the pilot call and other relevant projects at European/national level.

To keep in mind:

- Participating organisations are expected to have received the HR Excellence in Research Award or commit to applying the new Charter for Researchers and commit to its implementation (i.e., start the process towards the Award) within the grant duration, as far as relevant for their operations related to the employment of researchers;
- Salaries and mobility of individual researchers or teams of researchers are not supported.

Pillar III - Citizens and science for ERA

Type	CSA
Focus	Connecting R&I with citizens and other stakeholders
Activity type	Implementing and promoting participatory approaches, such as citizen engagement and citizen science
Expected impact	Increased trust in science and alignment of R&I with society's needs
Policy areas	▪ Trust in science ▪ Knowledge valorisation ▪ Citizen and societal engagement
2026 call	HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-05: Fostering citizen engagement for more responsible and democratic R&I HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-06: European Citizens' Hackathon Championship HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-07: Science comes to town 2028
2027 call	HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-ERA-03: Science comes to town 2029 HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-ERA-04: Promoting public engagement in R&I and scientific literacy

Pillar III - Citizens and science in ERA

Fostering citizen engagement for more responsible and democratic R&I

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-05

Georgios Papanagnou,
RTD.A.4 - Open Science and Research Infrastructures

European Commission

Main elements

Increase pubic engagement and alignment of R&I with society's needs, expectations and values, thereby enhancing the democratic character and impact of science in the ERA.

ERA policy: contributes to ERA Structural Policy "Enhancing Trust in Science through Citizen Participation, Engagement and Science Communication

Key principles:

- **Openness**: Select one area and develop pre-defined activities and additional activities that contribute to the expected outcomes.
- **Broad reach**: Large communities of stakeholders with broad geographical reach and participation.

Call opening / closing:
10 December 2025 / 12 March 2026

Type of action: CSA

Budget: EUR 2 million

Indicative number of projects: 2

Evaluation: Balanced portfolio

Funding approach: Lump sum

Area 1: Citizen science for enhancing democratic governance

Improve framework conditions with a view to improving the links between citizen science and democratic governance.

Expected outcomes:

- Improved framework conditions for integrating citizen science in democratic governance, considering issues of institutional feasibility and preparedness, including protocols and working modalities that foster the use of citizen science data in policies;
- Improved data practices employed by researchers and experts in citizen science initiatives;
- Increased awareness about the valuable scientific knowledge generated by citizen science and its contributions to tackling societal challenge.

Target groups:

- Research performing and funding organisations
- Universities
- Researchers and innovators
- Research infrastructures
- Civil society organisations
- Policymakers

Area 1: Citizen science for enhancing democratic governance

Key elements in scope:

- Recommendations on how to set up protocols supporting data quality, comparability, and inter-operability in citizen science for policies;
- Demonstrate how citizen science can be introduced in institutions through greater preparedness and coherence across different levels of governance, while also addressing issues of equity in public participation;
- Evidence of the impact of citizen science on policy change;
- Raise awareness among relevant stakeholders on incentives for the research community to engage in citizen science.

Area 2: Guiding principles for inclusive engagement in R&I

Make the R&I ecosystem more participatory, trustworthy, democratic; improving its capacity to tackle societal challenges.

Expected outcomes:

- Enhanced institutional and organisational capacities in relation to public engagement and science-society links;
- Actionable pathways for strengthening the co-creation of R&I by society, and evidence of the impacts of public engagement;
- Common ERA approaches for researchers, policymakers, public engagement professionals, and communication experts to boost public engagement in R&I and science communication.

Target groups:

- Research performing and funding organisations
- Universities
- Researchers and innovators
- Policymakers
- Science communicators
- Public engagement professionals
- Members of the media

Area 2: Guiding principles for inclusive engagement in R&I

Key elements in scope:

- Recommendations for mechanisms (e.g., guidelines, funding schemes, co-creation methodologies) for sustainable citizen participation and engagement in R&I of diverse groups of citizens, including those not habitually involved in science;
- Recommendations to support institutional capacity building, organisational structures and careers (in research performing organisations) in relation to facilitating interaction with society through innovative science communication, engagement, and participation of diverse groups of citizens;
- Establish evidence base on the effectiveness and impact of public engagement in R&I and science communication;
- Guidance for developing ethical guidelines for citizen engagement, participation, and science communication, ensuring their inclusion in institutional ethics and integrity committees and frameworks;
- Propose pathways to tackle issues of equity and inclusion in public engagement in R&I also considering beliefs, awareness and misperceptions by citizens.

Pillar III - Citizens and science for ERA

Promoting public engagement in R&I and scientific literacy

HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-ERA-04

Georgios Papanagnou,
RTD.A.4 - Open Science and Research Infrastructures

European Commission

Main elements

Promote policies and practices delivering innovative approaches for enhancing science-society links and promoting scientific literacy.

ERA policy: contributes to ERA Structural Policy "Enhancing Trust in Science through Citizen Participation, Engagement and Science Communication

Key principles:

- **Openness**: Select one area and develop pre-defined activities and additional activities that contribute to the expected outcomes.
- **Broad reach**: Large communities of stakeholders with broad geographical reach and participation.

Call opening / closing:
8 December 2026 / 11 March 2027

Type of action: CSA

Budget: EUR 2 million

Indicative number of projects: 2

Evaluation: Balanced portfolio

Funding approach: Lump sum

Area 1: Youth, science and democracy

Innovative ways to effectively and inclusively engage and involve young people in R&I.

Expected outcomes:

- Innovative ways for engaging young people in science and promoting scientific literacy;
- Common ERA approaches in engaging and communicating with young people in relation to R&I.

Target groups:

- Research performing organisations
- Universities
- Researchers and innovators
- Civil society organisations working with youth
- Science communicators
- Policymakers

Area 1: Youth, science and democracy

Key elements in scope:

- Engage young people, in different national settings, in participatory science activities that tackle complex social issues (e.g., climate change, biodiversity loss, digital skills inequalities, economic effects of AI transitions, energy poverty, social inclusion), ensuring the inclusion of those not habitually involved in science;
- Communities of practice that include public engagement experts, science communicators, citizen scientists, youth organisations, researchers and innovators, and policymakers with a view to co-developing handbooks and guidelines on engaging youth in science;
- Recommendations for developing common ERA approaches to engage and communicate with young people regarding R&I.

Area 2: Scaling up science engagement at EU level

Promote scientific literacy, dialogue and constructive interactions between scientists and the wider public.

Expected outcomes:

- Scaling-up national initiatives on public engagement in R&I to ERA level taking into consideration different audiences, languages and contexts;
- Improved engagement and cooperation of researchers and innovators, science communicators, and public engagement experts with civil society;
- Increased understanding of the value of scientific processes by society and the importance of public needs and values in addressing societal challenges through R&I.

Target groups:

- Research performing organisations
- Universities
- Researchers and innovators
- Civil society organisations
- Science communicators
- Policymakers

Area 2: Scaling up science engagement at EU level

Key elements in scope:

- Online dialogue platforms, in different national (language) settings, containing profiles of researchers and innovators, their availability for public visits, and the scientific issues to be discussed; the platforms should also facilitate the arrangement of meetings between the researchers and interested organisations or institutions.
- Implement the meetings while taking care to reach out to and include members of the public not habitually involved in science, and adapting the science communication and public engagement for different audiences, languages and contexts.
- Take stock of all visits and provide lessons learned and recommendations for the future development of similar activities.

Pillar III - Citizens and science for ERA

European Citizens' Hackathon Championship

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-06

Iphigenia Pottaki,
RTD.E.2 - Knowledge Valorisation and Technology Infrastructures

European Commission

Expected outcomes

Accelerate knowledge valorisation with citizen engagement through implementing for 3 years (2027- 2029) the “European Citizens’ Hackathon Championship”.

ERA policy: contributes to ERA Structural Policy “Upscaling knowledge valorisation capacities and activities”

Expected outcomes:

- Hundreds of innovative solutions supported to come to market;
- Upgraded skills, business mindsets, new business startups that are given exposure and opportunities to grow at European level;
- Increased awareness of societal challenges and R&I for new solutions
- Increased trust in science, citizen engagement approaches.

Target groups:

- Researchers, innovators, citizens
- Universities, research organisations, innovation hubs
- Municipalities, regional and city councils, research organisations, business and innovation centres, policy makers, industry, investors

Call opening / closing:
10 December 2025 / 12 March 2027

Type of action: CSA

Budget: EUR 3 million

Indicative number of projects: 1

Maximum financial support to third parties: EUR 20 000 (Prizes)

Scope

Enable researchers and citizens from across Europe to work together in transnational, transdisciplinary teams to address societal challenges through existing research results and to create new businesses to bring their innovative solutions to market.

- Connecting R&I with citizens and other stakeholders in order to upscale knowledge valorisation, while also contributing to increased trust in science and alignment of R&I with society's needs, expectations and values.
- Co-creation of innovative solutions that address citizens' needs, in joint teams of researchers and citizens, thereby supporting their market uptake.

Need to have/ expected:

- 1st phase physical events – at least 14
- Themes (challenge of each annual Championship)
- Winning teams awards
- Plan for support to uptake
- Hosting cities (3) to be consortium members or associated partners
- Synergies with other activities
- Inclusivity

Pillar III - Citizens and science for ERA
Science comes to town 2028 and 2029

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-07
HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-ERA-03

Maria Mecenero, RTD.A.2 - ERA, Spreading Excellence and Research Careers
Tim Logan, City of Kiel
Linda Piálek, Kiel University

European Commission

Expected outcomes

A **small group of 3 to 6 cities** jointly design and implement a **year-long programme** of activities, **connecting citizens and science** while involving relevant **stakeholders** around science and its contribution to society.

Expected outcomes:

- Participating cities having **stronger capacity, networks** and are **more involved** in science communication and citizen engagement in science, engaging **diverse social and age groups** in R&I activities;
- More informed and engaged discussions on the **future of science and R&I policy in Europe**, emphasising **inclusive and participatory approaches** involving stakeholders within and outside the EU;
- Improved attractiveness of **careers in R&I for younger generations** (academia, industry or entrepreneurship) by organising EU-wide science competitions and other initiatives.

Call opening / closing:
10 December 2025 / 12 March 2026

8 December 2026 / 11 March 2027

Type of action: CSA

Budget: EUR 6 million

Indicative number of projects: 1

Maximum financial support to third parties: EUR 60 000 (Prizes)

Scope

Make-up of the consortium:

- Min **3** and max **6 cities of 3 Members States and/or Associated Countries**, with the majority being in Member States.
- **Consortium partners**: organisations that can represent the host cities and/or join them in designing and implementing the activities, including local partners providing the **link to science and R&I**.
- **City authorities:** commitment letters from highest authority of each city.
- **Cities' roles**: explaination of cities' specific contribution (roles, resources, and support).

Important aspects to keep in mind:

- **Link** with other editions of SCTT fostering **coherence with the initative's brand.**
- **Synergies** with Researchers at School, European Researchers' Night, and other EU initiatives.
- Inclusion of **other events and activities** in **'satellite' cities** to reach further communities and increase impact.
- Mobilise **substantial resources** beyond the grant to support and broaden the programmed activities.
- **Commitment from the EUCYS National Organiser** of the country designated as host.

Programme

Overall concept for the annual programme in the proposal, including:

- Focus and scope of activities, with a link with the previous and next editions of SCTT
- Outreach strategy
- Contribution to long-term vision for the cities

Co-design of the **detailed draft programme** of activities will be a priority deliverable, due no later than 3 months before the launch of the programme.

Programmed activities & resources

1. Events (EUCYS, EU TalentOn, etc.) and activities funded partially or fully by the Union contribution

2. Activities and events financed by the participating cities, 'satellite' cities, sponsorships and other resources (not funded by the Union contribution)

Reporting:

- Implementation: All programmed activities
- Related costs: **Only** activities financed by the grant

European Commission

Key components

One-year programme of activities engaging citizens in the cities and beyond

The European Union Contest for Young Scientists (EUCYS): an international science fair awarding prizes and awards, for 14 to 20-year-olds who are first prize winners of national science contests for school science projects.

European Union Contest for early-career researchers (EU TalentOn): science hackathon awarding prizes bringing together early-career researchers aged 21-35 to work on scientific solutions to societal challenges.

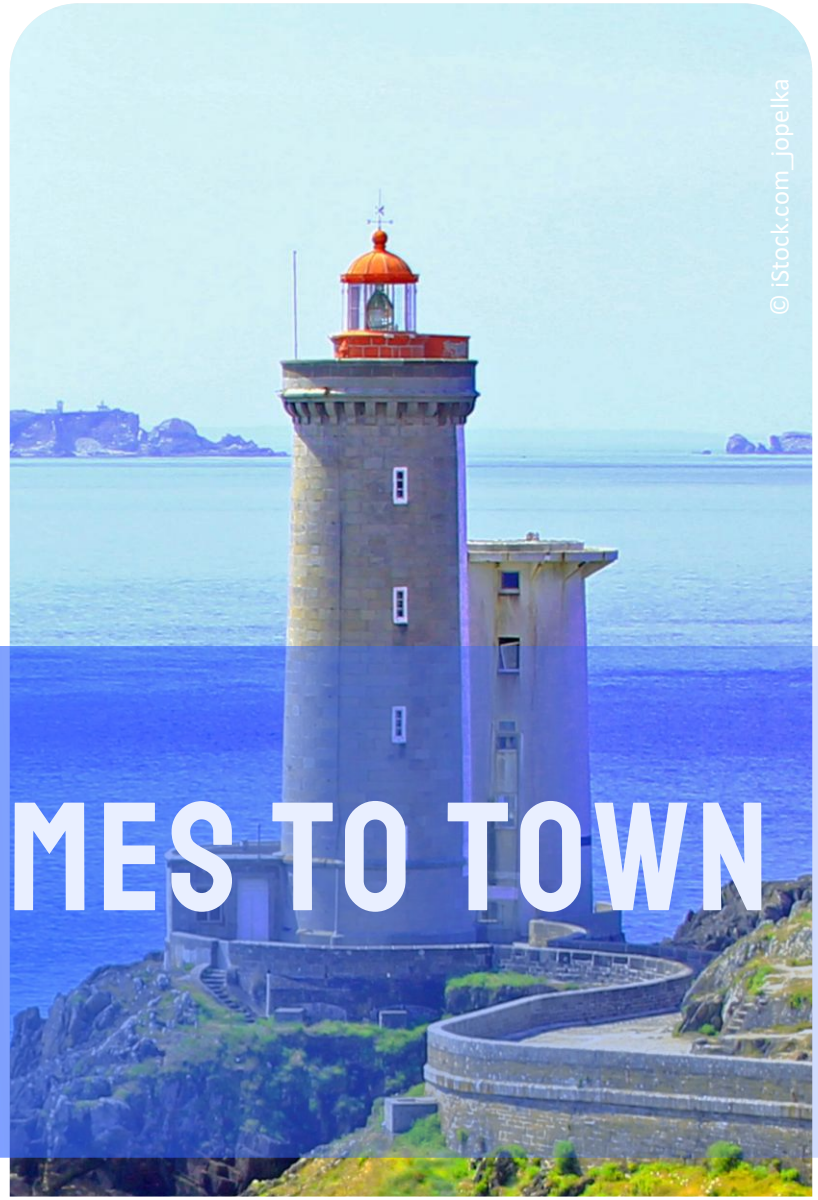
Tips and tricks

Preparing the proposal:

- ✓ **Get familiar with EUCYS and EU TalentOn**: more information and the events' specific guidelines for all organisational aspect can be found on the contest websites.
- ✓ Create **links with previous and subsequent editions of Science Comes to Town** to ensure brand coherence.
- ✓ Engage with different types of legal entities (local authorities, public and/or private stakeholders) ensuring a wide representation of actors.

Proposal's checklist:

- ✓ **Commitment letters** from highest public authorities of each participating city, demonstrating a strong commitment for the activities included in the proposal.
- ✓ Ability to **mobilise substantial resources beyond the Union contribution** to support and broaden the programmed activities.
- ✓ Inclusion of key components: **one-year programme, EUCYS, EU TalentOn**.
- ▪ **Commitment from the EUCYS National Organiser** of the country designated as host.



SCIENCE COMES TO TOWN 2026

Funded by
the European Union

SCIENCE COMES TO TOWN 2026

KIEL BREST SPLIT+

AND PARTNERS

25M
REACH

1.5M
VISITORS

3+6
CITIES

70+
PARTNERS

1000+
EVENTS

365
DAYS

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TARGETS

FOSTER TRUST AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN SCIENCE

ENHANCE OUR LOCAL INNOVATION CAPACITY THROUGH SCIENCE

DEVELOP SCIENCE-BASED LOCAL POLICY MAKING

AUDIENCE

1 **LEARNERS / PARTICIPANTS**
Learn, engage, gain & network

2 **KNOWLEDGE MEDIATORS / MENTORS / ROLE MODELS**
Empower, gain & network

3 **FACILITATORS**
Enable, support & vitalise

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THEMES

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FORMATS

SCIENCE COMES TO TOWN 2026

EU TALENTON 2026

EUCYS 2026

- CO-CREATION PROJECTS
- JOINT CITIZEN SCIENCE PROJECTS
- CHILDRENS UNIVERSITY
- SCIENCE BATTLE
- SCIENCE SHOW
- TEACHER TRAINING
- MUTUAL LEARNING

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Pillar IV - New knowledge for ERA

Type	RIA
Focus	Creating new knowledge that supports design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies & practices
Activity type	Conducting analyses, developing and testing new methods & practices
Expected impact	Strengthened evidence base for advancing the implementation of the ERA
Policy areas	Open science Research ethics and integrity Inclusive gender equality Research careers Global approach to R&I
2026 call	▪ HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-08: Advancing Knowledge for ERA
2027 call	▪ HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-ERA-05: Upgrading the EU's independent knowledge on China's Science, Technology and Innovation system

Pillar IV - New knowledge for ERA

Advancing Knowledge for ERA

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-08

Ana Teresa Mota, RTD.A.4 - Open Science and Research Infrastructures
Mihalis Kritikos, RTD.02 - Science Policy, Advice and Ethics
Hana Tenglerova, RTD.D.4 - Democracy, Equality & Culture
Carolina Canibano, RTD.A.2 - ERA, Spreading Excellence and Research Careers

European Commission

Main elements

Generate new information and knowledge to strengthen the evidence base for design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of ERA policies and practices.

Key principle:

- **Openness**: Select one area and develop pre-defined activities and additional activities that contribute to the expected outcomes.

Call opening / closing:
10 December 2025 / 12 March 2026

Type of action: RIA

Budget: EUR 16 million

Indicative number of projects: 8

Evaluation: Balanced portfolio

Award criteria: Overall score of 12 as threshold

Funding approach: Lump sum

Area 1: Assessing reproducibility in research by direct replication of scientific findings

Support the replication of significant findings across different scientific fields, addressing both technical and societal challenges related to research reproducibility.

ERA policy: contributes to ERA Structural Policy "Enabling open science via sharing and re-use of data, including through the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC)"

Expected outcomes:

- **New knowledge and methodologies** through independent, direct replication studies of selected high-impact research findings are available to researchers, citizens and policy makers;
- **New innovative approaches** to conduct and incentivise the replication of scientific findings;
- **Sustainable engagement and collaboration** in replication of scientific findings across research communities.

Target groups:

- Researchers
- Scientific service and infrastructure providers
- Open science experts

Area 1: Assessing reproducibility in research by direct replication of scientific findings

Key elements in scope:

- Conduct **independent, direct replication** of the findings of specified high-impact, influential studies in selected research domains, using state-of-the-art methodologies;
- Develop innovative approaches to replication studies and **solutions that can be generalised or adapted to multiple fields**, considering the distinct challenges of different scientific fields and the challenges that cut across the selected research domains;
- Assess the replication findings, and develop and disseminate **best practices** and **concrete, field-specific recommendations** for increased reproducibility of scientific findings based on their activities;
- Develop and test **innovative models to incentivise researchers** to participate in replication studies;
- Foster **community-building** to support **long-term collaborations** on replication practices.

Area 2: Ethics of emerging technologies with high socio-economic impact: space exploration/exploitation

Address the ethical challenges and design a robust framework to address the risks to fundamental rights, human integrity, and environmental harm of space exploration/exploitation.

ERA policy: contributes to ERA Action "A coordinated framework responding to emerging challenges for ethics and integrity in R&I"

Expected outcomes:

- New knowledge generated by researchers and ethics experts on ethical and societal impact of space exploration/exploitation;
- Sustainable engagement through a robust ethics and integrity framework in applying responsible governance;
- Increased awareness and understanding of the ethical aspects of space exploration/exploitation.

Target groups:

- Researchers, ethics experts, members of national and local ethics committees/bodies, policy makers, innovators and technology providers, and the general public.

Area 2: Ethics of emerging technologies with high socio-economic impact: space exploration/exploitation

Key elements in scope:

- Conduct independent study and identify the ethical challenges in relation to R&I on space exploration/exploitation, including the risks for the integrity and dignity of humans, approaches to minimize harm and maximise beneficence and a responsible and sustainable use of resources.
- Develop a robust research and integrity framework and training materials to support actors at the EU, national, and local levels in applying an ‘ethics by design’ principle for new technologies in space exploration/exploitation.
- Develop and implement communication tools to provide open and transparent information on ethical challenges and responsible approaches to enable key stakeholders and public trust.

Area 3: Mapping and promoting inclusive gender equality and policies in R&D intensive firms

Enhancing knowledge, awareness, and access to actionable strategies to improve gender equality and inclusiveness in R&D firms.

ERA policy: contributes to ERA Structural Policy "Strengthening gender equality and inclusiveness in the ERA"

Expected outcomes:

- Deeper understanding of inclusive gender equality policies and practices in R&D-intensive firms;
- Enhanced knowledge of methods and strategies to overcome the barriers hindering the implementation of such policies;
- Access to tailored capacity building, tools, and resources for R&D intensive firms.

Target groups:

- Research performing organisations
- Higher education organisations
- Other R&I stakeholders (networks, etc.)
- Participation of private sector organisations, including R&D intensive firms, is encouraged

Area 3: Mapping and promoting inclusive gender equality and policies in R&D intensive firms

Key elements in scope:

- Proposals are invited to focus on specific (sub)fields of research and development with persisting gender and diversity gaps, focusing in particular on small and medium-sized enterprises, start-ups, and scale-ups.
- Activities proposals should address:
  - Map inclusive gender equality policies and practices in R&D intensive firms;
  - Explore methods and strategies to enhance the engagement of these firms in actions aimed at increasing the participation of underrepresented groups;
  - Develop and disseminate capacity building, tools, and resources.

Area 4: Advancing gender-responsive R&I through budgeting, expenditure tracking, and evaluation of the sex and/or gender analysis in R&I content

Provide guidance and tools for gender budgeting and expenditure tracking in R&I, and for comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of the integration of gender dimension in R&I content.

ERA policy: contributes to ERA Structural Policy "Strengthening gender equality and inclusiveness in the ERA"

Expected outcomes:

- Improved capacity to systematically monitor, evaluate and strengthen the integration of the gender dimension, including intersectional perspective, in R&I content;
- Developed standardised principles, methodologies and tools for gender-responsive budgeting and expenditure tracking;
- Transparent reporting and improved access to high-quality data.

Target groups:

- Research performing and funding organisations
- Higher education institutions
- Research infrastructures
- Public bodies

Area 4: Advancing gender-responsive R&I through budgeting, expenditure tracking, and evaluation of the sex and/or gender analysis in R&I content

Key elements in scope:

Proposals should include:

- Review existing knowledge, frameworks and practices;
- Develop, *with an intersectional approach*:
  - guidelines, criteria, and metrics to assess and guide the integration of gender dimension in R&I content;
  - principles for gender budgeting and expenditure tracking in R&I, including a standardised methodology;
- Design monitoring and reporting mechanisms;
- Cooperate with key stakeholders, employ engagement activities and participatory approaches, build capacity and foster mutual learning.

Area 5: Assessing trends and effects of research careers in the private sector and of inter-sectoral research careers

Generate new knowledge on research careers in the private sector, on inter-sectoral research careers, and their effects on knowledge diffusion.

ERA policy: contributes to ERA Structural Policy "Making research careers more attractive and sustainable and support mobility"

Expected outcomes:

- Improved knowledge regarding the structure and development of research careers in the private business sector and of careers that deploy across various sectors;
- Better awareness of the types of knowledge flows triggered by inter-sectoral mobility and careers.

Target groups: Research performing and funding organisations, universities, researchers, in cooperation with business sector actors.

Area 5: Assessing trends and effects of research careers in the private sector and of inter-sectoral research careers

Key elements in scope:

Proposals should aim at building new evidence to support informed policymaking to

- foster the interoperability of research careers across sectors and countries;
- broaden the spectrum of research career opportunities.

Proposals should conduct quantitative and/or qualitative analyses to:

- Analyse the logics underpinning research careers in the private sector, and those spanning over private and public sectors;
- Analyse the role played by research careers in the private sector and by intersectoral careers in diffusing and valorising knowledge across the ERA.

Area 6: Mapping international research careers and talent flows

Increase knowledge regarding the inter-relation between international stable research collaboration networks, international research careers and knowledge and talent inflow in the EU.

ERA policy: contributes to ERA Structural Policy "Making research careers more attractive and sustainable and support mobility"

Expected outcomes:

- Better understanding of the international dimension of research careers, spanning across the EU and the rest of the world;
- Improved knowledge of the inter-dependence between international research careers and international research collaboration networks.

Target groups:

- Research performing organisations
- Universities
- Researchers

Area 6: Mapping international research careers and talent flows

Key elements in scope:

Proposals should explore and explain whether:

- International research communities and networks provide the scope for research careers that deploy internationally.
- International research careers contribute to strengthening international ties and communities.

Applicants may propose a variety of empirical approaches and strategies.

Proposals should at least address the following activities:

- Analyse the relevance of research collaboration networks involving the EU and Associated and/or third countries in shaping of research careers;
- Analyse the relevance of international careers in the development of the international collaboration ties and in encouraging knowledge flows across the EU and the rest of the world;
- Provide policy recommendations to improve the attractiveness of research careers in the EU.

Pillar IV - New knowledge for ERA

Upgrading the EU’s independent knowledge on China's Science, Technology and Innovation system

HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-ERA-05

GAETANI DELL'AQUILA D'ARAGONA Gianandrea
RTD.04 - International Cooperation - Asia, Pacific, Africa and the Middle East

European Commission

Expected outcomes

Enhancing our ability to understand and react to China's science, technology, and innovation ambitions.

ERA policy: contributes to ERA Structural Policy "Implementing the Global Approach to R&I cooperation"

Expected outcomes:

- Improved understanding and monitoring of China's science, technology and innovation (STI) system to support the development of strategic foresight and evidence-based policies;
- Development of innovative interdisciplinary approaches and methodologies to assess critical technology areas where China has achieved or is expected to achieve breakthroughs;
- A well-connected network of experts on China's STI ecosystem.

Target groups:

- Universities
- Think tanks
- Policy-makers

Call opening / closing:
8 December 2026 / 11 March 2027

Type of action: RIA

Budget: EUR 3 million

Indicative number of projects: 1

Funding approach: Lump sum

Scope

Key elements:

- Generate new and compiling existing knowledge, tools, and resources on developments in China's STI policies, legal framework, government structures, narratives, and strategies for international collaborations;
- Evaluate impact on European economic security, strategic autonomy, and on the EU's ability to achieve the objectives of the Competitiveness Compass;
- Ensure collaborations between China experts and technical experts (e.g., engineers, technology experts, economists, legal experts);
- Involve young EU researchers;
- Synergies with past and existing projects on upgrading China knowledge in the EU.

More information

- ✓ See all calls and topics: Horizon Europe | WIDERA Work Programme 2026-2027
- ✓ Ask questions about research and Horizon Europe: Research Enquiry Service (europa.eu)
- ✓ Submit your proposal: Funding & Tenders Portal | European Commission
- ✓ Build project consortia: ERA Brokerage Event – 17 December 2025

Thank you for your participation!

Thank you

European Commission