



Towards EU research funding

How to prepare a “winning” proposal under Cluster 1 Health
March 2024

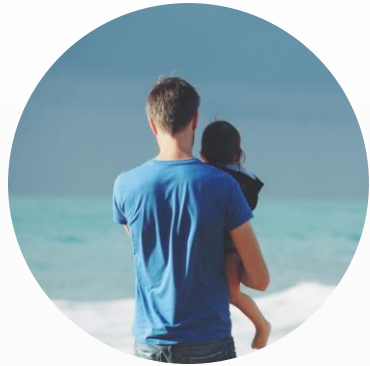
David Gancberg

***HaDEA-Unit A.3 - Health Research
Head of Sector Health innovation and
Eco-systems***

Introduction to HaDEA

- The **European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA)** is an executive agency established by the European Commission, operational since 1 April 2021.
- Executive agencies are set up and supported by the EC to manage funding programmes on its behalf.
- **HaDEA implements specific funding programmes related to health, digital, food safety, industry and space.**
- The **total budget** managed by HaDEA **>€20 billion over 2021-2027.**

Programmes managed by HaDEA



Health

EU4Health
Horizon Europe –
Health



Food

Single Market
Programme
(SMP): Food
Safety



Digital

Horizon Europe –
Digital
Connecting Europe
Facility – Digital
Digital Europe
Programme



Industry

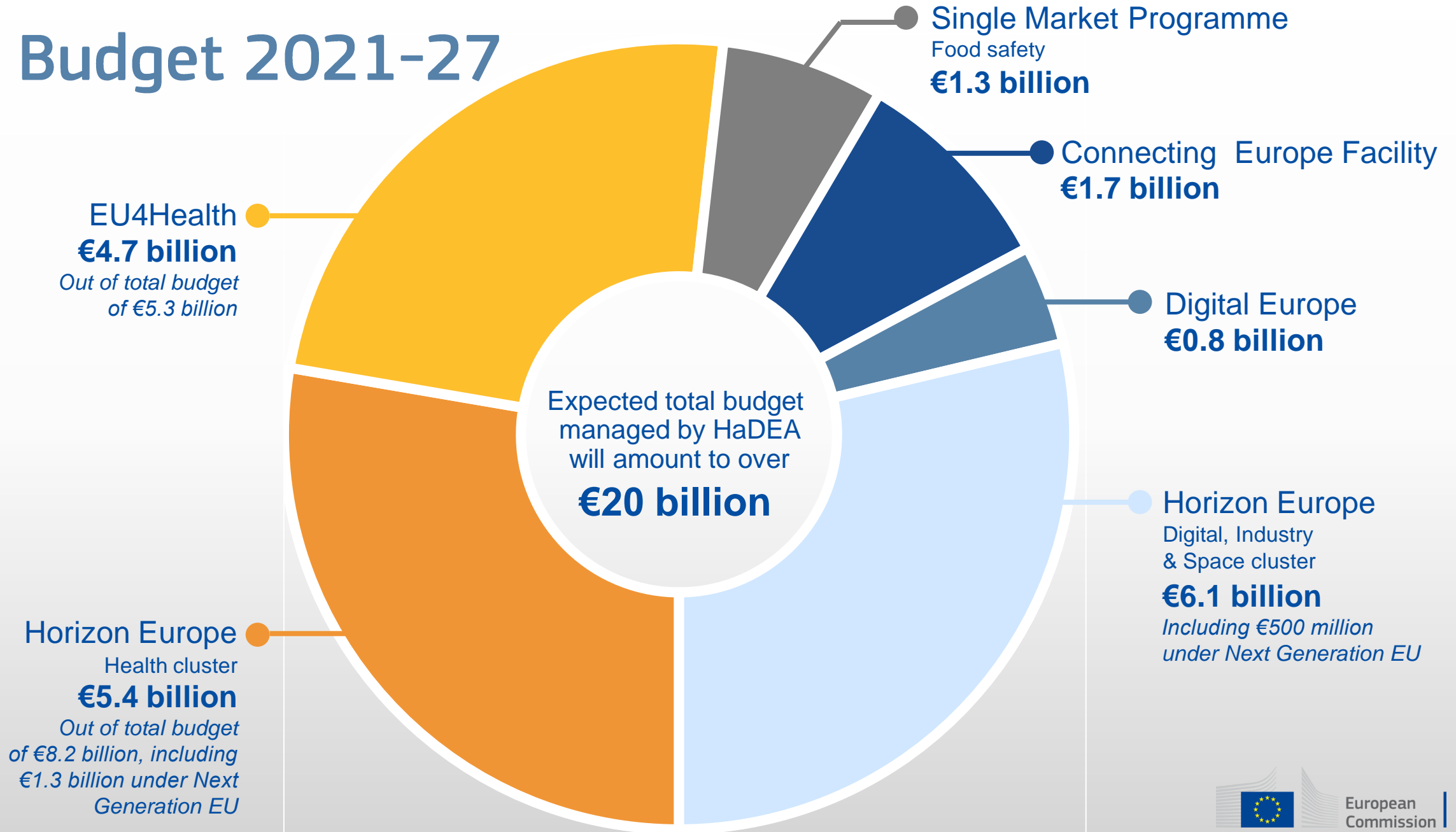
Horizon Europe –
Industry



Space

Horizon Europe –
Space

Budget 2021-27



Cooperation with the European Commission

European Commission

Defines policy

- Defines strategy, objectives and priority areas / work programmes
- Makes programme decisions
- Selects projects for funding (on the basis of the evaluations)
- Evaluates the programme implementation and the Agency's performance

HaDEA

Turns policy into action

- Manages the project lifecycle:
 - Organises calls for proposals & evaluations
 - Prepares Grant Agreements and monitors the implementation of projects
- Supports communication activities (Info days, publications, social media, etc.)
- Provides feedback to policy making

Directorates-General of the European Commission



HaDEA actions

In short, for **Horizon Europe**, HaDEA:

- launches the calls for proposals for HE Cluster 1 – Health (and Cluster 4), as well as for the Cancer Mission;
 - organises the evaluation of proposals by independent experts;
 - prepares the Grant Agreements (GA) with the consortia of short-listed proposals; and subsequently monitors the entire lifecycle of projects
-
- **for Horizon 2020: 306 projects** still ongoing
 - **for Horizon Europe: (Cluster 1 + Cancer Mission): 391 projects** ongoing + **7** proposals from reserve lists in Grant Agreement Preparation

Average grant size: ~€ 8 million, mainly Research & Innovation Actions



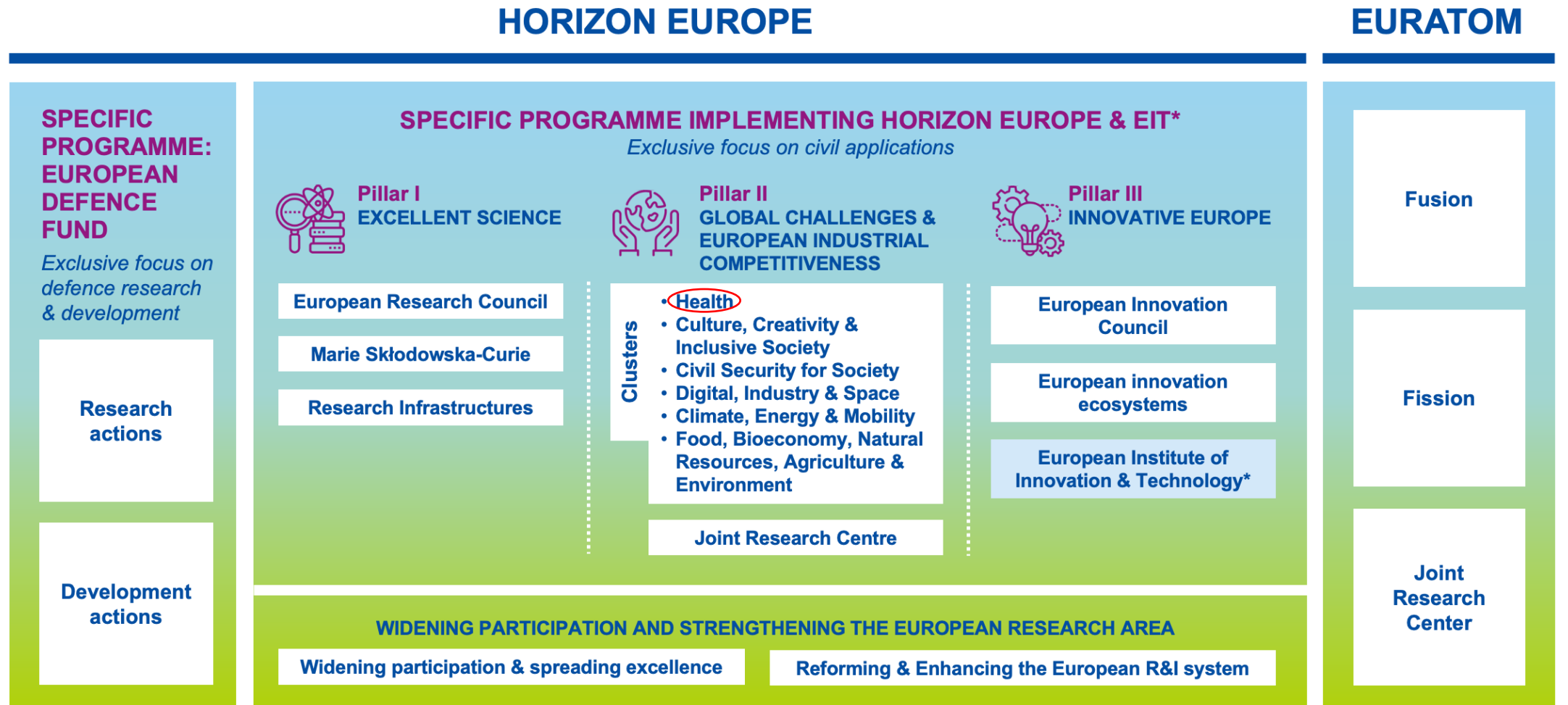
Horizon Europe Health

Horizon Europe Health generates new knowledge and develops innovative solutions to protect people's health and wellbeing

[Horizon Europe – Health research video](#)

Horizon Europe

Horizon Europe supports research and innovation through Work Programmes, which set out funding opportunities for research and innovation activities.

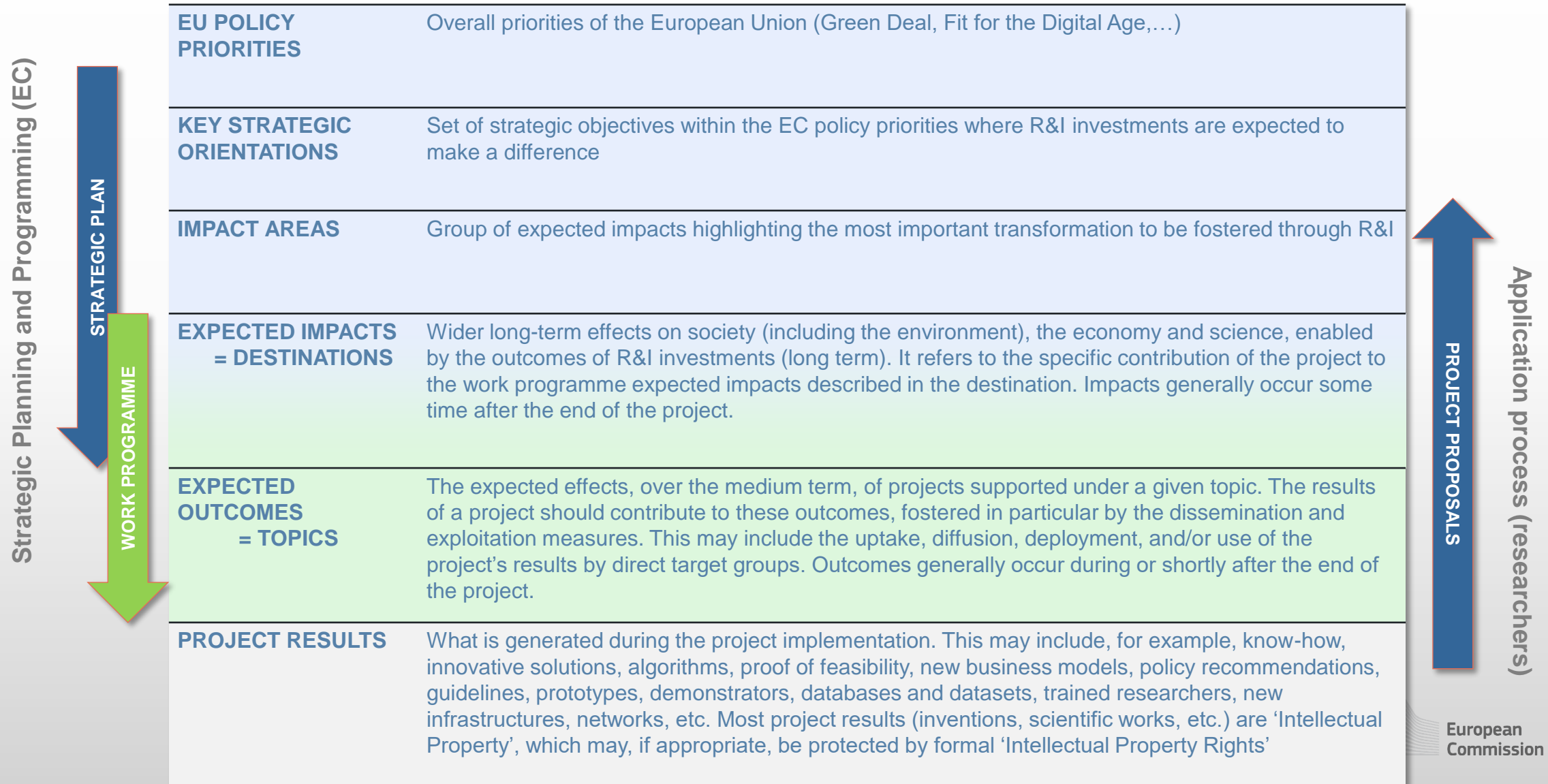


* The European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) is not part of the Specific Programme

Horizon Europe Work Programme

- Horizon Europe is implemented through **work programmes** which set out funding opportunities mainly through **calls for proposals**.
- A call for proposal will normally contain one or more **topics** with a common deadline. The budget of the call is distributed among topics. Where topics share a budget envelope, proposals for these topics will be competing against each other and will result in a single ranking list.
- Applicants **apply to a specific call and topic**.
- Each topic to which applicants can apply will include:
 - The topic **scope**
 - The topic **expected outcome**
 - The **expected impact** of the destination to which the topic belongs
 - The **type of action**
 - The topic **budget** (or budget shared by group of topics)

Link between policy priorities and project results



Health Research – Horizon Europe (2021-27)

- **Health cluster “destinations”:**
 1. Staying healthy in a rapidly changing society
 2. Living and working in a health-promoting environment
 3. Tackling diseases and reducing disease burden
 4. Ensuring access to innovative, sustainable and high-quality health care
 5. Unlocking the full potential of new tools, technologies and digital solutions for a healthy society
 6. Maintaining an innovative, sustainable and globally competitive health industry
- **Cancer Mission objectives:**
 - to understand cancer, its risk factors and impact;
 - to prevent what is preventable;
 - to optimise diagnostics and treatment;
 - and to support the quality of life of people living with and after cancer, while ensuring equitable access for all.

Calls for proposals 2023-2024

2024 Cluster 1 calls for proposals

- **Two-stage calls**, 9 topics*
Deadline: 19 Sept. 2023 & 11 April 2024
EU indicative budget: €320 million
- **Single-stage call** (3 destinations), 5 topics
Deadline: 11 April 2024
indicative EU budget: €89 million

2024 Cancer Mission call for proposals:

- Work programme **to be published in late April 2024.**

* “blind evaluation” at first stage and “lump sum” funding mechanisms

Funding collaborative research in HE – basic principles

- Annual work programmes published or updated each year
- Funding collaborative pan-European research projects.
- Min. 3 independent legal entities from 3 different EU Member States (min 1) or associated countries
- Partners from 3rd countries can be included
- Single-stage OR two-stage application process
- Peer review by panels of independent experts;
3 evaluation criteria (Excellence, Impact, Implementation)
- Ethics screening
- Grant Agreement Preparation: max. 8 months from submission to signing grant agreement,
eg 2023 calls: deadline 13 April, notification of results ~4 August, signature by 13 December.
- Reporting on scientific progress and admin/financial aspects
(every 12 or 18 months)

Funding rates for grants

- Research and Innovation Actions* ([RIA](#)): up to 100% for all organisations
- Innovation Actions* ([IA](#)): up to 70% for for-profit organisations and 100% for non-profit organisations
- Coordination and Support Actions* ([CSA](#)): up to 100% for all organisations
- Co-funded Partnership* (COFUND) : 30% or 50% (depending on topic) for all organisations

* Indirect costs included as a flat rate of 25% of the direct eligible costs

Critical steps

- Identify suitable funding types and topic(s) early and ensure thorough understanding.
- Develop a good understanding of the state of the art and of previously funded projects (e.g. see <https://cordis.europa.eu/projects>)
- Find partners, bringing together all necessary competences and resources
- Create an EU Login account to log in on the Portal
- Register an organisation (or check if your organisation has participated before):
<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/participant-register>
- “How to participate” – key steps
<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/how-to-participate/1>

Other forms of participation:

- Becoming an expert evaluator
<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/work-as-an-expert>

Resources – key information (1)

- **Cluster 1 (Health) work programme 2023-2024**
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2023-2024/wp-4-health_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf
- **Missions work programme 2023**
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2023-2024/wp-12-missions_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf
- **Research Enquiry Service** – ask questions about any aspect of European research in general and the EU Research Framework Programmes in particular
https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/contact/research-enquiry-service_en
- **Funding & tender opportunities Portal**
<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/horizon>
- **Funding & tender opportunities Portal – FAQ**
<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/faq>

Resources – key information (2)

- **Horizon Europe Programme Guide** - detailed guidance to structure, budget and political priorities of Horizon Europe.
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/programme-guide_horizon_en.pdf
- **Online Manual** - guide on procedures from proposal submission to managing a grant.
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/om_en.pdf
- **Partners search facility**
<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/partner-search>
- **National Contact Points (NCPs)**
<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/ncp>
- **Infodays**

Resources - webinars

- A successful proposal for Horizon Europe: Scientific-technical excellence is key, but don't forget the other aspects (21 April 2021)
<https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/other/event210421.htm>
- Webinar: How to prepare a successful proposal in Horizon Europe (24 March 2021)
<https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/other/event210324.htm>
- Lump Sum Funding in Horizon Europe: How does it work? How to write a proposal? (20 Oct. 2022)
<https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/other/event221020.htm>
- The Gender Equality Plan eligibility criterion in Horizon Europe: Who is concerned? How to comply with it? (23 June 2022)
<https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/other/event220623.htm>

Infodays

- Cluster 1 (Health) infoday for **2024** work programme – **May 2024 (details to be announced)**

Infoday – organisation

Missions infoday for 2023 work programme (17-18 January 2023)

- Organised by EC, **Cancer session 17 January 14:00-16:00**
- Further details on website:
<https://research-innovation-community.ec.europa.eu/events/1nVczf9ihgPdOg3zyoLyuC/overview>

Cluster 1 (Health) infoday (19 January 2023)

- Organised by EC & HaDEA
- Introduction by EC Directorate Generals & HaDEA
- Pre-recorded destination & topic presentations
- Live Q&A sessions for each destination covering the 2023 topics
- Further details on website:
<https://research-innovation-community.ec.europa.eu/events/2zRJJQrlddbL7rCrlJbBN4I/overview>

Infoday – programme

Cluster 1 (Health) infoday (19 January 2023)

- Pre-recorded destination & WP 2023 topic presentations (view before the event):
 - Destination 1 (1 topic): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qPDIjNmrm9M> (8 minutes)
 - Destination 2 (4 topics): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNUjZUEpcqA> (13 minutes)
 - Destination 3 (8 topics): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BAiO7nvUZZM> (25 minutes)
 - Destination 4 (3 topics): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-X9T30KXnw> (10 minutes)
 - Destination 5 (6 topics): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jwrRQ1Ue6ss> (12 minutes)
 - Destination 6 (5 topics): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_7f7HrflyY (14 minutes)
- 09:00-09:40 - Introduction by EC Directorate Generals & HaDEA
- 09:40-10:40 - Cross-cutting issues
- 11:00-12:00 - Live Q&A sessions for destinations 1 & 2
- 12:50-17:20 - Live Q&A sessions for destinations 3 to 6

Brokerage event – organisation & programme

Online brokerage event (20 January 2023)

- Organised by the HE Cluster 1 National Contact Points through the HNN3.0 initiative.
- Free of charge, but registration and profile activation are mandatory to attend.
- When registering, please include at least 1 Project Cooperation in the Marketplace section with information on the expertise you are offering or you are looking for against the topic(s) of your interest.
- Programme:
 - 09:30-11:30 - Pitching Session
 - 12:30-17:30 - Bilateral Meetings
- Further guidance on web site:
<https://cluster-health-horizon-europe-brokerage2023.b2match.io/>

Cluster 1 (Health) calls – success rates

2021 calls for proposals

Success rates

- **Emergency Covid call**
10 projects funded / 57 eligible proposals
- **2021 main call**
107 projects funded / 552 eligible proposals

➤ 17.5%

➤ 19.4%

2022 calls for proposals

Success rates

- **2022 Single-stage call**
61 projects funded* / 295 eligible proposals
- **2022 Two-stage call**
54 projects short-listed* / 170 eligible proposals

➤ 20.7%

➤ 31.8%

* additional projects may be added from reserve lists

Cluster 1 (Health) calls – success rates

2023 calls for proposals

Success rates

- **7 calls – 28 topics**

97 projects funded * / 490 eligible proposals

➤ 19.8%

* additional projects may be added from reserve lists

2024 – first stage of two-stage calls for proposals

Success rates

- **5 calls- 9 topics**

1002 proposals submitted/138 invited to stage 2

➤ 7.3%



Admissibility & eligibility checks

Admissibility is checked by EU staff.

- Applications must be **complete** and contain all parts and mandatory annexes and supporting documents.
- Applications must be **readable, accessible and printable**.

Substantial reduction in maximum length:

- **RIAs and IAs: limit for a full application is 45 pages**
- **CSAs: limit is 30 pages**
- **COFUND: limit is 70 pages**

Eligibility is checked by EU staff.

Eligible activities are the ones described in the call conditions.

- Minimum number of partners as set out in the call conditions (at least one independent legal entity established in a MS, and, at least two other independent legal entities established either in a MS or AC).



Evaluation (award) criteria

Three evaluation criteria

‘**Excellence**’, ‘**Impact**’ and ‘**Quality and efficiency of the implementation**’.

- Evaluation criteria are **adapted** to each **type of action**, as specified in the WP
- Each criterion includes the ‘**aspects to be taken into account**’. The same aspect is not included in different criteria, so it is not assessed twice.
- **Open Science** practices are assessed as part of the scientific methodology in the excellence criterion.



Evaluation criteria (RIAs and IAs)

Research and innovation action (RIA)

Activities to establish new knowledge or to explore the feasibility of a new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution.

This may include basic and applied research, technology development and integration, testing, demonstration and validation of a small-scale prototype in a laboratory or simulated environment.

Innovation action (IA)

Activities to produce plans and arrangements or designs for new, altered or improved products, processes or services.

These activities may include prototyping, testing, demonstrating, piloting, large-scale product validation and market replication.

EXCELLENCE

- ✓ Clarity and pertinence of the **project's objectives**, and the extent to which the proposed work is ambitious, and goes beyond the state-of-the-art.
- ✓ Soundness of the proposed **methodology**, including the underlying concepts, models, assumptions, interdisciplinary approaches, appropriate consideration of the **gender dimension** in research and innovation content, and the quality of **open science practices** including sharing and management of research outputs and engagement of citizens, civil society and end users where appropriate.

IMPACT

- ✓ Credibility of the **pathways** to achieve the expected **outcomes and impacts** specified in the work programme, and the likely scale and significance of the contributions due to the project.
- ✓ Suitability and quality of the **measures to maximize expected outcomes and impacts**, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities.

QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION

- ✓ Quality and effectiveness of the **work plan**, assessment of risks, and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages, and the resources overall.
- ✓ Capacity and role of each **participant**, and extent to which the **consortium** as a whole brings together the necessary expertise.

Proposals aspects are assessed to the extent that the proposed work is within the scope of the work programme topic



Evaluation criteria (CSAs)

Coordination
and support
actions
(CSA)

Activities that contribute to the objectives of Horizon Europe. This excludes R&I activities, except those carried out under the 'Widening participation and spreading excellence' component of the programme (part of 'Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area').

Also eligible are bottom-up coordination actions which promote cooperation between legal entities from Member States and Associated Countries to strengthen the European Research Area, and which receive no EU co-funding for research activities.

EXCELLENCE

- ✓ Clarity and pertinence of the **project's objectives**.
- ✓ **Quality of the proposed coordination** and/or support measures, including soundness of methodology.

IMPACT

- ✓ Credibility of the **pathways** to achieve the expected **outcomes and impacts** specified in the work programme, and the likely scale and significance of the contributions due to the project.
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Additional questions in the evaluation form

Evaluation form includes:

- Main part with the three **evaluation criteria** where you give comments and scores
- **Additional questions:** The evaluators are asked to take a position on additional questions linked to the selection procedure or policy considerations.

Additional questions in Horizon Europe evaluations

- Scope of the application
- Exceptional funding
- Use of human embryonic stem cells (hESC)
- Use of human embryos (hE)
- Activities not eligible for funding
- Exclusive focus on civil applications
- Do not significant harm principle
- Artificial Intelligence



Background and purpose of the ‘Clinical study/ies’ annex

- **Clinical studies** are usually **complex** but the main types of **challenges** that can hinder their timely and efficient implementation **are well-known**.
- With **appropriate planning**, securing the availability of the necessary **intelligence** and **resources**, consortia can overcome the expected challenges.
- Two intertwined **objectives**:
 - Guide applicants in **designing** scientifically **sound** and operationally **feasible** clinical studies
 - Provide a structured overview for expert evaluators on the **robustness** of various aspects of the required **planning** of clinical studies.



Definition of clinical study

For the purpose of the template, **clinical study means:**

- any systematic prospective or retrospective collection and analysis of health data obtained from individual patients or healthy persons in order to address scientific questions related to the understanding, prevention, diagnosis, monitoring or treatment of a disease, mental illness, or physical condition.

It **includes** but it is **not limited to:**

- clinical studies as defined by Regulation 536/2014 (on medicinal products),
- clinical investigation and clinical evaluation as defined by Regulation 2017/745 (on medical device)
- performance study and performance evaluation as defined by Regulation 2017/746 (on in vitro diagnostic medical devices).

Factors for success

For large collaborative EU projects success depends on:

- **Great leadership**
- **Excellent management**
- **Commitment** and **cohesion** of consortium and **dedication** of every beneficiary
- **Good, efficient and constructive working relationship** with funding agency

Pointers for good management (1)

- Read and **know your grant agreement** and the obligations you have signed up to.
- For guidance, **the participant portal** and **the Annotated Model Grant Agreement**, contains most answers to many questions.
- **Communicate regularly with your PO**, especially if facing a difficulty, using the communication portal as much and as soon as possible.
- **Communicate early** with your PO, for instance if you see a problem emerging.

Pointers for good management (2)

- **Fulfil administrative and financial reporting obligations in a timely manner.**
- **Get ready for the regular project monitoring** for each reporting period.
- **Project reviews** may be carried out by external reviewers, this is a normal procedure (not an audit, nor special treatment for problematic cases); it is beneficial to the project.
- **Keep your project on track timewise** – extensions will only granted exceptionally.

Pointers for good management (3)

- **Addressing Ethics requirements** is a mandatory part of your research, Ethics issues can block payments.
- **Amendments need to be carefully planned and launched in a timely manner.**
- **An amendment will block the reporting period and conversely.** So, consult your Project Officer before submitting an amendment.
- **Online manual for grant management:**
<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/funding-tenders-opportunities/display/OM/Online+Manual>

Grant management

Keeping records

Amendments

Reports & payment requests

Deliverables & milestones

Dissemination & exploitation

Communicating your project

Acknowledgement of EU funding

Checks, audits, reviews & investigations

Thank you



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Glossary of terms

Impacts	Wider long term effects on society (including the environment), the economy and science, enabled by the outcomes of R&I investments (long term). It refers to the specific contribution of the project to the work programme expected impacts described in the destination. Impacts generally occur some time after the end of the project.
Objectives	The goals of the work performed within the project, in terms of its research and innovation content. This will be translated into the project's results. These may range from tackling specific research questions, demonstrating the feasibility of an innovation, sharing knowledge among stakeholders on specific issues. The nature of the objectives will depend on the type of action, and the scope of the topic.
Outcomes	The expected effects, over the medium term, of projects supported under a given topic. The results of a project should contribute to these outcomes, fostered in particular by the dissemination and exploitation measures. This may include the uptake, diffusion, deployment, and/or use of the project's results by direct target groups. Outcomes generally occur during or shortly after the end of the project.
Pathway to impact	Logical steps towards the achievement of the expected impacts of the project over time, in particular beyond the duration of a project. A pathway begins with the projects' results, to their dissemination, exploitation and communication, contributing to the expected outcomes in the work programme topic, and ultimately to the wider scientific, economic and societal impacts of the work programme destination.
Research output	Results generated by the action to which access can be given in the form of scientific publications, data or other engineered outcomes and processes such as software, algorithms, protocols and electronic notebooks.
Results	What is generated during the project implementation. This may include, for example, know-how, innovative solutions, algorithms, proof of feasibility, new business models, policy recommendations, guidelines, prototypes, demonstrators, databases and datasets, trained researchers, new infrastructures, networks, etc. Most project results (inventions, scientific works, etc.) are 'Intellectual Property', which may, if appropriate, be protected by formal 'Intellectual Property Rights'.