



EN

Horizon Europe
Work Programme 2021-2022

1. General Introduction

(European Commission Decision C(2021)1940 of 31 March 2021)

General introduction

Welcome to Horizon Europe!

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

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

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

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

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

The COVID-19 outbreak was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020 and as of 11 March 2020 characterised as a global pandemic. One year later, this pandemic is still not under control. While vaccines are now becoming available and being used, COVID-19 variants are increasingly of concern – because of their effect on transmissibility, severity of disease and vaccine effectiveness. As outlined in the Commission’s recent Communication ‘HERA Incubator: Anticipating together the threat of COVID-19 variants’¹, an additional concerted EU effort is therefore needed to further speed up the process of understanding the occurrence and spread of variants and their effect on disease severity and vaccine effectiveness.

In response, this work programme comprises an emergency package of EUR 123 million, covering the following elements:

- Infrastructures
 - Provide innovative and customised research infrastructure services, including the provision of relevant integrated data, to enable research linked to identifying, assessing and combatting newly emerging variants and to help monitoring variant spread.
- Health
 - Support for the development of large scale, COVID19 cohorts and networks beyond Europe’s borders, forging links with European initiatives as a global response to the pandemic;
 - Conduct of vaccine and therapeutic trials to boost prevention and further inform public health policy and clinical management.

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

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

¹ COM(2021) 78 final of 17 February 2021

What you will find in this Work Programme

This special first work programme will contain the following parts;

- This General introduction
- Research Infrastructures
- Health
- General Annexes, which set out rules that apply across the work programme. These include the standard admissibility conditions and eligibility criteria, selection and award criteria, etc.

Getting started

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

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