Funding opportunities

Types of calls
Lessons on how to read a project call and how to answer the call requests, including examples

Edyta Woźniak

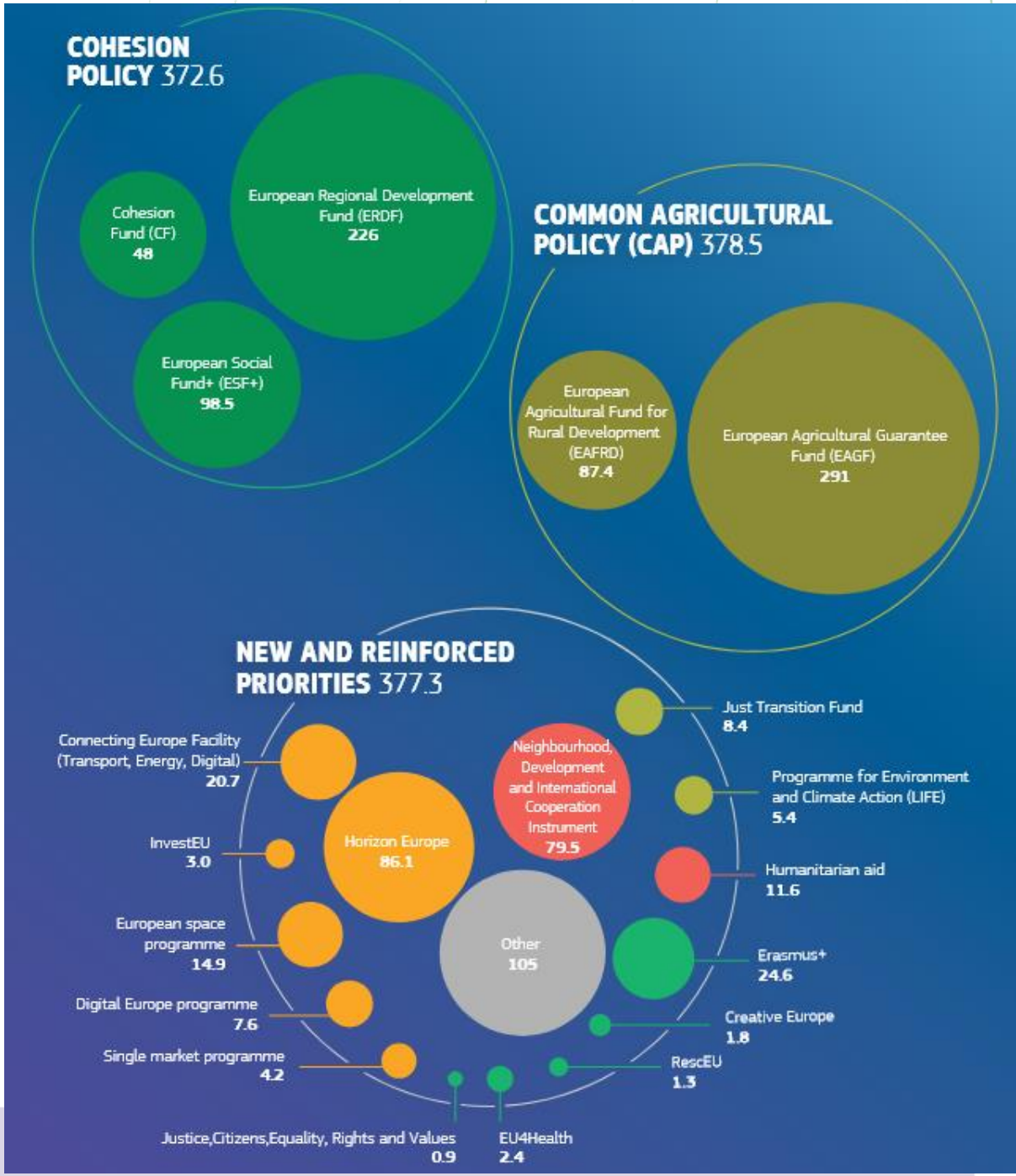
IR0000032 – ITINERIS, Italian Integrated Environmental Research Infrastructures System
(D.D. n. 130/2022 - CUP B53C22002150006) Funded by EU - Next Generation EU PNRR-Mission 4 “Education and Research” - Component 2: “From research to business” - Investment 3.1: “Fund for the realisation of an integrated system of research and innovation infrastructures”

Finanziato dall'Unione europea NextGenerationEU
Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca
Italiadomani

EU Multiannual Financial Framework

32 Funding Programs in the period 2021-2027

- **Horizon Europe:** Focuses on research and innovation
- **LIFE:** Funds projects related to climate action and the environment
- **Interreg:** Supports cross-border cooperation between regions
- **Erasmus+:** Supports education, training, youth, and sport
- **Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL):** aims to accelerate the recovery and drive the digital transformation of Europe
- **Innovation Fund (INNOVFUND):** to invest in cutting-edge low-carbon technologies and support Europe's transition to climate neutrality
- **European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF):** helps achieve sustainable fisheries, conserve marine biological resources



Types of grants in the European Union

Action Grants - intended to help achieve a European Union policy objective

Operating Grants - the operation (i.e. the running costs) of a body which has an objective forming part of, and supporting, a European Union policy

Types of Actions

Research and Innovation Actions (RIA) – aiming to establish new knowledge and/or to explore the feasibility of a new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution

Innovation Actions (IA) - developing plans or designs for new or improved products, processes, or services, including prototyping, testing, demonstrating, and market replication

Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) - to improve cooperation and coordination between different entities, facilitate networking, dissemination of information, and policy dialogue

Programme Co-fund Actions (COFUND) - provide co-funding for European partnerships that bring together public and private partners

Technology Readiness Level (TRL)

- a systematic method for assessing the maturity of a technology during the acquisition phase of a program
- ranging from basic research to successful deployment
- a scale of 1 to 9

Source: twi-global.com

Key differences among RIA, IA, and CSA

	RIA	IA	CSA
Purpose and Scope	Exploratory research and knowledge generation	Developing, demonstrating, and validating near-market solutions, aiming for deployment and commercialization	Coordinating, supporting, and facilitating activities
Type of Activities	Fundamental or applied research, concept proofs, early validation	Prototype refinement, demonstration in relevant environments, market preparation	Networking, policy dialogue, dissemination, training, capacity building
Funding Rates	Up to 100 percent for direct costs for all beneficiaries	Up to 70 percent for direct costs for for-profit entities, and up to 100 percent for non-profit entities	Up to 100 percent of direct costs for all beneficiaries
TRL	TRL 2 to TRL 5 or 6	TRL 5 or 6 up to TRL 8	Not directly applicable
Expected Impact	Scientific knowledge, novel methods, or proof-of-concept technologies	Near-market innovations and accelerates commercial or societal uptake	Coordination, policy alignment, or the exploitation of research results
Consortium Composition	Led by universities or research institutes, involving diverse partners	Companies (leading the project), research institutions and end users as partners	Led by entities specialized in networking, policy, or coordination (industry associations, public authorities, or research organizations)
Outputs and Deliverables	Scientific papers, patents, prototypes, pilot demonstrations in controlled settings	Demonstration of advanced prototypes or products in operational environments, market analyses, business plans, and exploitation strategies	Reports, policy recommendations, training modules, best practice guidelines, networking events, stakeholder platforms

Horizon Europe

- EU research & innovation framework programme for 2021-2027 with a budget of **€95.5 billion**
- Horizon Europe goals:
  - to strengthen the EU's scientific and technological bases and the European Research Area (ERA)
  - to boost Europe's innovation capacity, competitiveness and jobs
  - to deliver on citizen's priorities and sustain our socio-economic model and values
- focusing on creation of **societal and economic impact**, the European **Green Deal**, the **digital and sustainability transition** and **recovery from the coronavirus-crisis**.

Horizon Europe overview

SPECIFIC PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTING HORIZON EUROPE & EIT*

Exclusive focus on civil applications

Pillar I
EXCELLENT SCIENCE

- European Research Council
- Marie Skłodowska-Curie
- Research Infrastructures

Pillar II
GLOBAL CHALLENGES & EUROPEAN INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS

Clusters

- Health
- Culture, Creativity & Inclusive Society
- Civil Security for Society
- Digital, Industry & Space
- Climate, Energy & Mobility
- Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture & Environment

Joint Research Centre

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INNOVATIVE EUROPE

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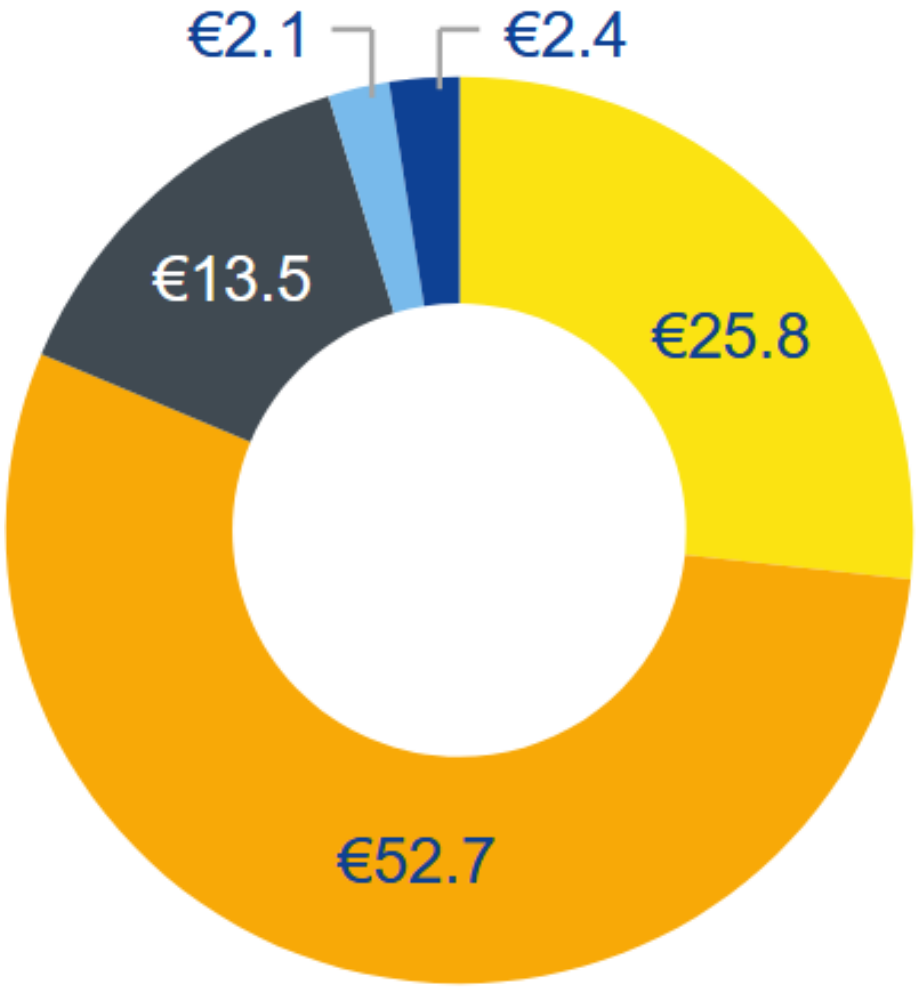
WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND STRENGTHENING THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA

- Widening participation & spreading excellence
- Reforming & Enhancing the European R&I system

Horizon Europe budget structure (2021-2027)



€ billion
In current prices

- Excellent Science
- Global Challenges & European Ind. Comp.
- Innovative Europe
- Widening Part. & ERA
- Euratom

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Modalities of the participation

Collaborative projects

- Research and Innovation Action (RIA)
- Coordination and Support Action (CSA)
- Innovation Action (IA)
- Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) - Staff Exchanges (SE), Co-funding of regional, national and international programmes (COFUND)
- EU Missions
- EU Partnerships

Individual projects

- European Research Council (ERC)
- Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA); Postdoctoral Fellowships

Pillar I - Excellent Science

Reinforcing and extending the excellence of the Union's science base

European Research Council

Frontier research by the best researchers and their teams

€16 billion

Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions

Equipping researchers with new knowledge and skills through mobility and training

€6.6 billion

Research Infrastructures

Integrated and inter-connected world-class research infrastructures

€2.4 billion

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European Research Council

ITINERIS

- ERC aims to
  - Support **the best of the best in Europe** across all fields of science, scholarship and engineering
  - Promote wholly **investigator-driven, or 'bottom-up' frontier research**
  - Encourage the work of the established and **next generation of independent top research leaders in Europe**
  - Reward innovative proposals by placing **emphasis on the quality of the idea** rather than the research area
  - Raise the status and visibility of European frontier research and the very best researchers of today and tomorrow

erc
European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

European Research Council - Key figures

- Budget: € 16 billion (2021-2027) - 17% of the overall Horizon Europe budget
- Since 2007, ERC funded more than 17 000 projects and over 10 000 researchers. It evaluated more than 130 000 research proposals.
- Each ERC grantee employs on average 7 team members. Currently over 75 000 postdocs, PhD students and other staff are working in their research teams.
- ERC projects have so far led to over 2 200 patents and other IPR applications and ERC grantees founded or co-founded over 400 start-ups
- More than 200 000 articles published in scientific journals
- 14 Nobel Prizes, 7 Fields Medals, 11 Wolf Prizes and dozens of important prizes awarded to ERC grantees
- Over 850 research institutions are hosting ERC grantees who hold more than 97 nationalities

For more information about ERC project - dashboard

Principles of ERC Funding

- **Excellence is the sole criterion** on the basis of which ERC frontier research grants are awarded
- Applications can be made in **any field of research**
- Independent researchers of **any age and career stage** can apply for attractive long-term funding
- Principal Investigators **from anywhere in the world** can apply for an ERC grant
- **Host institutions must provide appropriate conditions** for the Principal Investigator to independently direct the research and manage its funding
- **Open science**
- **Resubmission restrictions**

For more information about ERC principles

ERC Domains and Panels

- **Physical Sciences and Engineering (PE)** - includes areas like physics, chemistry, mathematics, and engineering
- **Life Sciences (LS)** - encompasses biology, medicine, and related fields
- **Social Sciences and Humanities (SH)** - covers areas like economics, sociology, history, and philosophy

ERC Panels Structure

Life Sciences

- LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures and Functions
- LS2 Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems
- LS3 Cell Biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration
- LS4 Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing
- LS5 Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System
- LS6 Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy
- LS7 Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Diseases
- LS8 Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution
- LS9 Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering

Physical Sciences and Engineering

- PE1 Mathematics
- PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter
- PE3 Condensed Matter Physics
- PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences
- PE5 Synthetic Chemistry and Materials
- PE6 Computer Science and Informatics
- PE7 Systems and Communication Engineering
- PE8 Products and Processes Engineering
- PE9 Universe Sciences
- PE10 Earth System Science
- PE11 Materials Engineering

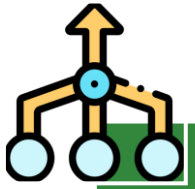
Social Sciences and Humanities

- SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations
- SH2 Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems
- SH3 The Social World and Its Interactions
- SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity
- SH5 Texts and Concepts
- SH6 The Study of the Human Past
- SH7 Human Mobility, Environment, and Space
- SH8 Studies of Cultures and Arts

Main ERC Grants

ERC Starting Grant (**StG**)

- 2-7 years after PhD
- up to € 1.5 milion for 5 years
- + up to 1 milion
- actual cost



ERC Consolidator Grant (**CoG**)

- 7-12 years after PhD
- up to € 2 milion for 5 years
- + up to 1 milion
- actual cost

ERC Advanced Grant (**AdG**)

- 10 yearstrack record after PhD
- up to € 2.5 milion for 5 years
- + up to 1 milion
- lump sum

ERC Synergy Grant (**SyG**)

- for groups of 2 to 4 Principal Investigators at any career stage
- up to € 10 milion for 6 years
- + up to 1 milion
- actual cost

Pillar I - Excellent Science

- Reinforcing and extending the excellence of the Union's science base

European Research Council

Frontier research by the best researchers and their teams

€16 billion

Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions

Equipping researchers with new knowledge and skills through mobility and training

€6.6 billion

Research Infrastructures

Integrated and inter-connected world-class research infrastructures

€2.4 billion

Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions

- Support the **mobility, training and career development** of researchers from **all over the world** through excellent doctorates, postdoctoral fellowships and collaborative projects
- Stimulating **international, inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary** cooperation. Participation of **non-academic sector**, especially industry and SMEs
- For researchers at **every stage** of their career
- Support excellent research in all domains (**bottom-up approach**)
- Promotion of **attractive working and employment** conditions (financing rate of up to 100%)
- Impacting **researcher careers, organisations, structures**

12 Nobel Prize winners either backed by or involved in the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions between 2012 and 2020

Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions

Doctoral Networks

- networks training PhD candidates
- doctoral programmes in and outside academia incl. joint & industrial doctorates

Postdoctoral Fellowships

- support to excellent postdoctoral researchers

Staff Exchanges

- support for any type of research and innovation (-related) staff exchanges

COFUND

- co-funding doctoral and postdoctoral programmes

Citizens

- public outreach events

MSCA Doctoral Networks

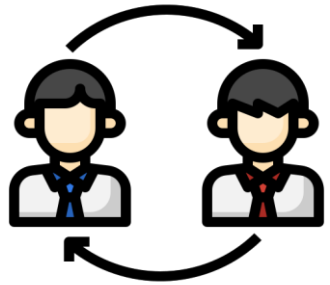
- **A unified initiative** to establish doctoral programmes that include joint and industrial degrees, incorporating career development planning, supervision, and training in both research and transferable skills
  - **Industrial Doctorates:** 1) Training in academia and industry; 2) Joint supervision
  - **Joint Doctorates:** 1) A joint/multiple doctoral degree; 2) Joint selection and supervision
- Consortia
  - **partnerships** of academic institutions and infrastructures, businesses incl. SMEs, other socio-economic actors
  - at least **three independent legal entities**, each established in a different MS or AC; minimum of 1 beneficiary from a MS
- Target group: **doctoral candidates**
- Size: **up to 360 PM (standard) + 180 additional PM for joint/industrial doctorates (incentive)**
- Duration
  - **Programme:** max. 48 months
  - **Fellow:** between 3 and 36 months
  - **Secondments:** up to 1/3 of the fellowship duration
  - **Industrial doctorates:** 50% in the non-academic sector
- Resubmission restrictions applying as of 2022 for applications receiving a **score below 80%**

MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships

- **Supporting postdoctoral research and careers**; open to researchers of **any nationality**
- Innovation through **interdisciplinary, inter-sectoral and international experience**
- Funding **all research domains (**incl. areas of the **EURATOM Treaty)**
- A single action
  - **Two destinations:** European and Global Postdoctoral Fellowships (Secondments in **any coun**
  - **Incentive** for additional period of up to 6 months **for placements in the non-academic secto**
- Duration :
  - European Fellowships: 12-24 months (additional up to 6 months for non-academic sector)
  - Global Fellowships: 24 -36 (12-24 outgoing & 12 months mandatory return phase in Europe)
- Foster the development of skills applicable to **both academic and non-academic careers**
  - Increase opportunities for training and secondments in non-academic sectors
  - Enhance support for career development through structured planning and supervision
- **Addressing growing demand** while ensuring high-quality selection and enhancing success rates
  - Limit research experience to 8 years (with exceptions)
  - Require PhD degree
  - Restrict resubmissions below quality threshold

MSCA Staff Exchanges

- Supporting exchanges of **any type of staff contributing to research activities** (researchers, administrative, technicians, infrastructure operators, etc.)
- **International, inter-sectoral, interdisciplinary** secondments
- Focus on the **added value of the collaboration** itself.
- A streamlined and adaptable instrument to support **collaborative RIA projects**
- **4 years** for project implementation
- Interdisciplinary secondments possible within Europe (max 1/3 of total secondment months)
- Number of person-months reduced to 360



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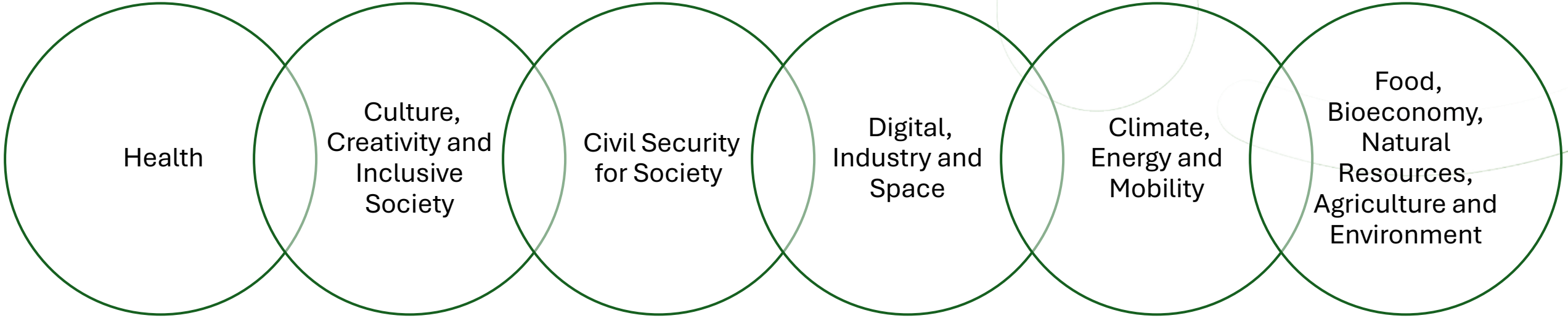
Pillar II
- Global challenges & european industrial competitiveness

- Boosting key technologies and solutions supporting EU policies & Sustainable Development Goals (6 clusters and JRC – non-nuclear direct actions)



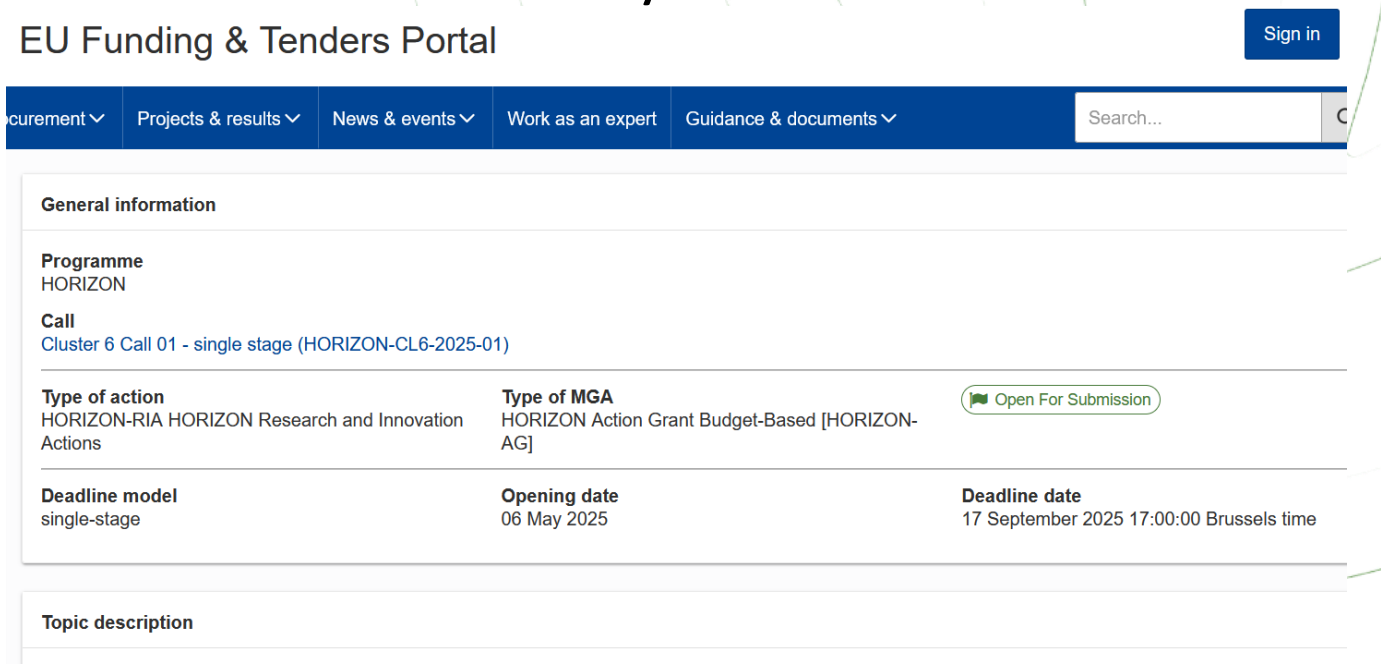
Clusters

- Health (€8.246 billion):
  - Focuses on health-related research and innovation, including disease prevention, treatment, and care.
- Culture, Creativity, and Inclusive Society (€2.280 billion):
  - Supports research on cultural heritage, social inclusion, and democratic participation.
- Civil Security for Society (€1.596 billion):
  - Addresses security challenges like cybersecurity, disaster resilience, and border management.
- Digital, Industry, and Space (€15.349 billion):
  - Covers digital technologies, industrial innovation, and space-related research.
- Climate, Energy, and Mobility (€15.123 billion):
  - Focuses on climate action, sustainable energy, and clean and smart mobility solutions.
- Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment (€8.952 billion):
  - Addresses challenges related to food systems, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture, and environmental protection.

Call description example

- HORIZON-CL6-2025-01-BIODIV-08: Strengthening pathways to alternative socio economic models for continuous improvement of biodiversity

Call: Cluster 6 Call 01 - single stage	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 14.00 million.
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Eligibility conditions	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.



- Topic description
  - Expected Outcome
  - Scope
- Topic destination
- Topic conditions and documents

EU Funding & Tenders Portal

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Joint Research Centre

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Pillar III - Innovative Europe

- Enabling disruptive **market innovations** and developing supportive innovation **ecosystems**

European Innovation Council

Support for innovations with transformative and market-shaping potential

European innovation ecosystems

Building connections with innovation actors across regional and national ecosystems

European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

Facilitating cross-sector collaboration among research, education, and business to cultivate innovation

The budget: €10.6 billion, incl. up to €527 milion for ecosystems (including NGEU – Recovery Fund parts dedicated to EIC)

circa €3 billion

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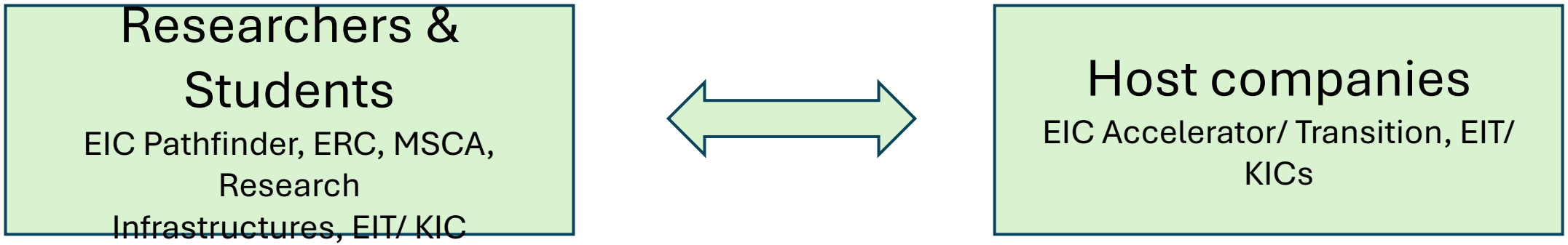
circa €3 billion

European Innovation Council

- The EIC seeks to identify and support **breakthrough technologies** and **transformative innovations** that have the potential to create **new markets** and scale globally
- To empower researchers and emerging innovators with practical experience and knowledge of the innovation journey beyond invention, while cultivating entrepreneurial skills and mindset
- To empower start-ups by giving them access to pioneering research and insights, helping fast-track the development of innovative solutions



European Innovation Council

- Expected number: 600 internships*
- Duration: 3-6 months over 2-year period
- 2 main streams
  - Deep-Tech Talents: highly specialised projects or assistance to a senior executive, open to PhD candidates and post-doctoral researchers currently working in ERC, EIC Pathfinder, MSCA, EIT and RI actions, 3-6 months;
  - Aspiring Innovators: less specialised activities, student in (and graduates from) EIT Label Masters and Doctoral programmes, EIT Alumni, EIT Jumpstarter, up to 6 months.
- Procedure for internship selection
  - Call for expression of interest to eligible companies to host internship;
  - Call for expression of interest to eligible researchers to participate in the proposed internships;
  - Application and matching between the researchers and the internship positions in the host companies

European Innovation Council

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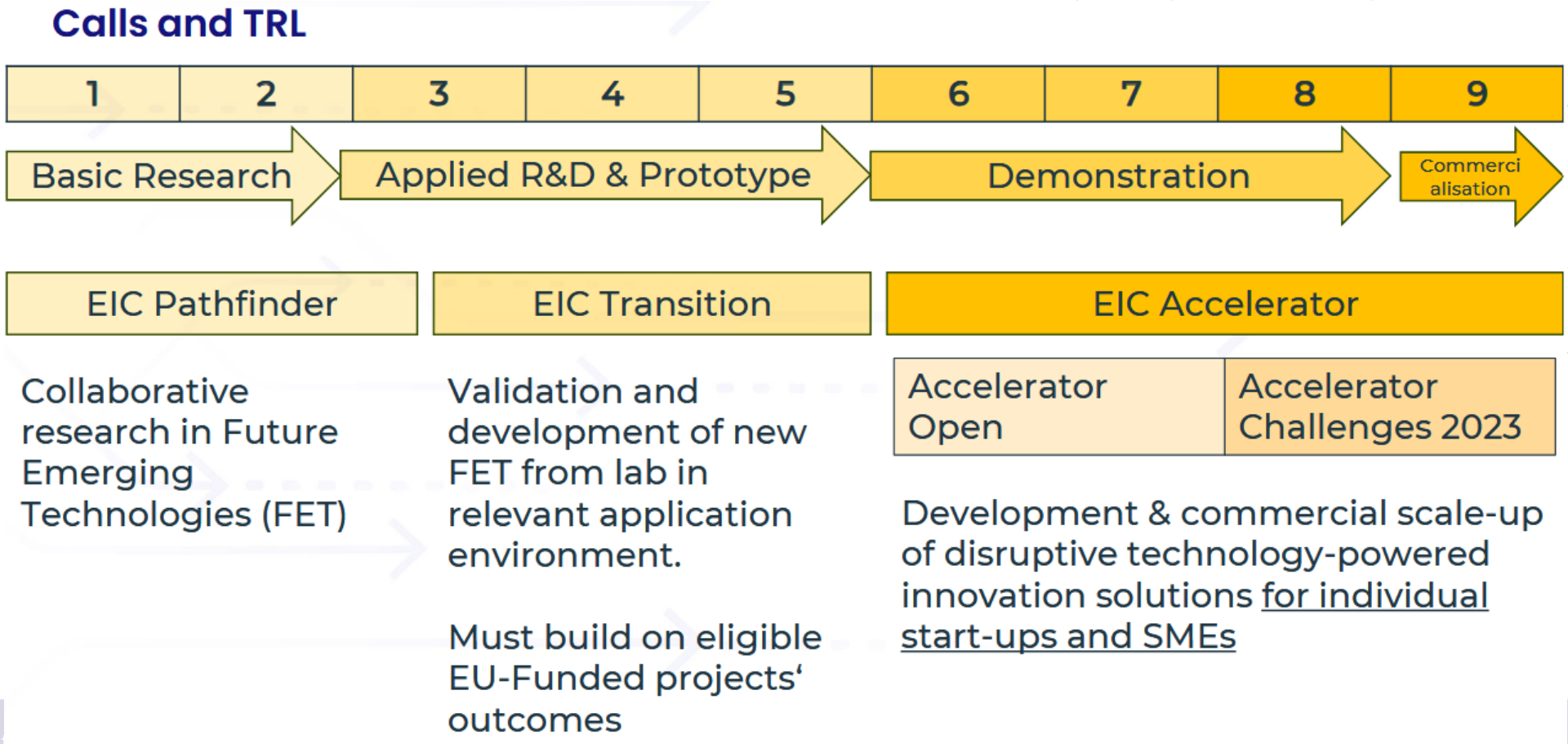
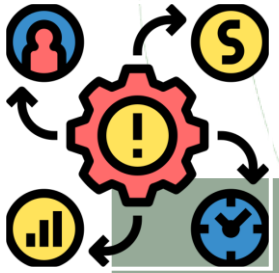


European Innovation Ecosystems

Objectives

- Connected & efficient innovation ecosystems
  - Support the scaling of companies
  - Encourage innovation
  - Stimulate cooperation among national, regional & local innovation actors



Expected impacts

- Interconnected, inclusive & efficient innovation ecosystems across Europe
- Elevated scalability potential of business
- Innovative SMEs growth accessing markets & embedding in global value chains

- Mostly CSAs and Co-fund actions, biannual WPs
- EUR 527 million (2021-2027)
- All ecosystem actors

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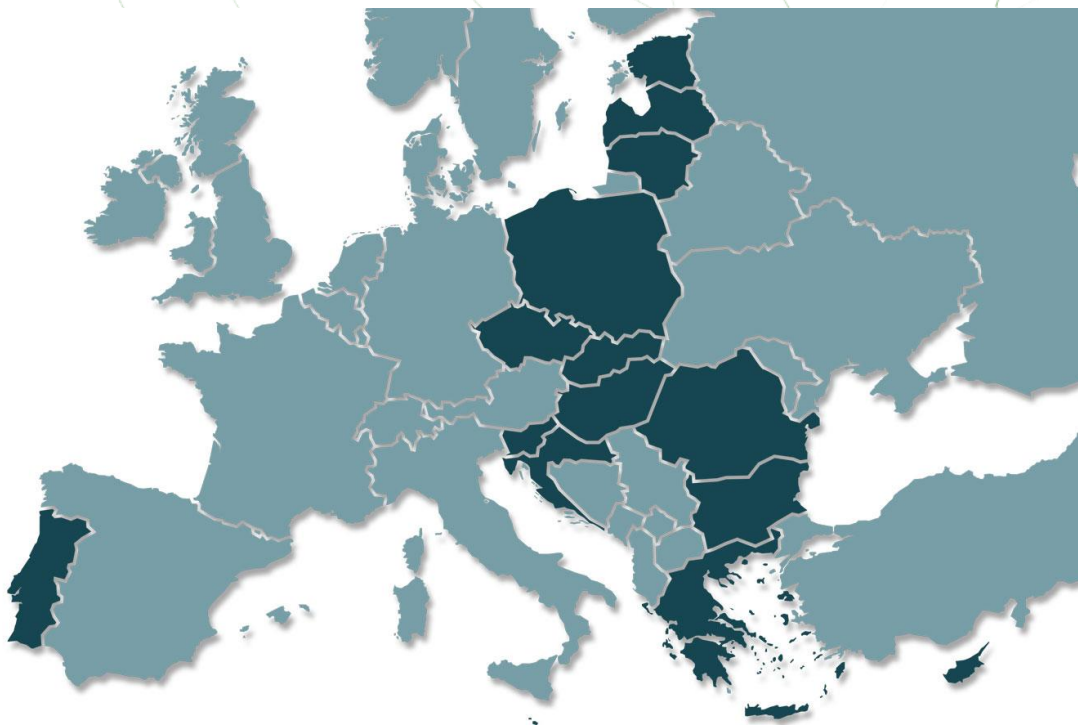
Widening participation & spreading excellence

- Destination 1: **Improved access to excellence**
  - Teaming
  - Twinning (incl. special call WBC)
  - Excellence Hubs
  - European Excellence Initiative for Higher Education Institutions
  - Hop-on facility
  - (under other actions) COST and NCP networks
- Destination 2: **Attracting and mobilising the best talents**
  - ERA Chairs
  - Fostering balanced brain circulation: ERA Fellowships
  - Fostering balanced brain circulation: ERA Talents
- Destination 3: **Reforming and enhancing the EU research and innovation system**

Improved access to excellence

- **Objective**: to create a portfolio of complementary actions that will build R&I capacities in **Widening countries** enabling them to advance to the competitive edge at European and international level

- **Main impacts:**
  - Increased science and innovation capacities for all actors in modernised and more competitive R&I systems in widening countries
  - Reformed institutions and increased attractiveness for talents
  - Higher participation success in Horizon Europe and more consortium leadership roles
  - Stronger linkages between academia and business and improved career permeability
  - Strengthened role of the Higher Education sector in research and innovation
  - Better involvement of regional actors in R&I process
  - Improved outreach to international scale for all actors



Improved access to excellence - programmes

TEAMING

- Policy objective: **develop light houses** and role models to stimulate reforms of national R&I system, increase level of excellence of national R&I system, mobilise new investments
- Scale of operation: **single Centre of excellence to be modernised or created**, relevant at national level, in a chosen scientific domain

Excellence Hubs

- Policy objective: Foster innovation excellence in place based (local/regional) **innovation ecosystems**, improve science business linkages, regional dimension of widening, bottom-up approach
- Scale of operation: Research institutions, firms, local/regional government, societal actors, local regional scale with **cross border dimension**

Improved access to excellence - programmes

TWINNING

- Policy objective: **strengthen a defined field of research** in a university or research organisation by linking it with at least two leading research institutions in other Member States or Associated Countries in the chosen scientific domain
- Scale of operation: Set of activities include some of the following: short-term staff exchanges; expert visits and short term on-site or virtual training; workshops; conference attendance; organisation of joint summer school type activities; dissemination and outreach activities

COST

- Policy objective: to give opportunity to widening countries to get involved in European and **international research initiatives** and to benefit from exposure to leading scientists in their field. In HE COST will become an integral part of the Widening part with ambitious set of KPIs (at least 50% of the budget at the benefit of the coordinator, 80% of actions with significant widening dimension); strengthen innovation dimension and better synergies with other widening actions.

LIFE Programme

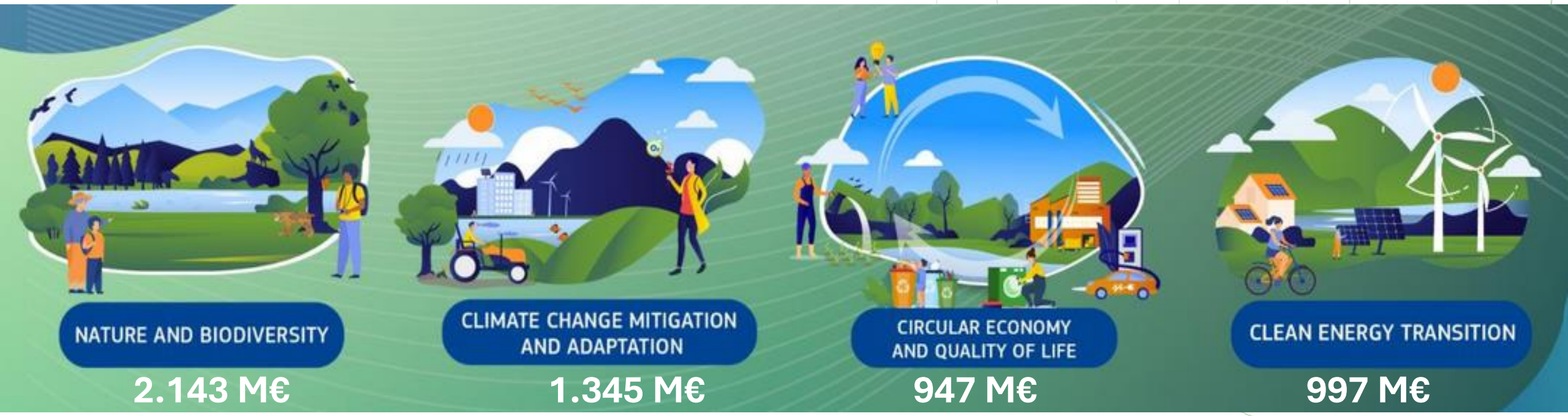
- To contribute to **positive environmental and climate outcomes** by supporting solutions aligned with EU legislation that deliver measurable improvements in environmental quality
- To facilitate
  - the transition to a sustainable, circular, and climate-resilient economy
  - protect and improve the environment
  - halt biodiversity loss

- Co-financing rate: 60%, for specific projects up to 90%
- An average budget: 3 – 6 mil. Euro, 5 partners
- Project lifespan: Maximum 10-year duration

LIFE and Horizon: What's the Link?

- **Common priority themes to Cluster 6** of the Horizon programme
- LIFE programme as a **follow-up programme to HORIZON´s results**
  - Builds on the outcomes of completed research projects, applying existing knowledge to practical innovation.
  - Focuses on testing and demonstrating pilot or innovative solutions in real-world, market-relevant conditions.
  - Aims to replicate and scale promising technologies, methods, and techniques, supporting their broader dissemination and market uptake.
  - Encourages international collaboration, supporting projects within the EU and in cooperation with global partners.
- **Similar administration rules** based on identical core documents
- **Excludes basic research activities, routine institutional operations, and large-scale infrastructure projects**, except for the funding of prototypes

LIFE - Thematic priorities



- List of priority topics (2025-2027)

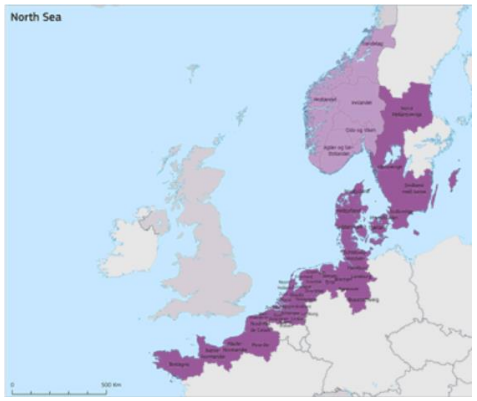
LIFE - Thematic priorities

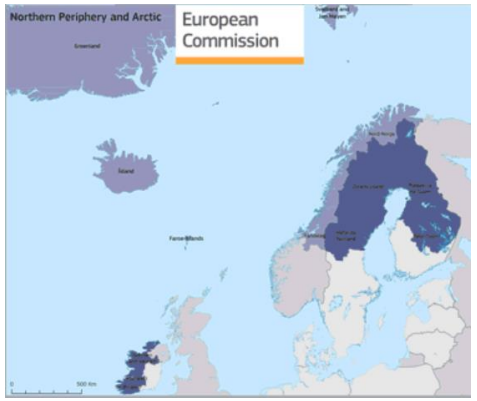
- List of priority topics (2025-2027)
- Nature and Biodiversity:
  - Focuses on the conservation and restoration of natural habitats and species.
  - Aims to support the implementation of EU biodiversity strategies and directives.
  - Includes actions to improve the management of the Natura 2000 network.
- Circular Economy and Quality of Life:
  - Promotes a shift towards a more circular economy, minimizing waste and maximizing resource efficiency.
  - Supports sustainable urban development, including urban planning, renewal, and strengthening urban-rural links.
  - Focuses on improving quality of life through sustainable mobility, water efficiency, and access to green spaces.
- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation:
  - Aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase resilience to climate change.
  - Supports the development and implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.
  - Promotes the development of innovative climate change mitigation technologies.
- Clean Energy Transition:
  - Facilitates the shift towards a sustainable, energy-efficient, and renewable energy-based economy.
  - Supports the development and deployment of clean energy technologies.
  - Encourages energy efficiency measures and the use of renewable energy sources.

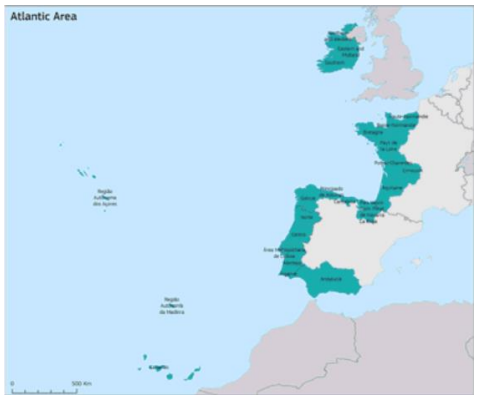
Interreg

- to foster **cooperation between European regions** to address shared challenges and promote balanced territorial development
- focus on improving policy-making, exchanging best practices, and implementing solutions for regional development
- specific objectives vary across different Interreg programmes, but generally include enhancing smart and sustainable growth, promoting a greener Europe, and fostering a more social Europe
- budget of almost 1.5 bilion EUR
- the 14 transnational Co-operation programmes for 2021-2027 are boosting strategic cooperation actions on large scale territories in Europe and beyond

Interreg - transnational Co-operation

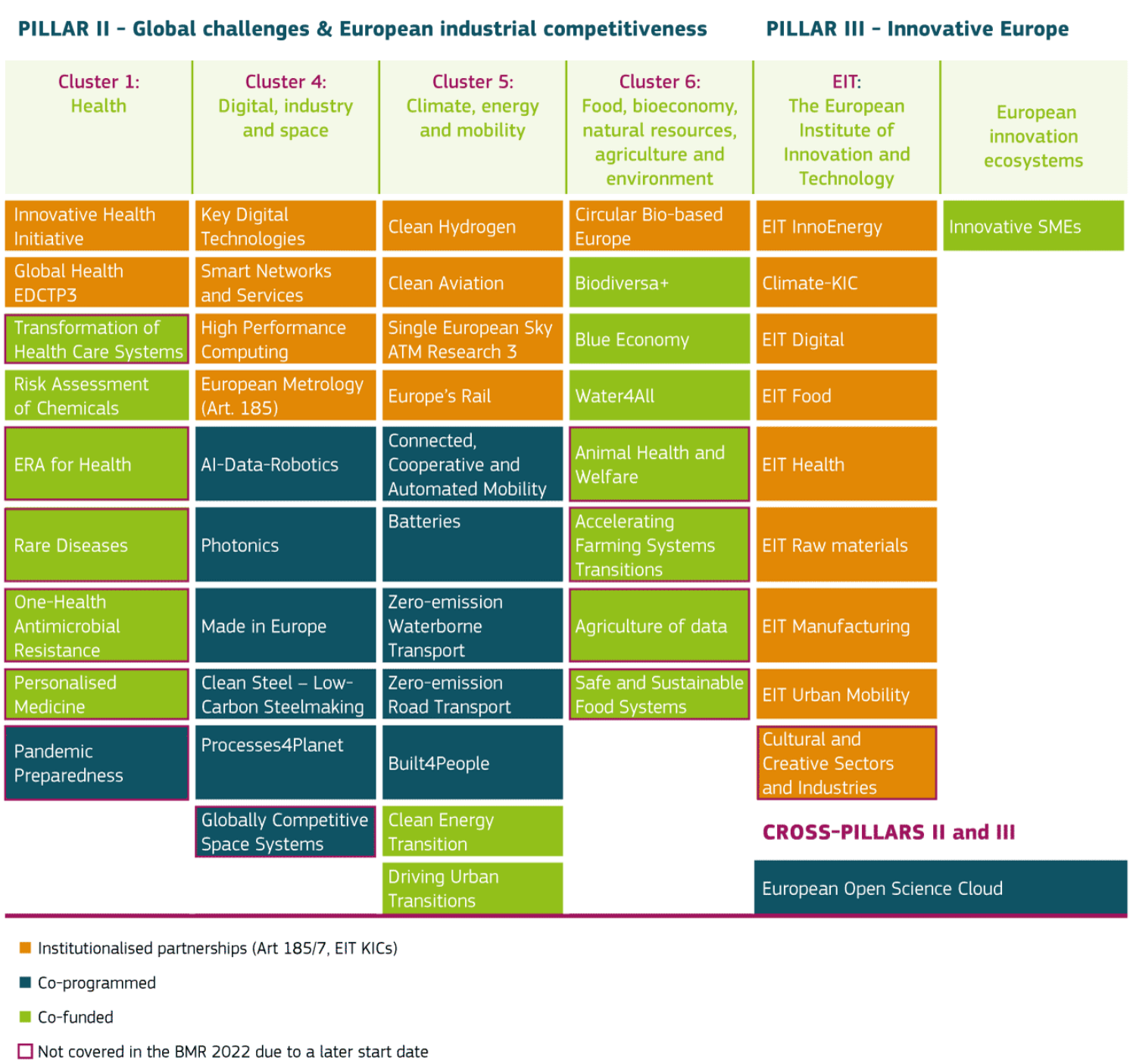






Other opportunities

- European Partnerships HE
  - collaborative initiatives where the European Commission works with public and/or private partners to jointly develop and implement research and innovation programs
- European Environment Agency (EEA)
- European Space Agency (ESA)
- National Funds
- Bilateral national collaborations



THANKS!

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