

Horizon Europe – Missions

What is Horizon Europe?

Horizon Europe is the EU’s key funding programme for research and innovation with a budget of €95.5 billion for the period 2021-2027. It tackles climate change, helps to achieve the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and boosts Europe’s competitiveness and growth.

The programme facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing EU policies while tackling global challenges. It supports the creation and better sharing of knowledge and technologies.

It also creates jobs, fully engages Europe’s talent pool, boosts economic growth, promotes industrial competitiveness and optimises investment impact within a strengthened European Research Area.

For information on UK participation in the programme see UKRO’s [dedicated factsheet](#).

Missions in Horizon Europe

While Horizon Europe has been designed to provide continuity with Horizon 2020 in many areas, there are some novelties as well. One of them is the concept of ‘Missions’ or mission-oriented funding, which the then European Commissioner for Research and Innovation, Carlos Moedas, introduced early in the development of the new Framework Programme and which has been closely followed by the community since.

Horizon Europe Missions aim to deliver solutions to global challenges, are expected to be bold and inspirational and have the mandate to solve these challenges within a defined timeframe. They are funded using a ‘portfolio approach’ with projects expected to stretch across different disciplines and parts of Horizon Europe. This means that they go beyond individual projects or partnerships and will create strong synergies.

Missions must relate to society and citizens’ needs, be highly visible and have a strong impact. They are to be co-designed with the Member States and stakeholders but must also focus on keeping citizens closely involved in this process.

Five Missions were launched by the Commission in September 2021:

<p>Conquering Cancer: Mission Possible</p> <p>By 2030, more than 3 million more lives saved, living longer and better.</p>	<p>Accelerating the Transition to a Climate Prepared and Resilient Europe</p> <p>By 2030, prepare Europe to deal with climate disruptions; accelerate the transition to a healthy and prosperous future within safe planetary boundaries; and scale up solutions for resilience.</p>	<p>Regenerating our Ocean and Waters</p> <p>By 2030: cleaning marine and fresh waters, restoring degraded ecosystems and habitats, decarbonising the blue economy.</p>
<p>Support, promote and showcase 100 European cities in their systemic transformation towards climate neutrality by 2030.</p> <p>100 Climate-Neutral Cities by 2030 - by and for the citizens</p>	<p>By 2030, at least 75% of all soils in the EU are healthy and are able to provide essential services that we depend on, for healthy food, people, nature and climate.</p> <p>Caring for Soil is Caring for Life</p>	

In the Horizon Europe structure, Missions are 'located' in Pillar II 'Global Challenges', but also have close links with other programme areas. A maximum of 10% of the Pillar's budget for the first years of Horizon Europe is dedicated to the Missions.

Mission Governance

In 2019, **Mission Boards** were formed for each Mission, following a call for expressions of interest. The Mission Board members submitted interim reports to the European Commission in September 2020. These provide a "Citizens summary" and portfolios for each proposed Mission.

Mission Assemblies have been created to work alongside the Boards. They are composed of up to 30 individuals who provide an additional pool of ideas, knowledge and expertise. The Boards can call upon the Assemblies to support them in defining mission priorities, how to maximise impact, how to liaise with stakeholders and the public at large, how to attract private funds, how to ensure outreach and engage with the media.

In addition, a **Mission Expert Group** has been created as a sub-group to the Horizon Europe Programme Committee with experts from EU Member States and Associated Countries. The group will be consulted and updated on the Missions by the European Commission and be instrumental in identifying key national events for citizens and stakeholders to engage in the Mission 'co-design' process.

Citizens are to be at the heart of Mission development. For this purpose, the European Commission encourages Member States to organise citizen engagement activities, including through events in each Member State.

Implementation of Missions in Horizon Europe

In late September 2021, all five Missions were launched, with detailed [Implementation Plans](#) for each Mission made available.

The 2023 [Mission calls](#) were published in December 2022 together with the rest of the main 2023-24 Horizon Europe Work Programme, and opened for submission in January 2023. The majority of the 2023 calls for proposals have deadlines in September, while the Mission on Cancer call closed in April.

In addition to the calls for proposals implementing the individual Missions, the current Work Programme includes several calls for joint actions between two or more Missions that aim to ensure greater synergies between them, as well as calls for "horizontal activities" that affect all five Missions.

Mid-term review of Missions

In July 2023, two years after their launch, the Commission published its mid-term evaluation of the Missions and has adopted two documents that summarise an analysis of the Missions' selection process, their governance, budget, focus and progress to date. The [Staff Working Document](#) presents detailed information on the evaluation methodology and findings for each Mission area, and the [Commission Communication on EU Missions](#) contains key messages on progress and the future of Missions.

The EU Missions have demonstrated their added value and potential to accelerate change, and that they are on track to achieve their ambitious goals by 2030 in important areas such as adaptation to climate change, improving the life of cancer patients, cleaning up marine and freshwater ecosystems, making cities climate-neutral and making soils healthy.

However, the review highlighted the initiatives need to be further supported in reaching their long-term goals, including strengthening and better coordinating administrative governance, facilitating access to resources and funding, continuing to support local and national efforts, as well as boosting citizens' engagement and raising public awareness of the Missions.

In addition, the review of the Missions has also highlighted the need to reaffirm political and financial support for the instrument; for the next phase, the Commission proposes to spend 11% of the Horizon Europe Pillar 2 budget on EU Missions (up from 10% currently), corresponding to over €3 billion for the period 2024-2027.

The publication of the 2024 Missions funding opportunities is expected soon, with the relevant Mission funding opportunities likely to follow the same programming cycle as the rest of Horizon Europe.

Launch of new Mission – the New European Bauhaus

The review also highlighted the opportunity to expand the Missions portfolio, and the Commission has launched the [New European Bauhaus](#) (NEB), a creative and interdisciplinary initiative that connects the European Green Deal to our living spaces and experiences.

The New European Bauhaus will develop synergies between research and innovation investments, and engage with people to build greater social acceptance for Green Deal policies, promoting social ownership of green solutions and encouraging behavioural changes needed to meet Green Deal targets. Inclusivity and sustainability are at the heart of the NEB ethos, which will bridge science and technology, art and culture, to address complex societal problems through co-creation.

The Commission is undertaking the preparatory phase for the new Mission (which follows the same process as all other Missions), including the appointment of a Mission Board and drafting a Mission Implementation Plan, both of which will help define the exact targets and milestones of the Mission.

Applying for funding under the Horizon Europe Missions

Under the 2023-24 Missions Work Programme, consortia of researchers can apply using more or less the same process as for the rest of Horizon Europe.

There are some differences in the evaluation and selection process, as the Missions will be funded through a portfolio approach. EC Programme Managers will look after portfolios of projects that typically include a mix of project types – from more traditional collaborative projects to prizes and financing mechanisms.

For the research and research manager community, the new mission-oriented approach will require some adjustment. UKRO will publish regular updates on the UKRO Portal and provide support to subscribers.

More information

- [Horizon Europe website](#)
- [Horizon Europe Missions pages](#)
- [2023-24 Work Programme for Missions](#)

Horizon Europe's legal basis:

- [Regulation establishing Horizon Europe](#)
- [Decision establishing the Specific Programme of Horizon Europe](#)
- [First Strategic Plan for Horizon Europe \(2021-2024\)](#)

UKRO Portal

- [UKRO Portal](#) (subscriber access required)

