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Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda
EU Call for Project Proposals

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European long-term budgeting

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EU institutions and bodies I

- Innovation & Research
- Green Transition & Climate Funding
- Digital Transformation
- Infrastructure & Supply Chains
- Regional Development & Social Funds

- Excellence (new and innovative)
- Impact to society
- Implementation realistic

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EU institutions and bodies I

European Commission

which makes proposals

European Parliament

representing EU citizens

Council of the European Union

representing EU countries

Abbildung: EU institutions and bodies [Com25c]

The EU budget combines resources at EU level and enables EU countries to achieve more together than they could if they acted alone, for instance financing infrastructure or research projects [Com25c].

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EU institutions and bodies II

Abbildung: European Comission makes proposals for EU investments [Com25c]

- proposes the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)
- Resources Decision
- as specific sectoral legislation sets rules for specification of EU investments [Com25c]

EU institutions and bodies III

Abbildung: Parliament and Council of the EU negotiate [Com25c]

- Council of the EU discusses the proposals until all EU countries agree and adopts its positions
- In parallel, the European Parliament discusses the proposals and adopts its positions [Com25c]

Why the EU funds projects

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EU Research and Missions

The **European Union** invests money in research and innovation.

EU **missions** focus on big problems like climate, cancer, oceans, cities and healthy soil.

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Long-term budget I

- The **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)** defines the EU's long-term spending priorities and limits
- It sets maximum annual expenditure for the entire EU budget and its main policy areas
- The current MFF covers the period **2021–2027**
- Together with NextGenerationEU, the long-term budget amounts to around **€2 trillion** [Uni25]

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Funding programmes and open calls of the current period I

- **Horizon Europe** — Budget: **€95.5 billion.** EU research and innovation framework programme (2021–2027) focusing on climate action, UN SDGs, competitiveness, and knowledge creation [**Com25a**]

Figure: Horizon Europe [eur20]

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Types of European Partnerships I

- **Institutionalised Partnerships**
  - Long-term structured collaborations
  - Strong integration between partners
  - Implemented through dedicated EU bodies
  - Includes EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs)
- **Co-funded Partnerships**
  - Joint research and innovation programmes
  - Funded by EU + national authorities
  - Typically run joint international calls
- **Co-programmed Partnerships**
  - Joint planning of research and innovation priorities
  - Based on cooperation with industry associations
  - EU provides funding through Horizon Europe calls [Com25a]

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Horizon Europe Partnerships I

- The Horizon Europe Strategic Plan 2025–2027 introduces new candidate co-funded and co-programmed partnerships.
- The full portfolio will consist of **60 European Partnerships**.
- **Partnership areas:**
    - Climate, energy and mobility
    - Culture, creativity and inclusive society
    - Digital, industry and space
    - Food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment
    - Health [Com25a]

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# From Call to Project
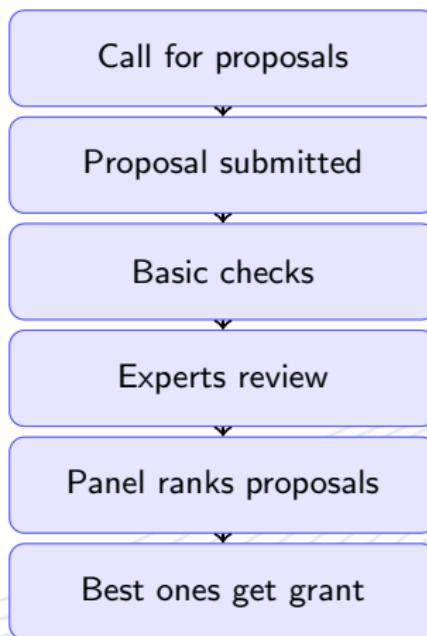
- The EU publishes a **call text** with a topic and rules.
- A group of partners writes a **project proposal**.
- They send the proposal on time through the online portal.
- After the deadline, the proposal enters the **evaluation process**.
- Only the best proposals become **funded projects**.

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Who checks the proposals

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Who Evaluates the Proposal?

- Proposals are checked by **independent experts**.
- Experts come from **different countries** and backgrounds.
- They are chosen for their **knowledge** in the topic.
- They must follow **conflict of interest** rules (they cannot judge their own project).
- Each proposal is read by **several experts**, not only one person.

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Evaluation Pipeline

Call for proposals

Proposal submitted

Basic checks

Experts review

Panel ranks proposals

Best ones get grant

Each step removes proposals that do not fit the rules or have low quality.
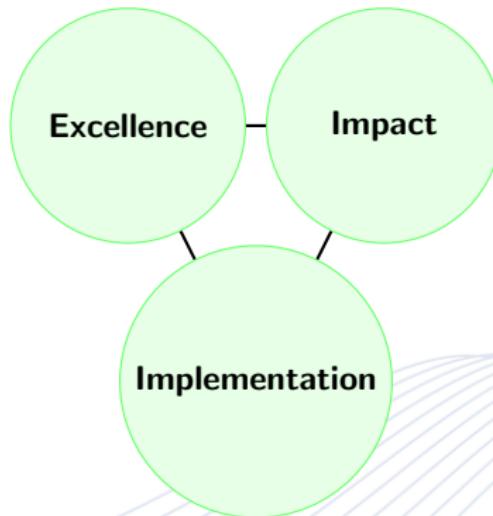
How the evaluation works

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Scoring System

- Experts give scores from **0** (very poor) to **5** (excellent).
- Scores are given for each **criterion**.
- A proposal must reach a **minimum score** to stay in the game.
- Later, experts meet and agree on a **common score**.
- Then the EU creates a **ranked list** from the best to the worst.

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The three main criteria:
Excellence, **Impact**,
Implementation

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Three Main Evaluation Criteria

Every proposal is judged on these three **pillars**.

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Excellence: The Idea

- The proposal must start with a **simple and clear problem**.
- It must explain what people **already know** about this problem.
- It must show what is **missing** or what is not solved yet.
- It should have **clear goals** that the team wants to reach.
- The idea should follow a **logical plan** and make sense.

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Excellence: The Method

- The proposal must show **how** the team will work.
- It should list the **tools** and **techniques** they will use.
- It must explain **why** these tools are the right choice.
- It should say how they will **collect** and **study** data.
- It must mention possible **problems** and how they will solve them.

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Impact: The Change

- Describes what will **change** if the project is successful.
- Links the project to **EU missions** or strategies.
- Explains who will **benefit** and how.
- Gives simple **numbers** to measure success (for example fewer accidents, less energy use).

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Impact Plans: Use and Communication

- Shows how results will be **used** after the project (for example product, service, policy).
- Explains how results will be **shared**: reports, websites, open events, training.
- Talks about the **target groups**: cities, companies, citizens, students.
- Makes sure the project does not end in a **drawer**.

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Implementation: Work Plan

- Breaks the project into **work packages**.
- Each work package has tasks, a leader and a time period.
- Shows a simple **timeline** (Gantt style).
- Explains how partners will **manage** the project: meetings, reports, risk checks.

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Implementation: The Team

- A good consortium mixes:
    - **Universities** (knowledge)
    - **Companies** (market and products)
    - **Cities or users** (real-life testing)
- Each partner has a **clear role**.
- The coordinator has experience in **project management**.

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Short Overview of the Three Criteria

Excellence	Quality of the idea and method. Clear problem and clear objectives.
Impact	Useful change in society or the market. Strong link to EU goals.
Implementation	Realistic work plan, good team and management.

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SRIA

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What is a SRIA? I

- A **Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA)** is the core strategy document of a European Partnership
- It defines objectives, impact areas, expected outcomes, activities, outputs, and milestones
- Provides a **long-term systemic plan** with clear principles, impact logic, and pathways
- Forms the basis for annual or multi-annual work programmes [ERI25]

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Principles for SRIA creation I

- **Strategic & impact-driven:** Clear vision, objectives, and measurable targets
- **Openness & transparency:** Inclusive and transparent development process
- **Flexibility:** Adaptable structure with periodic review and refinement
- **Commitment & ownership:** Active involvement of all key stakeholders
- **Synergies:** Alignment with EU, national, and regional initiatives [ERI25]

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General structure of a SRIA I

- **Vision & Mission:** defines the long-term ambition and the core purpose of the partnership
- **Intervention Logic & Impact Pathways:** maps how objectives lead to outcomes, impacts and results, and tracks progress
- **Prioritized Lines of Action:** a detailed action plan that enables annual or multi-annual work plans
- **Objectives & Targets:** clear, measurable goals to assess progress and success
- **Engagement of Stakeholders & Adaptability:** includes involvement of relevant actors and allows adaptability to changing needs or context [ERI25]

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Example for an SRIA I

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Example Project: Smart Traffic

- Goal: make a city **safer** at busy crossings.
- University builds an **AI model** to predict risky situations.
- Company builds **smart cameras** and software.
- City installs the system at real junctions.

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A simple **smart traffic** example

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Smart Traffic Project and the Criteria

- **Excellence**: clear accident problem, new AI-based solution.
- **Impact**: fewer injuries, supports green and smart city mission.
- **Implementation**: clear work packages, 3-year plan, partners with real responsibilities.

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Typical Weak Points in Proposals

- Problem is **not clear** or too broad.
- Many nice words but **no concrete impact**.
- Work plan looks **too optimistic** for the time and budget.
- Missing important partners (for example no city partner for a city project).
- Risks are ignored or only written in one short line.

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What Makes a Proposal Strong

- Simple and **clear story** that everyone understands.
- Real **innovation**, but still realistic.
- Impact that matches **EU missions**.
- Work plan that looks **doable**.
- Team that has the **right skills**.

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Students in EU Projects

- Students cannot be **main applicants**.
- But they can work inside a **university team**.
- They help with data, coding, tests and reports.
- This gives strong **experience** and a good CV.

How students can join such projects

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How a Student Can Join a Project

```
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│    1. Interest in a topic    │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│    2. Talk to a professor    │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   3. Join a research group   │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   4. Work on an EU project   │
└─────────────────────────────┘
```

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Typical Student Roles

- **Data work**: collecting, cleaning and simple analysis.
- **Programming**: small modules, scripts, dashboards.
- **Testing**: trying out prototypes in the lab or in the field.
- **Support**: helping with figures, slides and documentation.
- **Thesis**: writing a project-related bachelor or master thesis.

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Benefits for Students

- Learn how real **EU projects** work.
- Build an **international network**.
- Gain experience that looks strong on a **CV**.
- Understand how research ideas become **funded projects**.

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Summary

- EU projects are evaluated on **Excellence**, **Impact** and **Implementation**.
- Only clear, realistic and high-impact proposals are funded.
- Students cannot lead these proposals but can **join** them.
- Working in such a project is a strong step for a **future career**.

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Thank you for listening.

Questions?

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Thank You

for your attention

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