

Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda

EU Call for Project Proposals

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European long-term budgeting

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].

EU institutions and bodies II

1

Proposals are made



Abbildung: European Commission 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

2

Discussions and negotiations start



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]

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]

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]

European Horizon Partnerships

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]

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]

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

Principles for SRIA creation I

- Strategic and impact-driven
- Transparent and inclusive
- Evidence-based and foresight-oriented
- Flexible and adaptable to change
- Shared ownership and commitment
- Strong stakeholder engagement

General structure of a SRIA I

- Vision and strategic objectives
- Impact areas and expected outcomes
- Portfolio of activities and workstreams
- Milestones and timeline
- Governance structure and responsibilities
- Monitoring, evaluation and adaptation mechanisms

Process for developing a SRIA I

- Draft preparation by partnership members
- Foresight activities and evidence gathering
- Stakeholder consultation and co-creation
- Alignment with partnership vision and EU priorities
- Finalisation, approval and publication
- Implementation via annual or multi-annual work plans

Methods useful for SRIA development I

- Foresight (scenarios, horizon scanning)
- Surveys, interviews and public consultations
- Expert panels and stakeholder workshops
- Trend analysis and literature review
- Portfolio mapping and gap analysis

Agenda

- **Why** the EU funds projects
- **Who** checks the proposals
- **How** the evaluation works
- The three main criteria: **Excellence, Impact, Implementation**
- A simple **smart traffic** example
- **How students** can join such projects

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.

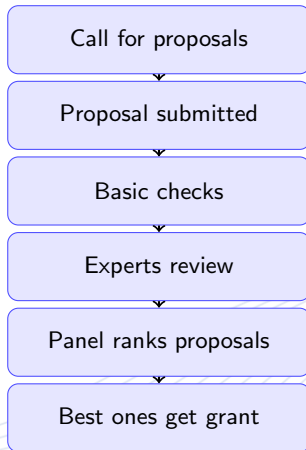
From Call to Project

- 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**.

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.

Evaluation Pipeline

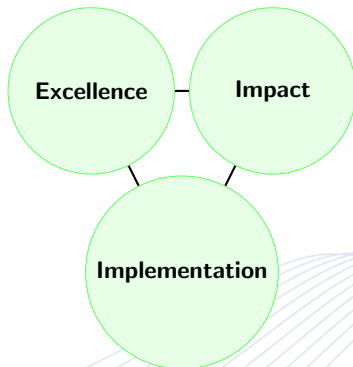


Each step removes proposals that do not fit the rules or have low quality.

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.

Three Main Evaluation Criteria



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

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.

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.

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).

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**.

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.

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**.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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**.

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 a Student Can Join a Project



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.

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**.

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**.

Thank you for listening.
Questions?

Thank You
for your attention

Literature

Literature I

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