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## **Horizon Europe**

### **Work Programme 2021-2022**

#### *10. European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE)*

*(European Commission Decision C(2022)2975 of 10 May 2022)*



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## **Introduction**

The European Union and the world face a series of profound and rapid changes including in climate, in the digital transition and in geopolitics. The COVID-19 pandemic is causing unique health, social and economic challenges with a pressing urgency for action. The crisis has spurred researchers, entrepreneurs, industry, public authorities and institutions, civil society organisations and people across the globe into close cooperation to identify and co-develop innovative solutions and achieve post-pandemic stability. More than ever in recent history, collaboration for innovative solutions is necessary for social and economic recovery, environmental sustainability and resilience.

The European Innovation Ecosystems work programme aims to create more connected, inclusive and efficient innovation ecosystems<sup>1</sup> that support the scaling of companies and spur innovation to address important challenges in a responsible way.

The work programme contains actions under three (3) destinations: CONNECT, SCALEUP and INNOVSMES.

- The actions in the CONNECT destination focus on building interconnected, inclusive innovation ecosystems across Europe by drawing on the existing strengths of national, regional and local ecosystems and encouraging the involvement of all actors and territories to set, undertake, and achieve collective ambitions towards challenges for the benefit of society, including green, digital, and social transitions and the European Research Area.
- The actions in the SCALEUP destination focus on reinforcing network connectivity within and between innovation ecosystems for sustainable business growth with high societal value.
- The action in the INNOVSMES destination will support the European Partnership on Innovative SMEs, which will help innovative SMEs to increase their research and innovation (R&I) capacity and productivity and successfully embed in global value chains and new markets.

In addition, it contains a number of other actions supporting the policy and programme goals of European Innovation Ecosystems.

This work programme can contribute to all key strategic orientations and impact areas of Horizon Europe<sup>2</sup> and to tackling the innovation gap. It will also work in complementarity with the European Innovation Council (EIC), the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), the “Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area” work programme and innovative activities across Horizon Europe, the Digital Europe Programme,

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<sup>1</sup> Definition as per Article 2(47) of the Horizon Europe Regulation.

<sup>2</sup> [Horizon Europe Strategic plan 2021-2024](#)

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as well as other relevant funding and policy initiatives at EU, national, regional and local level, such as the Enterprise Europe Network and the regional smart specialisation strategies.

At the policy level, the EIC Forum will work in a flexible manner to foster enabling framework conditions and flows of information, knowledge, talent and best practices among actors of innovation ecosystems and the EIC, to harness fully the potential of innovation. It will aim at promoting a coherent and inclusive approach to EU innovation ecosystems' policy and instruments and, as such, will operate in complement to the actions in this work programme.

The National Contact Point for the European Innovation Ecosystems work programme will be supported under the European Innovation Council work programme.

Proposals are invited against the following three (3) destinations:

## **Destination: CONNECT - Interconnected Innovation Ecosystems**

The urgent challenges of today are inherently complex and systemic and will not be solved by individual actors or territories in isolation. To foster enabling innovation ecosystems across Europe requires a systemic approach that is inclusive and collaborative, involves diverse actors, institutions and places, maximises the value of innovation to all and ensures equitable diffusion of its benefits.

This destination offers a holistic package of actions that:

- foster the implementation of co-funded multi-annual programmes of activities among Member States, Associated Countries and EU regions;
- encourage the inclusion of more stakeholders from across the quadruple helix<sup>3</sup> (academia, industry, public bodies, civil society and citizens) and a wider participation of territories in existing successful initiatives and networks towards the deployment of innovation;
- stimulate innovation procurement to help the market uptake of innovative solutions and the integration of social innovation that responds to the needs of people and society.

The destination is open for any thematic area and will focus on building interconnected, inclusive innovation ecosystems across Europe by drawing on the existing strengths of national, regional and local ecosystems and encouraging the involvement of all actors and territories to set, undertake, and achieve collective ambitions towards challenges for the benefit of society, including green, digital, and social transitions and the European Research Area.

In particular, the actions under this destination should promote the creation of links:

- with all key innovation stakeholders, including the private sector, in particular between SMEs, start-ups and other innovators with investors, industry and public and/or private buyers for faster access to funds and markets and the public sector including authorities in charge of national, regional or local innovation policies and programmes and bodies responsible for smart specialisation; also between innovators with foundations, civil society organisations and citizens to ensure that the innovations match the needs values and expectations of society, thereby accelerating deployment and up-take towards tackling societal challenges and with universities and research and technology organisations (RTOs) as sources of innovation and talent;

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<sup>3</sup> A model of cooperation between industry, academia, civil society and public authorities, with a strong emphasis on citizens and their needs.

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- among ‘innovation leaders’ and ‘strong innovators’ with ‘moderate’ and ‘modest innovators’<sup>4</sup> across the EU and Associated Countries<sup>5</sup> to tackle the innovation gap<sup>6</sup>;
- with networks such as National Contact Points, Enterprise Europe Network, social innovation networks<sup>7</sup>, clusters, pan-European platforms such as Startup Europe, regional or local innovation actors, public but also private, in particular incubators and innovation hubs that could moreover be interconnected to favour partnering among innovators.

The applicants should consider and actively seek synergies with, and where appropriate possibilities for further funding from other relevant EU, national and/or regional innovation programmes, including Cohesion policy funds, other public and private funds or financial instruments.

**Expected impact**

Proposals for topics under this destination should set out a credible pathway to contributing to interconnected innovation ecosystems, and more specifically to the following impact:

- Interconnected, inclusive and more efficient innovation ecosystems across Europe that draws on the existing strengths of European, national, regional and local ecosystems and pulls in new, less well-represented stakeholders and less advanced in innovation territories, to set, undertake, and achieve collective ambitions towards challenges for the benefit of the society, including green, digital, and social transitions.

Proposals are invited against the following topics:

The following call(s) in this work programme contribute to this destination:

Call	Budgets (EUR million)		Deadline(s)
	2021	2022	
HORIZON-EIE-2021-CONNECT-01	8.00		26 Oct 2021
HORIZON-EIE-2022-CONNECT-01		7.00	26 Apr 2022
HORIZON-EIE-2022-CONNECT-02		12.50	27 Sep 2022
Overall indicative budget	8.00	19.50	

<sup>4</sup> References: [Regional Innovation Scoreboard \(RIS\)](#), [European Innovation Scoreboard \(EIS\)](#), [Global Innovation Index \(GII\)](#).

<sup>5</sup> Associated countries are described in General Annex B.

<sup>6</sup> The work programme will act in complementarity with the “Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area” work programme.

<sup>7</sup> Such as the [Social Innovation Community \(SIC\)](#) and the [PITCCH Network](#), funded via an INNOSUP action.

**Call - Interconnected Innovation Ecosystems (2021)**

***HORIZON-EIE-2021-CONNECT-01***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>8</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>9</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2021		
Opening: 06 Jul 2021 Deadline(s): 26 Oct 2021				
HORIZON-EIE-2021-CONNECT-01-01	CSA	4.00	Around 0.50	8
HORIZON-EIE-2021-CONNECT-01-02	CSA	4.00	Around 0.50	8
Overall indicative budget		8.00		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General

<sup>8</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.  
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.



	Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-EIE-2021-CONNECT-01-01: Preparatory action for setting up joint programmes among innovation ecosystems actors**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 0.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: Consortia must have at least three (3) independent legal entities.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:  Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum.

Expected Outcome:

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Open the dialogue, prepare the ground and facilitate the agreement among Member States, Associated Countries and EU regions, in cooperation with the private sector and research and innovation actors, towards more dynamic, inclusive, gender diverse, and connected innovation ecosystems, via co-creation, co-planning and co-investments around promising areas of joint and European interest;
- Prepare the implementation of joint long-term programme of activities (action plans) fostering collaboration and creation of common knowledge assets among EU, national, regional and/or local level innovation ecosystems' stakeholders, enhancing synergies and

complementarities of their programmes and encouraging the alignment of their innovation agendas;

- Ensure the inclusiveness of all key innovation players from across the quadruple helix<sup>10</sup>, and all EU territories;

Foster any other funding leverages, including national or regional public funds, to complement Horizon Europe support for innovation ecosystems.

Scope:

*Target group(s): National, regional and/or local authorities together with private actors, including public-owned enterprises, and research and innovation actors.*

The topic will allow national, regional and/or local authorities from Member States, Associated Countries and/or EU regions in charge of innovation policies and programmes, in cooperation with private and research and innovation actors, to prepare joint multi-annual programmes of activities (action plans) with the aim of strengthening their efficiency, capacities and interconnection and jointly tackle challenges at EU, national, regional and local level.

The topic will allow applicants to prepare and agree on a common programme of activities (action plans); the applicants are encouraged to consider a project duration of up to two years and in their proposals they should:

- identify areas and activities of cooperation, to improve the efficiency and performance of Europe's innovation ecosystems, fostering their interconnection and scale-up while tackling EU, national, regional and/or local challenges; the proposals may focus on a thematic/technological area of common interest and innovation priorities with an EU added-value, and/or around one or more EU priorities; the proposals are encouraged to contribute to one or more EU priorities and challenges, including climate action, green deal and digital transformation, and should pay attention to gender equality objectives;
- plan their long-term commitment; the applicants are encouraged to consider planning commitments of at least five (5) years, towards engaging in the joint cooperation activities set up in the frame of the projects;
- explain the potential for growth and competitiveness foreseen in the targeted sector and/or expected impact in EU challenge(s) through the proposed cooperation;
- ensure inclusiveness and diversity with the involvement of all innovation actors applicants, enhance complementarities of EU, national and/or regional funds and programmes and encourage the alignment of their innovation agendas;

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<sup>10</sup> A model of cooperation between industry, academia, civil society and public authorities, with a strong emphasis on citizens and their needs.

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- provide a justification on the need for those joint activities that should be scalable at European level and demonstrate their strong EU added value;
- explain how the proposed action plans complement and reinforce their national and/or regional and/or local innovation plans, policies and/or strategies in synergy, including with their smart specialisation strategies;
- explain the process that they plan to follow, with an open, clear, realistic and impact-oriented approach, including relevant guidance mechanisms and tools;
- present what common knowledge assets are expected from the proposed action plans, and the benefit of the intended beneficiaries of the plans;
- present the targeted milestones to be achieved.

The proposals for the development of a joint long-term action plan may include the following two (2) phases:

- A first phase to foster close dialogue among key stakeholders for strategy/partnership building, mapping and analysis of existing national and/or regional and/or local innovation agendas/strategies/policies/plans/activities, the relevant active/inactive actors (including financial actors and citizens) and ways to motivate their inclusiveness, identification of areas of competitive advantage for sustainable economic growth mapping of gaps, needs and opportunities. Any activities are encouraged to consider existing tools, knowledge and expertise. Responsible Research and Innovation expertise may be relevant in this regard<sup>11</sup>;
- A second phase dedicated to the concretising, setting up and finalising the joint action plan(s) and allocation of the activities over a period of the proposed action plans.

The implementation of the proposed action plans is not part of this topic. For the implementation part, the successful proposals under the topic may seek further financial support from other programmes, including Horizon Europe programme and/or other public and/or private programmes.

**HORIZON-EIE-2021-CONNECT-01-02: Building capabilities in innovation procurement**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 0.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.00 million.

<sup>11</sup> E.g. projects supported under SwafS-14-2018-2019-2020 in Horizon 2020.

<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: Consortia must have at least three (3) independent legal entities.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:  Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum.

Expected Outcome:

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Raise awareness, knowledge and practical use of legal procedures to implement the practices of innovation procurement;
- Leverage capacity building, skills and legal knowledge among public and private buyers;
- Explore and scale up the best examples of innovation procurement practices,
- Contribute to the establishment of innovation friendly legal frameworks, and market-oriented procedures;
- Ensure long-term and sustainable innovation procurement strategies;
- Foster public and private partners' collaboration in the co-design processes to match their needs and identify existing technologies that could result in procurement of innovation.

Scope:

*Target group(s): Public and private buyers, public-owned enterprises, SMEs and start-ups, research and technological organisations.*

Despite legal reforms and incentives in the area of public procurement of innovative solutions, the lack of awareness, skills and knowledge within public and private buyers remains the important problem obstructing implementation of innovation procurement in practice. While there is an overriding necessity to change traditional procurement approaches, the need for dedicated training and guidance, exchange of best practices and capacity building in this area becomes necessary to reveal innovation procurement potential. The proper design of strategies and procedures, in line with the existing legal frameworks, would define market-oriented proposals, facilitate the implementation of innovation procurement, and ensure its long-term success. Moreover, it will leverage potential new markets and contribute to tackle societal challenges in a more efficient and sustainable way.

The proposals should focus on the following activities:

- accessible dedicated training portfolios, to improve skills and capacities to design innovative procurement;
- awareness-raising and enhanced knowledge on innovation procurement legal frameworks for public buyers and evaluators of innovative procurements;
- enhanced innovation knowledge and skills within buyers, raising awareness about co-design process between SMEs and buyers (public and private) that may help to discover the most up-to-date innovative technological solutions, and assist in their development and further acquisition;
- scale up best examples on the definition of needs and design of programmes, procedures and long-term strategies in the field of innovation procurement;
- set up new experts networks and/or local competence centres or advance existing ones, including the coaching services to set up innovation procurement, legal assistance, the support on the definition of resources and tools, and the exchange of best practices;
- public and private buyers' cooperation and partnerships with the innovation deployment actors, particularly innovative SMEs and start-ups community, research institutions and technological organisations in order to tap into the under-exploited innovative potential of these type of companies.

**Call - Interconnected Innovation Ecosystems (2022.1)**

***HORIZON-EIE-2022-CONNECT-01***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>12</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>13</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2022		

<sup>12</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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Opening: 11 Jan 2022				
Deadline(s): 26 Apr 2022				
HORIZON-EIE-2022-CONNECT-01-01	CSA	4.00	Around 0.50	8
HORIZON-EIE-2022-CONNECT-01-02	CSA	3.00	Around 0.50	6
Overall indicative budget		7.00		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-EIE-2022-CONNECT-01-01: Towards more inclusive networks and initiatives in European innovation ecosystems**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 0.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following

<i>conditions</i>	<p>exceptions apply:</p> <p>Consortia must have at least three (3) independent legal entities, of which at least one (1) is established in 'modest' or 'moderate' innovator region and at least one (1) in 'strong' or 'innovation leader' innovator region. The <a href="#">Regional Innovation Scoreboard</a> is taken as a reference, and in the case of entities representing national authorities, the <a href="#">European Innovation Scoreboard</a>. The applicants must use as a reference the latest version of the documents mentioned above at the time of the call closure. Associated Countries which are not included in the European Innovation Scoreboard and are ranked below 25 on the <a href="#">Global Innovation Index 2020</a> are considered as 'moderate' or 'modest innovators'. In cases of Associated Countries not included in any of the previously mentioned references, the participation rank of the country in the Horizon Europe programme (<a href="#">H2020 country profile</a>) will be taken as a reference and countries ranked below the average will be considered as 'moderate' or 'modest innovators'.</p> <p>Legal entities established in Widening countries may join already selected actions, subject to the agreement of the respective consortium and provided that legal entities from such countries are not yet participating in it.</p>
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum.</p>

Expected Outcome:

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Increased inclusiveness by enlarging the participation of more diverse innovation actors and broaden the participation among EU and Associated Countries territories, in already existing successful initiatives and networks that interconnect European innovation ecosystems and promote the deployment and scale-up of innovative solutions;
- Reduce the innovation divide in Europe and reinforce the innovation aspect of the European Research Area<sup>14</sup> in the areas of inclusiveness and connectivity, improving the innovation capacities of Member States and Associated Countries and enabling them to engage in joint efforts for sustainable growth and economic development<sup>15</sup>.

Scope:

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<sup>14</sup> [European Research Area\(ERA\)](#).

<sup>15</sup> In complementarity with the “Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area” work programme.

*Target group(s): Public national, regional and/or local authorities, private organisations, public-owned enterprises, professional associations, clusters, accelerators, innovation hubs, incubators, technology parks, and/or any other representatives that lead initiatives/networks that support the deployment of innovation.*

The topic aims to increase Europe's innovation efficiency and capacity via expanding the cooperation and enlarging the participation of more diverse innovation stakeholders and territories in existing successful initiatives and networks that support innovation deployment in Member States, Associated Countries, at national, regional and/or local level.

In Europe, there are various excellent and well-established initiatives and/or networks that support innovation deployment and foster value co-creation via interconnected flows of information, knowledge and talent. However, some innovation-related stakeholders and EU and Associated Countries' territories are not aware of them, the nature of their activities, ways to get involved, and support they offer. Despite serious efforts deployed at national, regional and European level<sup>16</sup>, the EU sees too many innovation actors to still miss from the innovation ecosystems (including investors, foundations, public and private buyers, social innovators, civil society organisations non-governmental organisations, as well as women-innovators), and significant internal disparities exist in terms of innovation performance at territorial level. The widening countries<sup>17</sup> are among those that are lagging behind; most of them being moderate and modest innovators<sup>18</sup>.

To tap into Europe's yet unexploited innovation potential, greater involvement of all innovation actors and EU and Associated Countries' territories who are moderate and modest innovators can be instrumental and networking and connection with partners across Europe is imperative. In addition, inclusive ecosystems should also be more gender-responsive, fostering the participation of women innovators, as well as taking into consideration overall gender equality and diversity objectives in the innovation initiatives developed<sup>19</sup>.

The proposals should:

- present the existing initiatives and/or networks, their role and activities towards uniting, and representing a bigger ecosystem of stakeholders with a joint clearly defined purpose to support key stakeholders, including SMEs and start-ups towards innovation

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<sup>16</sup> Two examples at EU level are the H2020 INNOSUP calls and projects on "[Peer learning of innovation agencies](#)" and "[Supporting experimentation in Innovation agencies](#)" which have been running since 2014 and 2019 respectively. The main objectives are the exchange, experimentation and uptake of excellent and experimental SME innovation support services by innovation agencies and similar intermediary organisations.

<sup>17</sup> Widening countries under Horizon Europe are:  
Member States: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Greece, Portugal.  
Associated Countries: please refer to General Annex B for information on Associated Countries.

<sup>18</sup> References: [Regional Innovation Scoreboard \(RIS\)](#), [European Innovation Scoreboard \(EIS\)](#), [Global Innovation Index \(GII\)](#).

<sup>19</sup> A positive correlation has been observed in Member States between their European Innovation Scoreboard and their Gender Equality Index, and an increased share of research performing institutions with adopted gender equality plans is also positively correlated with a country's innovation potential - [GENDERACTION project Deliverable D3.2 \(Monitoring of ERA Priority 4 implementation\)](#).



deployment; potential initiatives and/or networks that will be supported may include, *inter alia*, clusters, accelerators, innovation hubs and platforms;

- demonstrate that they successfully operate in Europe and explain the reasons for which they are considered to be successful in supporting innovation deployment;
- describe the process applicants plan to follow in order to implement a solid “opening-up” strategy of the initiatives and/or networks they represent, with the aim:
  - a. to increase the participation of more diverse innovation stakeholders currently missing or underrepresented within and among territories;
  - b. to enlarge and broaden the participation and enhance the commitment for involvement of more EU and Associated Countries; applicants are thus encouraged to facilitate collaborative links with moderate and modest innovators from these countries;
- explain how expansion to new territories and/or inclusion of new stakeholders would bring added value both at initiative/network level and at EU level;
- describe the proposed activities to achieve the topic outcomes, including:
  - a. ways to better identify the specific needs of key innovation stakeholders, including start-ups and SMEs, as well as the participating countries and/or regions in order to allow the customization of the provided services by the network/initiatives; this may include surveys, studies and data/intelligence/market analysis where necessary;
  - b. design and development of joint strategies and/or new supporting services, tools and resources to facilitate and expand the support provided to innovation stakeholders (including high-quality start-ups and SMEs), training and soft skills development, networking and coordination structures and tools to facilitate innovation development, as well as tools for the access to and sharing of best practices, resources, knowledge, talents, markets, expertise, and services, common knowledge assets, mutual learning and exchanges of best practices, the design of pilot schemes with the view of filling possible gaps in relation to the provided services, and promoting gender balanced participation;
  - c. joint awareness raising and communication campaigns to reach out to more stakeholders in different territories;
- present the variety of involved stakeholders (e.g. universities, investors, public and private buyers, foundations, social innovators and women-led businesses, civil society organisations) and the new ones that they bring in, in comparison to their current and other initiatives with a proper justification on the need for their involvement;

- explain the diversion of involved Member States and Associated Countries with the participation of legal entities from countries and/or regions that are moderate and modest innovators; provide information on how this could help those lagging behind in terms of innovation performance to attain a competitive position in the European and global value chains;
- demonstrate the complementarity and encourage the alignment of the proposed initiatives/networks with other national and/or regional and/or local policies and strategies, including the smart specialisation strategies.

**HORIZON-EIE-2022-CONNECT-01-02: Integration of social innovation actors in innovation ecosystems**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 0.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: Consortia must have at least three (3) independent legal entities.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:  Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum.

Expected Outcome:

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Active participation of social innovation actors in innovation ecosystems, by ensuring their interlinking and connection with all other actors, including the SMEs and start-ups, accelerators and business incubators, industry, investors, philanthropy societies and the public sector, with the aim to ensure access to their entrepreneurial knowledge and skills required to run successful projects;
- Wider access to alternative means of financing social innovations achieved by promoting its impact and mobilising a broad range of partners;

- Tested innovation models with potential of scaling up and replicability, and that are available for widespread use, possibly through the policy actions.

Scope:

*Target group(s): Social innovation actors/social entrepreneurs<sup>20</sup>, SMEs, start-ups, accelerators and business incubators, investors, industry, foundations and philanthropy societies, universities and RTOs public-owned enterprises.*

The action aims to raise awareness and ease the access of social entrepreneurs to the resources of pan-European, national, regional and local innovation ecosystems. In addition, the action aims to have a lasting spill-over effect by bringing attention to the benefits of social innovation projects to the society as a whole, and to strategic priorities and objectives of the Commission in particular.

The proposals should focus on the following activities:

- the transfer of knowledge and building capacities among the innovation actors (including universities, accelerators and incubators, networks of start-ups), so that they would be better equipped to work with the social entrepreneurs; examples may include: activities aiming at creating and improving connections of social entrepreneurs to stakeholders in innovation ecosystems (e.g. gathering, production and diffusion of relevant information materials), study visits and exchange of good practices, training activities, webinars, seminars, conferences, etc., developing business support services for social entrepreneurs (e.g. toolkits, templates, manuals and other support material), awareness raising activities among the network's members and towards the wider audience, engagement of social entrepreneurs in business and entrepreneurial skills and knowledge enforcement trainings;
- creation and/or connection of social innovation hubs/centres of excellence; integration of social innovation dimension to existing tech-oriented hubs;
- detection of possible innovation models with potential of scaling and replicability at national, regional, and local level. Although one size does not fit all, the examples of social innovator's scaling path may help public authorities to design and implement new evidence-based policies; help in detecting the local partners (e.g. other organisation and/or individuals – micro franchisees) to deploy the model;
- creation or utilization of the already existing open platform that use digital technologies to connect a global network of social entrepreneurs to promote the best practices, alternative financing opportunities and improve their skills.

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<sup>20</sup> Social entrepreneurship is an approach by individuals, groups, start-up companies or entrepreneurs, in which they develop, fund and implement solutions to social, cultural, or environmental issues. This concept may be applied to a wide range of organisations, which vary in size, aims, and beliefs. Social entrepreneurs are either non-profits, or they blend for-profit goals with generating a positive "return to society".

**Call - Interconnected Innovation Ecosystems (2022.2)**

***HORIZON-EIE-2022-CONNECT-02***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>21</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>22</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2022		
Opening: 14 Jun 2022 Deadline(s): 27 Sep 2022				
HORIZON-EIE-2022-CONNECT-02-01	COFUND	8.00	Around 2.00	4
HORIZON-EIE-2022-CONNECT-02-02	COFUND	4.50	Around 1.50	3
Overall indicative budget		12.50		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.

<sup>21</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.  
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-EIE-2022-CONNECT-02-01: Implementing co-funded action plans for interconnection of innovation ecosystems**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Programme Co-fund Action
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: Consortia must have at least three (3) independent legal entities.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:  The funding rate is 50% of the eligible costs as the beneficiaries will carry out the proposed activities mainly themselves and the activities will not include financial support to third parties.  Grants award under this topic will have to submit the following deliverable(s):  Annual work plans subject to approval by the Commission. For the first year the annual work plan needs to be submitted together with the respective proposal.

Expected Outcome:

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Open<sup>23</sup>, efficient inclusive and interconnected innovation ecosystems across Europe, building on their diversities and complementarities, enhancing the joint definition of visions and strategies with input from across the quadruple helix<sup>24</sup>, encouraging the alignment of their innovation agendas, and strengthening of their efficiency and potential to innovate;
- Enhanced synergies, complementarities and collaboration among all European innovation ecosystems' stakeholders around promising areas and challenges of joint and European interest, creation of common knowledge assets;
- Increased innovation capacities in Member States and Associated Countries, allowing innovators to bring their ideas into the market and enable innovations to be scaled up at EU level, and facilitating the link with the private sector and research and innovator actors;
- Better links between innovation leaders and strong innovators with moderate and modest innovators across the EU and Associated Countries;
- More innovation co-investments, fostering other funding leverages, including national or regional public funds and/or other private funds, to complement Horizon Europe support.

Scope:

*Target group(s): National and/or regional innovation authorities together with private actors, all relevant key stakeholders of innovation ecosystems from across the quadruple helix, including innovative SMEs, start-ups, social innovators, public-owned enterprises, academia, RTOs, technology transfer centres, investors, foundations, clusters, associations and the civil society, the Enterprise Europe Network.*

The aim of this topic is to foster the creation of efficient, open, inclusive and interconnected European innovation ecosystems.

The topic will support strategic-oriented long-term programmes of activities (action plans) to enable authorities in charge of public national, regional or local innovation policies and programmes, with the participation of the private sector and research and innovation actors, to implement joint activities towards innovation deployment, while tackling challenges at EU, national, regional and local level.

The applicants are encouraged to consider a project duration of at least five (5) years and proposals should:

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<sup>23</sup> The notion of “openness” can be defined as “the pooling of knowledge for innovative purposes where the contributors have access to the inputs of others and cannot exert exclusive rights over the resultant innovation” (Chesbrough, H., & Appleyard, M. 2007. [Open Innovation and Strategy](#). California Management Review, 50(1): 57–76).

<sup>24</sup> A model of cooperation between industry, academia, civil society and public authorities, with a strong emphasis on citizens and their needs.

- present the applicants' joint strategic visions and their proposed innovation programme of activities (action plans); during the proposal submission the participants should have already reached an agreement on what they want to achieve, in order to be able to present concrete action plans; the plans can be further detailed at annual level during the implementation of the action;
- describe the activities necessary, the process that will be followed and the assets that will be mobilised; activities should be open, clear, realistic, impact-oriented and ensure:
  - a. participation of private actors, either for the joint implementation of proposed activities, and/or their possible co-funding; for example, via links and cooperation with innovative SMEs, start-ups, industry, private entities supporting innovation and innovators, including clusters, associations, as well as investors and foundations;
  - b. inclusiveness and diversity by expanding to territories that are less advanced in innovation deployment (modest and moderate innovators <sup>25</sup>) and with the involvement of all innovation actors, especially those that are currently less active or missing in the innovation ecosystems (e.g. investors, foundations, public and private buyers, social innovators, civil society organisations including non-governmental organisations, as well as women-led start-ups and SMEs);
  - c. complementarity and synergies with other funds (EU, public and/or private) and innovation-related strategies/policies/programmes/plans at national and/or regional level, including their smart specialisation strategies, as well as other relevant programmes (e.g. EIT/KICs, EEN); applicants should outline the scope for synergies and/or additional funding, in particular where this makes the projects more ambitious or increases their impact and expected results.
- explain the need and the reasons for selecting the proposed programme of activities that should be scalable at European level and demonstrate their strong EU added value; the proposed plan:
  - a. should include core activities, for example: networking and coordination structures and tools to facilitate innovation development and access to and sharing of best practices, resources, talents, markets, expertise, services and knowledge, including open and collaborative knowledge bases and common knowledge assets (methods, data, processes); market analysis and development and activities towards better access to new markets and finance for innovative SMEs and start-ups; training and skills development; interconnection of open innovation infrastructures; supportive activities towards scale up, exploitation and dissemination of innovative solutions; joint public procurement initiatives; social innovators' and civil society integration,

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References: [Regional Innovation Scoreboard \(RIS\)](#), [European Innovation Scoreboard \(EIS\)](#), [Global Innovation Index \(GI\)](#).

as interlocutors for society and important inputs to the development of innovations and promotion of gender diversity;

- b. may include additional joint activities non-eligible for co-funding with Horizon Europe budget but in line with the expected outcomes of the topic; the budget of these activities however will not be considered for the final Commission contribution.
- explain the reasons for selecting the proposed strategic areas of cooperation, and how this cooperation will improve the efficiency and performance of Europe’s innovation ecosystems, fostering their interconnection and scale-up; the action plans may focus on a thematic/technological area and innovation priorities of common interest, and/or may be shaped around one or more EU challenges <sup>26</sup> and/or priorities; the proposals are encouraged to contribute to one or more EU priorities and challenges, including climate, digital and social transitions, and should pay attention to gender equality objectives; the potential for growth and competitiveness foreseen in the targeted sector and/or expected impact in EU challenge(s) through the proposed cooperation should be clarified in the proposal;
  - present how the consortium plans to implement these joint activities; the topic will not co-fund financial support to third parties, however the applicants may consider including such activities in their action plan (as additional joint activities non-eligible for co-funding), to be funded by other sources (national and/or regional and/or local or private);
  - include clear targets in terms of outcomes for the measures/activities underpinned by verifiable indicators (applicants may wish to refer to the Sustainable Development Goals, the EU taxonomy on sustainable finance, or other relevant policy frameworks);
  - ensure their long-term commitment towards engaging in the joint cooperation activities set up in the frame of their projects.

**HORIZON-EIE-2022-CONNECT-02-02: Stimulating innovation procurement**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 1.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.50 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Programme Co-fund Action

<sup>26</sup> It may develop the connections established among the Innosup05 Initiative from Horizon 2020 Peer learning of Innovation agencies.



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<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <p>Consortia must have at least three (3) independent legal entities.</p>
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The funding rate is 50% of the eligible costs as the beneficiaries will carry out the proposed activities mainly themselves and the activities will not include financial support to third parties.</p> <p>Grants award under this topic will have to submit the following deliverable(s):</p> <p>Annual work plans subject to approval by the Commission. For the first year the annual work plan needs to be submitted together with the respective proposal.</p>

Expected Outcome:

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Establishing long-term national and regional innovation procurement policy frameworks and integration of innovation procurement in sectoral policies;
- Establishing action plans, including spending targets and monitoring systems to be implemented by different levels of public authorities; defined set of incentives mechanisms to stimulate innovation procurement;
- Adoption and scale-up of joint procurement initiatives managed by national, regional, local authorities enabling innovations to be commercialised in the public (and also private) sector (and therefore providing market opportunities to European innovators and encouraging cross-European procurement);
- Further engagement of public buyer's community with SMEs, start-ups, incubators and accelerators, research institutions in driving innovation demand and detecting the innovative solutions;
- Improved SMEs' skills and capacity to identify buyers' needs, to facilitate access to the public buyers;
- Improved buyers' skills and capacity to match their needs and challenges to possible technological solutions at the market and design innovative procurements;
- Effective adoption of co-creation models to stimulate SMEs' response to buyer's needs and challenges;

- Reduced gap between pilots, up-take and scale-up of projects.

Scope:

*Target group(s): Public national, regional and/or local authorities, public-owned enterprises, SMEs and start-ups, incubators, accelerators, research institutions and technological organisations.*

The aim of this topic is to boost the innovation procurement in Europe by engaging public and private buyers in the purchase of innovative solutions.

Public purchasers are important actors for the innovation ecosystem, however, the potential of procuring innovative solutions is severely underexploited and untapped. With their 14% of GDP purchasing power are not only potential launching customers of innovative solutions, they can also drive innovation by asking the market to develop new ones (market research and engagement) and by co-financing the innovation process (pre-commercial procurement, procurement of Research and Development services, Competitive Dialogue, Innovation Partnership, etc.). There are a number of obstacles, which prevent public buyers from buying innovative solutions: insufficient administrative capacity, lack of awareness, legal challenges in the transposition into Member State legislation, and risk-averse approach to procurement, important differences among Member States but also among various level of buyers, e.g. local, regional, national and depending on the sector (health, infrastructure, education, municipality services, etc.). Similarly, the reach and benefits of innovation procurement procedures, in terms of results and outputs, are very often limited to the direct beneficiary, rather than spill-over more widely, even in the regional and/or national context.

The applicants are encouraged to consider a project duration of at least five (5) years and the proposals should focus on strategic oriented joint innovation programmes (multi-annual action plans), that will include activities aimed to enable national and/or regional and/or local authorities and/or municipalities, in association with the public and private buyers, to:

- develop long-term innovation procurement policy frameworks and integration of innovation procurement in sectoral policies;
- develop action plans, including spending targets and monitoring system to be implemented by different levels of public authorities; develop a set of incentives mechanisms to stimulate innovation procurement;
- develop and improve data collection and monitoring of results to demonstrate the positive long-term impact for society in adopting the innovative solutions;
- design a strategy and supporting tools for the further exploitation of the results and outputs of innovation procurement procedures by other EU actors;
- support matchmaking, brokering and expertise gathering entities (including specialised buyers, facilitators/brokers, competence centres) at national but also at regional/city or sector level encouraging dialogue and co-design;

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- create and establish capacity in Member States and Associated Countries, support the competence building and preparation of innovation procurement (including legal advice, tender preparation, training);
- contribute to the development of innovative solutions/products (development of product benchmarks, setting up of piloting spaces);
- facilitate exchange of best practices on the legal set up, design and implementation of innovative public procurement.

## **Destination: SCALEUP - Elevating the scalability potential of European business**

In today's competitive landscape, innovative companies thrive through the support of an ecosystem that provides additional capabilities, data, customers and knowledge. Network connectivity within and between innovation ecosystems greatly contributes to sustainable business growth with high societal value. An ecosystem focused on the meeting concrete needs of companies helps them to stimulate their expansion at European and global level and lead to accelerated growth.

This destination aims at strengthening and expanding cooperation between innovation players to better support the next generation of innovative companies whose solutions will lead the shift towards a more competitive EU and a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient world.

The actions of this destination will help innovation ecosystems to support companies to better sustain their growth and gain new competitive advantage. Besides stronger innovation performance, increased competitive sustainability and more rapid transitions to a green and digital society, ecosystem integration can provide companies with access to new markets and customers and contribute to disruptive strategies. By being actively engaged in their local, national and European networks, companies can increase their overall growth potential.

### **Expected impact**

Proposals for topics under this destination should set out a credible pathway to contributing to elevating the scalability potential of business, and more specifically to one or several of the following impacts:

- Enhanced network connectivity within innovation ecosystems by reinforcing their capacity to support existing and emerging innovators and companies;
- Strengthened and expanded cooperation between innovation ecosystems worldwide;
- More inclusive and gender equal innovation ecosystems.

Proposals are invited against the following topics:

The following call(s) in this work programme contribute to this destination:

Call	Budgets (EUR million)		Deadline(s)
	2021	2022	
HORIZON-EIE-2021-SCALEUP-01	13.75		10 Nov 2021
HORIZON-EIE-2022-SCALEUP-01		5.00	10 May 2022

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HORIZON-EIE-2022-SCALEUP-02		15.00	04 Oct 2022
Overall indicative budget	13.75	20.00	

**Call - Elevating the scalability potential of European business (2021)**

***HORIZON-EIE-2021-SCALEUP-01***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>27</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>28</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2021		
Opening: 13 Jul 2021 Deadline(s): 10 Nov 2021				
HORIZON-EIE-2021-SCALEUP-01-01	CSA	5.00	Around 1.00	5
HORIZON-EIE-2021-SCALEUP-01-02	RIA	5.00	Around 5.00	1
HORIZON-EIE-2021-SCALEUP-01-03	CSA	3.75	Around 0.075	50
Overall indicative budget		13.75		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.

<sup>27</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.  
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-EIE-2021-SCALEUP-01-01: Expanding Acceleration Ecosystems**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 1.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Legal entities established in Widening countries may join already selected actions, subject to the agreement of the respective consortium and provided that legal entities from such countries are not yet participating in it.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <p>Consortia must have at least three (3) independent legal entities, of which at least one (1) is established in 'modest' or 'moderate' innovator region and at least one (1) in 'strong' or 'innovation leader' innovator region. The <a href="#">Regional Innovation Scoreboard</a> is taken as a reference, and in the case of entities representing national authorities, the <a href="#">European Innovation Scoreboard</a>. The applicants must use as a reference the latest version of the documents mentioned above at the time of the call closure. Associated Countries which are not included in the European Innovation Scoreboard and are ranked below 25 on the <a href="#">Global Innovation Index 2020</a> are considered as 'moderate' or 'modest innovators'. In cases of Associated Countries not included in any of the previously mentioned references, the participation rank of the country in the Horizon Europe programme (<a href="#">H2020 country profile</a>) will be taken as a reference and countries ranked below the average will be considered as 'moderate' or 'modest innovators'.</p>

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	The consortium must consist of business acceleration service providers.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum.

Expected Outcome:

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Enhanced openness, competitiveness, and global potential of developing innovation ecosystems and creation of local jobs with high-value added;
- Balanced business activity across Europe;
- Improved quality and outreach of business acceleration services in developing innovation ecosystems.

Scope:

*Target group(s): Business-acceleration providers such as incubators, accelerators, company-builders, innovation agencies, business clubs and networks, regional public authorities and educational institutions.*

Incubators, accelerators and different types of ‘company-builders’ play a crucial role in providing start-ups with growth support. Due to the diverse innovation landscape in Europe, start-ups from better-connected innovation ecosystems benefit from more local accelerators with greater funding opportunities and more qualified business support services compared to their counterparts elsewhere<sup>29</sup>. This geographical gap often requires start-ups from less connected ecosystems to move to more established hubs elsewhere in Europe<sup>30</sup>. Consequently, there are fewer scale-ups in less connected innovation ecosystems, creating unbalanced business activity and employment opportunities. The Expanding Acceleration Ecosystems should reverse this flow by making ‘modest’ and ‘moderate’ innovation ecosystems more attractive to international companies interested in setting up their businesses outside the established centres and tapping into the potential of local ecosystems.

The action supports co-designed programmes of activities, of at least two (2) calendar years, proposed jointly by business acceleration entities located in less connected innovation ecosystems (‘modest’ and ‘moderate’) and innovation hubs (‘strong innovators’ and

<sup>29</sup> Although there is no credible benchmarking study on Europe’s accelerators, most worldwide or European rankings do not include accelerators from Europe’s less connected ecosystems, e.g. [DispatchedEurope](#) and [Crunchbase](#).

<sup>30</sup> [Startup Heatmap Europe, 2019](#).



innovation leaders')<sup>31</sup>, to improve the quality of business acceleration services, their network outreach and scale-up support, such as:

- share business acceleration related best practices, knowledge, tools and methods;
- exchange of promising start-ups and SMEs, including women-led businesses, involving participation in acceleration programmes abroad and introduction to foreign financing institutions;
- exchange of accelerator programme experts, including evaluators, thematic experts, mentors and investors;
- establishing links between local actors in developing ecosystems, particularly research, education institutions and local authorities and incoming start-ups, international accelerators and experts to enhance transfer of technology and knowledge to supply them with innovative solution;
- establishing a virtual platform with an overview of accelerator programmes, financial resources, mentors, events in partner ecosystems.

To ensure that the impact of the action goes beyond consortium members and their respective countries, it is encouraged that the consortium works closely with innovation agencies from their respective territories and beyond, and seeks for synergies with relevant EU initiatives such as the European Europe Network.

#### **HORIZON-EIE-2021-SCALEUP-01-02: Scaling up deep tech ecosystems**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  At least one Pan-European Research Infrastructure <sup>32</sup> to be part of the consortia.

<sup>31</sup> References: [Regional Innovation Scoreboard \(RIS\)](#), [European Innovation Scoreboard \(EIS\)](#), [Global Innovation Index\(GII\)](#).

<sup>32</sup> As described by the HLEG to assess the progress of ESFRI and other world class research infrastructures towards implementation and long-term sustainability in their report [Supporting the transformative impact of research infrastructures on European research](#) (2020) Annex3.

<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 2-6 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:  The granting authority can fund a maximum of one project.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:  Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. At least 60% of budget must be distributed in the form of grants to third parties. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 75 000. This amount is justified as providing grants to third parties is the primary activity of the action and this amount is necessary to fund projects of sufficient scale.

Expected Outcome:

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Enhanced development of deep tech<sup>33</sup> ecosystems around pan-European research and technology infrastructures to generate, scale and deploy breakthrough technologies with market and social value;
- Increased involvement of industry, including SMEs, with research and technology infrastructures to raise the technology level and competitiveness of companies and generate market opportunities, including through the generation of start-up or spin-off companies;
- Improved valorisation of the socio-economic impact of past investments in pan-European research and technology infrastructures from the European Structural and Investment Funds.

Scope:

*Target group(s): Pan-European research and technology infrastructures, industry including small and medium enterprises, clusters, universities, RTOs, business schools, national / regional innovation funding agencies.*

Pan-European research and technology infrastructures, as providers of advanced services and procurers of cutting-edge technologies, have an innovation potential related to the development of components, instruments, services and knowledge that could be better exploited to push the edge of existing technologies and lead to their deployment for socially

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<sup>33</sup> Deep tech is technology that is based on cutting-edge scientific advances and discoveries and is characterised by the need to stay at the technological forefront by constant interaction with new ideas and results from the lab. Deep tech is distinct from ‘high tech’ which tends to refer only to Research & Development intensity.

useful or market-oriented purposes. The aim of the action is to explore how to fully utilise and build on the experience and knowledge of existing or previous relevant initiatives <sup>34</sup>at pan-European and, where appropriate national or sub-national level, that have exploited the ecosystem-building potential of interactions with industry during the construction, operation and upgrading of research infrastructures. The proposal should pilot the possibility to seed the development of innovation ecosystems around diverse technological areas related to pan-European research and technology infrastructures by providing grants to pilot projects in three to five different technological areas.

The proposals should:

- identify deep tech opportunities related to pan-European research infrastructures with breakthrough potential;
- assess the feasibility and scalability of the identified opportunities;
- suggest a selection and clustering of those opportunities and nascent ecosystems that demonstrate sufficient maturity to provide a clear potential for industrial implementation;
- identify those opportunities with strongest potential towards industrial application with societal or market value;
- run and evaluate calls to provide grant funding to pilot projects in the identified technological areas;
- assess the outcome of the pilot grants.

**HORIZON-EIE-2021-SCALEUP-01-03: Women TechEU**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 0.075 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.75 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Applicants are not required to include in their proposal a plan for the exploitation and dissemination of results.</p> <p>The page limit of the application is 10 pages. Applicants must submit a</p>

<sup>34</sup> For example Horizon 2020 Grant agreement ID: 777222

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	short online application that includes a description of the business plan, along with a clearly defined growth strategy respectful of inclusion and gender-balance, and a description of the activities planned for the following five years. The proposal must also include a brief video pitch.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  Participation is limited to early-stage deep tech start-ups founded, or co-founded by women, holding a top management position (CEO, CTO or equivalent) in the company at the time of submission. The applying legal entity must be registered and established in an EU Member State or a Horizon Europe Associated Country for at least six months at the time of the submission. All deep tech domains are eligible.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:  Funding for grants awarded under this topic will take the form of a fixed lump sum of EUR 75 000.

Expected Outcome:

Project results are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- Support deep tech innovation as a basis for a modern, knowledge-driven, resource-efficient and competitive economy;
- Promote female leadership in the deep tech industry to build fairer, more inclusive, and more prosperous innovation ecosystems in Europe.

Scope:

Women TechEU supports <sup>35</sup> early-stage deep tech European start-ups. The initiative complements the activities funded under the European Innovation Council (EIC), paving the way for the participation of their start-ups in future EIC calls.

Women TechEU targets highly innovative start-ups founded, or co-founded by women, holding a top management position (CEO, CTO or equivalent) in the company at the time of submission. The company must be registered and established in an EU Member State or a Horizon Europe Associated Country for at least six months at the time of the submission.

All deep tech<sup>36</sup> domains are eligible, with the emphasis being on overall gender balance and the position held by women in the start-up.

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<sup>35</sup> The topic will be supported with a budget transfer of EUR 2 million from the European Innovation Council Work Programme 2021 (EIC WP 2021).

Support provided to Women TechEU beneficiaries under this initiative is made up of the following components:

- financial support to the company as an individual grant of EUR 75 000 supporting activities such as upgrading the business model, updating the business plan and growth strategy, finding partners and investors, market validation, etc.;
- mentoring and coaching provided by the EIC Business Acceleration Services (BAS), under the new ‘Women Leadership Programme’, which includes dedicated networking and pitching events;
- the possibility to participate in dedicated activities organised by InvestEU and the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN).

At the end of the funded project, and after completing the Women Leadership Programme, beneficiaries will submit an evaluation report. Women TechEU beneficiaries will become part of a community of peers, and given opportunities to expand their network and showcase their business at pitching and networking events, to give visibility to their work and attract further funding.

**Call - Elevating the scalability potential of European business (2022.1)**

***HORIZON-EIE-2022-SCALEUP-01***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>37</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>38</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2022		
Opening: 25 Jan 2022				

<sup>36</sup> Deep tech is technology that is based on cutting-edge scientific advances and discoveries and is characterised by the need to stay at the technological forefront by constant interaction with new ideas and results from the lab. Deep tech is distinct from ‘high tech’ which tends to refer only to Research & Development intensity.

<sup>37</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.  
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>38</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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Deadline(s): 10 May 2022				
HORIZON-EIE-2022-SCALEUP-01-01	CSA	5.00	Around 1.00	5
Overall indicative budget		5.00		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-EIE-2022-SCALEUP-01-01: Expanding Entrepreneurial Ecosystems**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 1.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply:  Consortia must have at least three (3) independent legal entities, of which at least one (1) is established in 'modest' or 'moderate' innovator

	<p>region and at least one (1) in 'strong' or 'innovation leader' innovator region. The <a href="#">Regional Innovation Scoreboard</a> is taken as a reference, and in the case of entities representing national authorities, the <a href="#">European Innovation Scoreboard</a>. The applicants must use as a reference the latest version of the documents mentioned above at the time of the call closure. Associated Countries which are not included in the European Innovation Scoreboard and are ranked below 25 on the <a href="#">Global Innovation Index 2020</a> are considered as 'moderate' or 'modest innovators'. In cases of Associated Countries not included in any of the previously mentioned references, the participation rank of the country in the Horizon Europe programme (<a href="#">H2020 country profile</a>) will be taken as a reference and countries ranked below the average will be considered as 'moderate' or 'modest innovators'.</p> <p>The consortium must consist of at least one educational institution and at least one representative of the private sector.</p> <p>Legal entities established in Widening countries may join already selected actions, subject to the agreement of the respective consortium and provided that legal entities from such countries are not yet participating in it.</p>
<p><i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i></p>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum.</p>

Expected Outcome:

Projects results are expected to contribute to some of the following expected outcomes:

- Improved flows of innovation resources between innovation ecosystems at various levels of developments;
- Improved quality of entrepreneurial education and local talents equipped with skills to support business acceleration and digitalisation<sup>39</sup>;
- Enhanced entrepreneurial activity in developing innovation ecosystems and its scale up across Europe or internationally;
- Increased youth (self) employability;
- Raised awareness of diverse business cultures and opportunities across sectors and / or geographies.

Scope:

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<sup>39</sup> See [Entrepreneurship Competence Framework](#) for more information on entrepreneurial competences.

*Target group(s): Vocational schools, higher education establishments, public authorities in the field of education and employment, SMEs, corporations.*

The transforming economy and rapid development of technology have changed employment conditions and the set of skills needed to grow one's own business. More than ever should educational institutions work hand in hand with the business sector to prepare students for a rapidly changing working environment by nurturing their entrepreneurial competences. Compared to dense areas around economic centres, the entrepreneurial skills and activity gap is bigger in peripheral areas with lower economic activity, confirming the importance of closely interlinked ecosystems for sustaining entrepreneurial activity and employment rates.

The Expanding Entrepreneurial Ecosystems should enhance entrepreneurial skills of youth in 'modest' and 'moderate' innovation ecosystems by supporting entrepreneurial education through programmes designed in close collaboration with the private sector and business acceleration entities. The proposals should leverage on the best practices of the private sector in Europe's well performing innovation hubs and the existing collaboration with educational institutions. Only by building local talents, including female talents, and providing them with knowledge and opportunities to contribute to the local private sector or develop their own businesses, the local innovation ecosystem can expand based on sustainable and inclusive growth. The proposals should valorise high levels of technical skills in developing innovation ecosystems with hands-on knowledge and experiences in business management and international scale-up process.

The action supports co-designed programmes of activities, of at least two (2) study years, proposed jointly by educational institutions from 'modest' and 'moderate' innovation ecosystems and the private sector from innovation hubs ('strong innovators' and 'innovation leaders')<sup>40</sup>, to nurture entrepreneurial skills by activities, for example:

- engagement of business experts into the implementation of educational programmes;
- engagement of students and graduates from various disciplines and departments into the respective companies' structures, and engagement of educational staff in companies' business processes, both with a target of gender-balanced participation;
- organisation of co-ideation challenges, where students can propose innovative solutions in the field of partners' expertise and are provided with resources and support to develop the product and its business development strategy.

To ensure that the impact of the action goes beyond consortium members and their respective countries, it is encouraged that the consortium works closely with innovation agencies from their respective territories and beyond, and seeks for synergies with relevant EU initiatives such as the European Institute of Technology and Innovation.

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<sup>40</sup> References: [Regional Innovation Scoreboard \(RIS\)](#), [European Innovation Scoreboard \(EIS\)](#), [Global Innovation Index \(GII\)](#).



**Call - Elevating the scalability potential of European business (2022.2)**

***HORIZON-EIE-2022-SCALEUP-02***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>41</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>42</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2022		
Opening: 21 Jun 2022 Deadline(s): 04 Oct 2022				
HORIZON-EIE-2022-SCALEUP-02-01	CSA	5.00	Around 1.00	5
HORIZON-EIE-2022-SCALEUP-02-02	CSA	10.00	Around 0.075	133
Overall indicative budget		15.00		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.

<sup>41</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.  
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>42</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-EIE-2022-SCALEUP-02-01: Expanding Investments Ecosystems**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 1.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply: Consortia must have at least three (3) independent legal entities, of which at least one (1) is established in 'modest' or 'moderate' innovator region and at least one (1) in 'strong' or 'innovation leader' innovator region. The <a href="#">Regional Innovation Scoreboard</a> is taken as a reference, and in the case of entities representing national authorities, the <a href="#">European Innovation Scoreboard</a>. The applicants must use as a reference the latest version of the documents mentioned above at the time of the call closure. Associated Countries which are not included in the European Innovation Scoreboard and are ranked below 25 on the <a href="#">Global Innovation Index 2020</a> are considered as 'moderate' or 'modest innovators'. In cases of Associated Countries not included in any of the previously mentioned references, the participation rank of the country in the Horizon Europe programme (<a href="#">H2020 country profile</a>) will be taken as a reference and countries ranked below the average will be considered as 'moderate' or 'modest innovators'.</p> <p>Legal entities established in Widening countries may join already selected actions, subject to the agreement of the respective consortium and provided that legal entities from such countries are not yet participating in it.</p>
<i>Legal and financial</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions

<i>set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025). <sup>43</sup> .
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Expected Outcome:

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Increased access to capital and investments in less connected innovation ecosystems, enhancing their openness, competitiveness, and global potential;
- Increased venture investments and enabled late-stage growth of local start-ups in less connected and developing innovation ecosystems;
- Facilitated investors’ access to the flow of local deals;
- Improved investors’ knowledge on regulatory frameworks and networks to support joint cross-border ventures in new markets.

Scope:

*Target group(s): Business-acceleration providers such as incubators, accelerators, company-builders, innovation agencies, business clubs and networks, public and private VCs and their networks, national and regional promotional banks.*

The lack of funding is one of the most problematic aspects of business growth in less connected innovation ecosystems and there are huge disparities between company needs and the available funding. Existing interventions by public and private funders are limited and further resources are necessary to bridge the gap. The lack of funding is harmful for local start-ups’ survival rate and the development of regional scale-ups, especially for women-led companies. While the established European start-up hubs attract significant money and attention, the innovation ecosystems in other areas try to keep pace with fewer resources. In the struggle for resources, many start-ups face the choice to either close their business or move elsewhere, while foreign investors struggle to enter new markets due to insufficient information about the market, its opportunities and regulatory frameworks.

The Expanding Investments Ecosystems should attract foreign investors into “modest’ and ‘moderate’ innovation ecosystems by raising awareness of local innovation ecosystems and

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<sup>43</sup> This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision\\_he\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf)

their start-ups, as well as the potential of the whole region, to capital providers from across Europe.

The action supports co-designed programmes of activities, of at least two (2) years, proposed by business acceleration service providers and/or investor networks and clubs, located in less connected innovation ecosystems ('modest' and 'moderate') and innovation hubs ('strong innovators' and innovation leaders')<sup>44</sup>, to facilitate the entry of funders in less connected innovation ecosystems through activities, for example:

- market orientation / introduction programmes for European investors, including establishment of central points of information for foreign investors providing them with knowledge on the ecosystem's establishment conditions, incentives, tax and legislation;
- assistance to foreign EU and international investors / Venture Capitalists, including women investors, during the whole process of investment, from the pre-entry stage until the exit, by ensuring support in administrative, legal, linguistic and cultural issues;
- organisation of European and worldwide international business forums, conferences and events to attract and connect international with local investors;
- peer-matching of investors and other networking activities to encourage joint ventures;
- a repository of best practices of market entry facilitation for international investors;
- a list of recommendations for local authorities and European regulators to better address investors' entry challenges and facilitate cross-border deals.

To ensure that the impact of the action goes beyond consortium members and their respective countries, it is encouraged that the consortium works closely with innovation agencies from their respective territories and beyond, and seeks for synergies with relevant EU initiatives such as the Enterprise Europe Network.

#### **HORIZON-EIE-2022-SCALEUP-02-02: Women TechEU**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 0.075 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Admissibility</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following

<sup>44</sup> References: [Regional Innovation Scoreboard \(RIS\)](#), [European Innovation Scoreboard \(EIS\)](#), [Global Innovation Index \(GI\)](#).

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<i>conditions</i>	<p>exceptions apply:</p> <p>Applicants are not required to include in their proposal a plan for the exploitation and dissemination of results.</p> <p>The page limit of the application is 10 pages. Applicants must submit a short online application that includes a description of the business plan, along with a clearly defined growth strategy, and a description of the activities planned for the following five years. The proposal must also include a brief video pitch.</p>
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Participation is limited to early-stage deep tech start-ups founded, or co-founded by women, holding a top management position (CEO, CTO or equivalent) in the company at the time of submission. The applying legal entity must be registered and established in an EU Member State or a Horizon Europe Associated Country for at least six months at the time of the submission. All deep tech domains are eligible.</p>
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The EU contribution will take the form of a fixed lump sum of EUR 75 000 as defined in the <a href="#">Decision authorising the use of financing not linked to costs for the Women TechEU actions under the Horizon Europe Programme (2021-2027)</a>.</p>
<i>Evaluation Procedure</i>	<p>The final score of a proposal will be the median of the individual scores of the individual evaluators; and the report will comprise a collation of the individual reports, or extracts from them. Where appropriate, a Panel Review will be organised remotely.</p>

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- Support deep tech innovation as a basis for a modern, knowledge-driven, resource-efficient and competitive economy;
- Promote female leadership in the deep tech industry to build fairer, more inclusive, and more prosperous innovation ecosystems in Europe.

Scope: Women TechEU targets highly innovative start-ups founded, or co-founded by women, holding a top management position (CEO, CTO or equivalent) in the company at the time of submission. The company must be registered and established in an EU Member State or a Horizon Europe Associated Country for at least six months at the time of the submission.

All deep tech<sup>45</sup> domains are eligible, with the emphasis being on overall gender balance and the position held by women in the start-up.

Support<sup>46</sup> provided to Women TechEU beneficiaries under this initiative is made up of the following components:

- financial support to the company as an individual grant of EUR 75 000 supporting activities such as evaluating and refining products/services, design, user experience, upgrading the business model, updating the business plan and growth strategy, finding partners and investors, market validation, etc.;
- mentoring and coaching provided by the EIC Business Acceleration Services (BAS), under the new ‘Women Leadership Programme’, which includes dedicated networking and pitching events;
- the possibility to participate in dedicated activities organised by InvestEU and the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN).

At the end of the funded project, and after completing the Women Leadership Programme, beneficiaries will submit a short final report. Women TechEU beneficiaries will become part of a community of peers, and given opportunities to expand their network and showcase their business at pitching and networking events, to give visibility to their work and attract further funding.

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<sup>45</sup> Deep tech is technology that is based on cutting-edge scientific advances and discoveries and is characterised by the need to stay at the technological forefront by constant interaction with new ideas and results from the lab. Deep tech is distinct from ‘high tech’ which tends to refer only to Research & Development intensity.

<sup>46</sup> The topic will be supported with a budget transfer of EUR 10 million from the European Innovation Council Work Programme 2022 (EIC WP 2022).

## **Destination: INNOVSMES - Partnership on Innovative SMEs**

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) represent the backbone of the European economy. They represent 99.8% of all enterprises in the EU non-financial business sector and two thirds of employment. However, SMEs in Europe face obstacles to growth, expansion and scaling up, including lack of skills, administrative burden, and access to finance. Many lack capacity for innovation and struggle to enter international markets.

Greater cooperation with partners in Europe and beyond can help to address many of these issues. However, opportunities for bottom-up, international collaborations are limited. SMEs can struggle to find support for their internationalisation efforts. At national level, support is often limited to collaboration among partners within the same Member State. Levels of investment to support internationalisation in innovative SMEs vary and there is suboptimal co-ordination of national schemes. Overall, these issues weaken the resilience of the European innovation ecosystem.

The proposal for the topic under this destination should cover a specific niche that other EU, national and regional interventions do not address for the benefit of innovative SMEs in Europe: cooperation among European and/or international partners, with at least one innovative SME as the project leader. The proposed initiative would help innovative SMEs to increase their research and innovation (R&I) capacity and productivity and to become embedded in global value chains and new markets. It would achieve this by supporting innovative SMEs in developing products, processes and services through funding market-led, cross-border, R&I collaborative projects and providing accompanying measures. It would enable global collaboration and the commercialisation of new knowledge. It would thereby strengthen the overall resilience of the European innovation ecosystem.

In line with the Horizon Europe objectives<sup>47</sup> it aims to generate knowledge, support the access to and uptake of innovative solutions by SMEs (including to address global challenges), facilitate technological development, demonstration, knowledge and technology transfer, and strengthen deployment and exploitation of innovative solutions.

In line with Horizon Europe Strategic Planning, the partnership aims to contribute to global and European policies. In particular the strategic priorities of the European Commission with a special focus on the ‘European Green Deal’ and ‘An economy that works for people’ including the SME Strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe, as well actions towards tackling the COVID-19 crisis and the post-COVID era.

### **Expected impact**

The proposal for the topic under this destination should set out a credible pathway to contributing to the following expected impact:

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<sup>47</sup> HE Regulation, Article.3.2.(b), (c).

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To help innovative SMEs to grow and successfully access European and international markets and to embed in global value chains by :

- Strengthening the resilience of the European innovation ecosystem;
- Addressing the productivity and internationalisation gap between innovative SMEs and large companies and aiming to improve SMEs' global scale-up potential leading to increased employment and turnover;
- Leveraging investment for innovative SMEs.

Proposals are invited against the following topic:

The following call(s) in this work programme contribute to this destination:

Call	Budgets (EUR million)		Deadline(s)
	2021	2022	
HORIZON-EIE-2021-INNOVSMES-01	34.99	37.89	01 Sep 2021
Overall indicative budget	34.99	37.89	



**Call - Partnership on Innovative SMEs**

***HORIZON-EIE-2021-INNOVSMES-01***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>48</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)		Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>49</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2021	2022		
Opening: 22 Jun 2021 Deadline(s): 01 Sep 2021					
HORIZON-EIE-2021-INNOVSMES-01-01	COFUND	34.99	37.89	Around 72.88	1
Overall indicative budget		34.99	37.89		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General

<sup>48</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.  
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>49</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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	Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-EIE-2021-INNOVSMES-01-01: European Partnership on Innovative SMEs**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 72.88 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 72.88 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Programme Co-fund Action
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The granting authority can fund a maximum of one project.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: The starting date of grants awarded under this topic may be as of the submission date of the application. Applicants must justify the need for a retroactive starting date in their application. Costs incurred from the starting date of the action may be considered eligible. The funding rate is 30 % of the eligible costs. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. Financial support provided by the participants to third parties is one of the primary activities of this action in order to be able to achieve its objectives. The EUR 60 000 threshold provided for in Article 204(a) of the Financial Regulation No 2018/1046 does not apply.
<i>Total indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the partnership is up to EUR 250 million.

Expected Outcome:

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Improved knowledge transfer in the innovative SMEs ecosystem, through increased and sustained collaboration between SMEs, public research partners and academia;
- Mitigation of difficulties in access to finance for innovative SMEs and thus contribute to enhanced growth and expansion of innovative SMEs;
- Improved innovative SME access to new international markets or value chains thus leading to improved market share and sales for innovative SMEs increasing their employment capacity;
- Increase public research and innovation funding to innovative SMEs, to spur more high quality collaborations and more innovative solutions;
- Pull together national efforts to spur internationalisation and collaboration in innovative SMEs, avoiding unnecessary duplication leading to a simplified offer to beneficiaries, achieving a more balanced geographic participation, ensuring complementarity and improved innovation ecosystems across Europe.

Scope:

The proposal should provide mainly two types of activities. Firstly, regular calls for proposals resulting in collaborative research and innovation activities. These activities should result in a faster time to market, de-risking investment, supporting business growth, contributing to EU and global priorities and supporting access to markets and knowledge. Secondly, through coordination and support activities, the creation of synergies between and synchronisation of national programmes, and a better cooperation and knowledge exchange between national intermediaries.

While collaborative research and innovation activities for internationalisation of innovative SMEs exist to some extent at Member State and EU level the alignment of national programmes and more effective and efficient processes of intermediaries and funding bodies are not addressed in instruments and programmes other than the Eurostars 1 and 2 programmes, supported under previous framework programmes. The initiative should draw on the experiences, and build on the successes, of those predecessor programmes.

There is a clear added value and ‘selling point’ for the initiative to further address gaps towards a better alignment and increased focus on internationalisation. This reflects the definition of European Partnerships in the Horizon Europe regulation<sup>50</sup> as initiatives where the union and its partners ‘commit to jointly support the development and implementation of a programme of research and innovation activities, including those related to market, regulatory or policy uptake.’

The below list of specific activities, going beyond research and innovation activities, can therefore be implemented under the partnership and are anticipated as expected outputs:

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<sup>50</sup> Definition as per Article 2(47) of the Horizon Europe Regulation.

- Support transnational near-market collaborative research and innovation addressing technological and societal challenges;
- Enhance SME readiness (absorptive capacities in all participating countries),
- Attract wide range of beneficiaries by country and SME type and age;
- Create synergies among national programmes by streamlining their execution;
- Enhance cooperation and knowledge exchange at level of national intermediaries.

The proposed initiative will help innovative SMEs to increase their research and innovation capacities and productivity and to become embedded in global value chains and new markets. It will achieve this by supporting innovative SMEs in developing products, processes and services through funding market-led, cross-border, research and innovation collaborative projects and providing accompanying measures. The initiative addresses collaboration in Europe and beyond, and the commercialisation of new knowledge. Thereby it will strengthen the overall resilience of the European innovation ecosystem.

The overall objective of the initiative is to implement a Co-funded European Partnership for Innovative SMEs to stimulate economic growth and job creation by enhancing the competitiveness of innovative SMEs while contributing to deliver a positive economic, societal and environmental impact in Europe and beyond.

In order to address that objective, the initiative should:

- Enable innovative SMEs to develop all forms of innovation, including breakthrough innovation, and strengthen market deployment of innovative solutions;
- Foster the internationalisation of innovative SMEs;
- Connect national programmes to unlock the potential of all partners.

#### Type and range of activities

A main activity would be to run calls for proposals, organise the evaluation process and enable collaborative cross-border research and innovation projects. Beyond providing funding to innovative SMEs for cross-border R&I collaboration, they should include further promotion of the programme in underrepresented Member States, including but not limited to, through dissemination events, mutual learning seminars or roadshows.

The initiative should exploit synergies with cohesion policy funds and significantly support the widening aspect. In any case, links with regional smart specialisation strategies should be a priority.

Accompanying measures such as Innowwide should be included in the proposal.

#### Expected partner composition and geographical coverage

- National administrations and National Funding Bodies (NFBs).

The private sector and research actors would need to be mainly drawn from the activities of the national and/or regional funding organisations. The effort, networks and judgements of these organisations are key to initiate cross-border research collaborations, to help prepare applications and to fund successful participants. The success of the initiative depends largely on these organisations.

A dedicated implementation structure may notably support them through various activities and services such as to organise calls, manage funding, monitor payments and projects and implement dissemination events, roadshows, matchmaking events, webinars etc.

The initiative should have an extended geographical coverage beyond Member States and Associated Countries, and the potential to evolve towards a global programme under Horizon Europe, including through possible involvement of additional partners during the lifetime of the programme. Third countries are welcome to participate in the Partnership. The initiative should promote the ambition towards more projects involving other partners than those in geographical proximity and the sufficient utilisation of the potential of the extended Eureka network.

#### Types and levels of contributions from partners

Proposals should mobilise the necessary financial resources from participating national (or regional) research programmes with a view to implementing joint calls for transnational proposals resulting in grants to third parties.

Member States are invited to maximise the financial support provided to innovative SMEs through increased national funding during the selection process.

#### International dimension

Proposals should focus on supporting international projects led by innovative SMEs. They should enable international cooperation, enabling small businesses to learn, combine and share expertise and benefit from working beyond national borders.

In line with the ambitions of the partnership to foster international collaboration and the provisions of the model grant agreement, projects involving one legal entity established in a Member State or Associated Country as beneficiary and one legal entity established in a non-associated third country as partner may be supported in the same manner as under Eurostars 2. A substantial majority of the projects supported must involve at least two beneficiaries from Member States or Associated Countries.

#### Synergies

Focussing on helping innovative SMEs to grow and successfully embed in international markets and value chains by developing methodologies and technologies, the partnership is expected to collaborate closely with other relevant European Partnerships, missions and the European Innovation Council in order to ensure coherence and complementarity of activities.

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Proposals must describe the methodology for their collaboration and the aims the project wants to achieve with this kind of collaboration.

Proposals should include only their commitments for the grant covered by the present work programme.

The Commission envisages to include new actions in its work programmes 2023-2024 and 2025-2027 to award a grant to identified beneficiaries with the aim of continuing to provide support to the partnership for the duration of Horizon Europe.

## **Other actions not subject to calls for proposals**

### **1. Intellectual Property Helpdesk (IP Helpdesk)**

SMEs, including start-ups, and researchers do not always have sufficient knowledge of how to best use Intellectual Property<sup>51</sup> to facilitate in the future the exploitation of research results, either in a commercial or non-commercial manner. A smart use of intellectual property may help resilience of the European economy by increasing the chances that the scaling up and exploitation will take place in the EU. It will also help creators and inventors to obtain adequate reward for their intellectual efforts.

This action supports the better use of Intellectual Property by SMEs in setting up an IP Helpdesk based on the existing one and possibly extending its scope. The Helpdesk must offer access to knowledge via a website, propose trainings as well as individual advice in relation to cross-border IP issues and developing an IP strategy. The Helpdesk should work seamlessly with the EIC acceleration services, as well as selected other innovation ecosystem services. It should in particular coordinate the website offering with the EUIPO and the other EU funded IP support services (namely Helpdesks and IP Scan) and implement promotional activities in coordination with the action Awareness raising on Intellectual property (IP) management for European R&I.

The IP Helpdesk must aim at the following:

- Improving SME's knowledge about IP showing specifically how to use IP as strategic and structuring element for business development;
- Supporting applicants for IP issues that are relevant in cross-border research and commercial relationships supported by EU funds (IP rights management as to the results of common projects);
- Supporting the management, dissemination and/or valorisation of technologies and other intellectual assets;
- Increasing the participation of the target group(s): entrepreneurs, SMEs and start-ups (applicants, together with the universities), start-up hubs, universities (applicants), NCPs, Enterprise Europe Network partners, Chambers of commerce, professional associations, EIC coaches, Business accelerators (applicants providers).

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Fourth quarter of 2021

Indicative budget: EUR 3.00 million from the 2021 budget (IP Helpdesk)

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<sup>51</sup> On SME challenges with IP see the EUIPO study [IP SME scoreboard 2019](#).

## **2. Use of individual experts on assisting with the monitoring of actions (2021)**

This action will support the use of appointed independent experts for the monitoring of actions (grant agreement, grant decision, public procurement actions, financial instruments) and where appropriate include ethics checks.

A special allowance will be paid to the experts appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest.

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

Indicative timetable: Second quarter of 2021

Indicative budget: EUR 0.10 million from the 2021 budget (Use of individual experts on assisting with the monitoring of actions (2021))

## **3. Mapping and scoping of frugal and reverse innovation**

Originating from developing and emerging economies, frugal and reverse innovation<sup>52</sup> offer new opportunities for interactions between European and emerging markets, and the potential to serve better the needs of people and society while generating economic benefit. Within the context of Europe's sustainability agenda and the European Green Deal, frugal and reverse innovation offer simple solutions to many of today's most complex global challenges.

This action supports a study resulting in a mapping and scoping of the present volume of frugal and reverse innovation. It should provide orientations to support the development of a common language with a sufficiently broad definition of the concepts to inform potential future policy measures and support a more comprehensive approach at EU level. In doing so, this action can serve as a basis to bring together the different actors of frugal and reverse innovation, and help create a well-connected and robust sustainable innovation ecosystem in Europe.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: First quarter of 2022

Indicative budget: EUR 0.30 million from the 2022 budget (Frugal / Reverse Innovation)

## **4. Innovative practices in legislation around emerging tech**

The action should contribute to the general objective of the EIC Forum, which aims at fostering enabling framework conditions by enhancing flows of information and knowledge

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<sup>52</sup> Under the successive H2020 Innovation in SMEs WPs 2016-2017 and 2018-2020, the EU-funded [www.cubein.eu](http://www.cubein.eu) project actively has been supporting a better understanding of innovation in emerging economies. It has also been targeting reverse innovation as crucial topic.



on empowering innovation ecosystems policies and tools. With a special view on EIC beneficiaries, the study should focus on legal and policy initiatives in the intersection of emerging technologies and provide a better understanding of how the regulatory environment at EU, national and regional level may affect market uptake of emerging deep-tech solutions. While there are a limited number of studies focusing on innovation friendly frameworks and regulatory barriers to companies' innovation performance, none of them directly touches upon issues related to emerging deep tech and EIC beneficiaries. The work should build upon and be complementary with other relevant initiatives including those ongoing in Horizon Europe and the EIC as well as the Policy Support Facility. This project is expected to develop scenarios and guidance for the future use of experimental legislation with a special focus on regulatory sandboxes, based on compiling a repository of relevant legislative practices, incentives and impediments at EU and national level, including the outcomes of a benchmarking exercise in view of integrating the innovation aspect in EU policymaking.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: First quarter of 2022

Indicative budget: EUR 0.30 million from the 2022 budget (Innovative practices in legislation)

## **5. EIC FORUM support**

The EIC Forum will foster in an informal manner, enabling framework conditions and flows of information, knowledge, talent and best practices among actors of innovation ecosystems and the EIC, to fully harness the potential of innovation. The Forum will act as an interface between the sections of Pillar III of Horizon Europe, ensuring coordination between the EIC and the EIT, as well as with other relevant sections of Pillar I and II. By involving also other relevant Directorates Generals (DGs) from the Commission, the Forum will aim at promoting a coherent and inclusive approach to EU innovation ecosystems, by co-creating and co-designing policies and instruments.

The action will support the work of the EIC Forum and/or its working groups. Their aim will be to gather new or more robust evidence and / or to produce analyses in support of policy discussions.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: First quarter of 2022

Indicative budget: EUR 0.50 million from the 2022 budget (EIC FORUM support )

## **6. Creating and nurturing angel investing in the EU**

Given their involvement in early stages of companies, Business Angels play a crucial role in funding, coaching and supporting the growth potential of such companies. This tender<sup>53</sup> aims to strengthen and increase women's representation<sup>54</sup> in innovation and investment ecosystems for start-up and scale-up companies in the EU in view of their development and growth by supporting angel investors and their syndicates in countries where those remain weak and encouraging cross-border collaboration with countries with more developed angel investor communities.

Services to be contracted include:

- Developing and implementing a number of capacity-building and tailor-made angel investment programmes focusing notably on women. Beneficiaries of this programme will become active business angels in their countries, potentially functioning as seeds of new angel investment syndicates;
- Supporting the creation and development of new or existing Business Angel syndicates, and provide assistance for them to realise investments. The supported syndicates will strive to ensure gender parity;
- Provide assistance to the realisation of a number of national or sub-national schemes for co-investment vehicles with Business Angels;
- Preparing standardised investment term-sheets to facilitate and harmonise cross-border angel investing in the EU and support new angel investors in realising their first investments;
- Match-making angel investors with European start-ups, particularly at an early stage;
- Organising workshops to support the development of the above-mentioned tasks.

The implementation of the procurement will be monitored through a number of objective KPIs specified in the tender.

The tender will build on the results of the ‘Awareness-raising and capacity-building for business angels and other early-stage investors’ Coordination and Support Action (CSA) launched under the Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2016-2017<sup>55</sup>. The resulting contract will coordinate actions with relevant ongoing initiatives and organisations such as those managed by Business Angels Europe, European Business Angel Network, the European Women in Venture Capital, the Enterprise Europe Network, and Invest Europe.

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<sup>53</sup> The topic will be supported with a budget transfer of EUR 2 million from the European Innovation Council Work Programme 2022 (EIC WP 2022).

<sup>54</sup> The proportion of women business angels of the total number of angel investors in Europe remains extremely low. See "[The Barriers and Opportunities for Women Angel Investing in Europe](#)", "[Gender Smart Financing. Investing In and With Women: Opportunities for Europe](#)", and the State of European Tech Reports [2018](#) and [2021](#) for more information.

<sup>55</sup> <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/727812/results/fr>

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Second quarter of 2022

Indicative budget: EUR 2.00 million from the 2022 budget (Creating and nurturing angel investing in the EU)

## **7. Commission expert group on EIC FORUM**

This action will support the EIC FORUM operation with the implementation of the activities of its working groups. The appointed independent experts will assist with the implementation, evaluation and design of programmes.

A special allowance will be paid to the experts appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest. This amount is considered to be proportionate to the specific tasks to be assigned to the experts, including the number of meetings to be attended and possible preparatory work.

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

Indicative timetable: First quarter of 2022

Indicative budget: EUR 0.30 million from the 2022 budget (EIC Forum Experts)

## **8. Use of individual experts on assisting with the monitoring of actions (2022)**

This action will support the use of appointed independent experts for the monitoring of running actions (grant agreement, grant decision, public procurement actions, financial instruments) funded under Horizon Europe and previous Framework Programmes and where appropriate include ethics checks.

A special allowance will be paid to the experts appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest.

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

Indicative timetable: First quarter of 2022

Indicative budget: EUR 0.20 million from the 2022 budget (Monitoring)

## **9. Commission fee as EUREKA member (administrative costs)**

This action will cover the Commission fee as a member of Eureka (administrative costs). This action will support coordination activities aimed at increasing complementarities and synergy between EUREKA and the Horizon Europe in areas of common interest.

EUREKA is an international network established in 1985 as an agreement between 18 countries to foster European competitiveness and integration and to encourage Research & Development cooperation. Since then, it expanded to include over 45 countries in Europe and beyond who share the same goals and have national funding available to organisations who apply through our programmes.

The EU is a member of EUREKA and, as such, contributes to the budget of the EUREKA Secretariat.

Type of Action: Subscription action

Indicative timetable: Second quarter of 2021 and first quarter of 2022

Indicative budget: EUR 0.30 million from the 2021 budget and EUR 0.50 million from the 2022 budget

## **10. Establishment of an indicator system and defining relevant data collection methods**

The Commission services have decided to not implement this action.

Form of Funding: Direct action grants

Type of Action: Provision of technical/scientific services by the Joint Research Centre

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## Budget<sup>56</sup>

	Budget line(s)	2021 Budget (EUR million)	2022 Budget (EUR million)
<b>Calls</b>			
HORIZON-EIE-2021-CONNECT-01		8.00	
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020302</i>	<i>8.00</i>	
HORIZON-EIE-2022-CONNECT-01			7.00
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020302</i>		<i>7.00</i>
HORIZON-EIE-2022-CONNECT-02			12.50
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020302</i>		<i>12.50</i>
HORIZON-EIE-2021-SCALEUP-01		13.75	
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020302</i>	<i>13.75</i>	
HORIZON-EIE-2022-SCALEUP-01			5.00
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020302</i>		<i>5.00</i>
HORIZON-EIE-2022-SCALEUP-02			15.00
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020302</i>		<i>15.00</i>
HORIZON-EIE-2021-INNOVSMES-01		34.99	37.89
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020302</i>	<i>34.99</i>	<i>37.89</i>
<b>Other actions</b>			
Public procurement		3.00	3.10

<sup>56</sup>

The budget figures given in this table are rounded to two decimal places.  
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

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	<i>from</i> <i>01.020302</i>	<i>3.00</i>	<i>3.10</i>
Expert contract action		0.10	0.50
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020302</i>	<i>0.10</i>	<i>0.50</i>
Subscription action		0.30	0.50
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020302</i>	<i>0.30</i>	<i>0.50</i>
Provision of technical/scientific services by the Joint Research Centre			
<b>Estimated total budget</b>		60.14	81.49