



Developments and thinking on Horizon Europe Funding for Cluster 6 'Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment'

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Boosting the participation of UK in Horizon Europe

UK is now an '**Associated Country**' to Horizon Europe (like Iceland, Norway, and others) and has full rights equivalent to those of Member States for *grant funding* from Horizon Europe calls under the 2024 Work Programmes and beyond. **Funding for successful projects comes directly from the European Commission.**

The **NICP Horizon Europe Newsletter** (May 2024) focuses on 'Boosting Participation'. It is available on the NICP website [here](#). You can sign up with email subscription for the NICP Network Bulletin at <https://horizoneuropeni.com/> and follow us on X @HORIZONEUROPENI.

News and Developments

Update on Cluster 6 Call 2024 (Closed)

The main 2024 Cluster 6 calls for proposals covering 'Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture & Environment' closed in February. The Commission received 1,269 submitted proposals competing for €890 million in EU funding. Evaluations have been completed with independent experts.

- Projects successful under the Single Stage call mode were informed in June and are anticipated to start from November 2024.
- Successful Stage 1 consortia were invited to submit a full proposal for the Stage 2 deadline (17th September). Projects should be informed of outcome of Stage 2 evaluations in December 2024, with successfully funded projects commencing from as early as May 2025.

Preparation of Horizon Europe Work Programmes for 2025-2027

The Commission has adopted the [second strategic plan for Horizon Europe](#), shaping research and innovation funding for 2025–2027. It focuses on the green and digital transition, Europe's resilience and competitiveness, and tackling climate change and biodiversity loss. Notably, the plan commits the Commission to allocating 10% of the remaining budget to biodiversity-related topics. It also introduces nine new [European partnerships](#) of which "Forests and Forestry for a Sustainable Future" sits most squarely under Cluster 6.

The draft Work Programmes for 2025 are well advanced, however, the European elections in July and the new European Parliament means we are still waiting for sign-off of the budget for 2025-2027 and consequently finalisation of the 2025 Work Programmes. Publication and opening of calls for proposals is expected in Q2 of 2025 – from April onwards. The **2025 Cluster 6 Work Programme** is now in its third draft (July 2024). Calls are expected to open in April 2025 and deadlines are in September. Drafts are provided to NCPs on a confidential basis, however consortia are already developing based on the draft; **please contact the NICP if you would like to discuss the fit of your ideas to topics in next years' calls.**

The development of the work programmes for 2026-2027 will commence after the summer break. First drafts are expected in early 2025 and it is anticipated that 2026 Cluster 6 calls may open in late 2025.

Biotechnology in the spotlight

In March the Communication [Building the future with nature](#) identified challenges and barriers to boost biotechnology and biomanufacturing in the EU and proposed a series of targeted actions to unlock the full potential of this area, including:

- A study on streamlining of biotech legislation, laying the foundations for a **possible EU Biotech Act**.
- Establish an **EU Biotech Hub** to help companies navigate through the regulatory framework and identify support to scale up.
- Deepen **cooperation with international partners**, such as the US, on biotechnology research
- Further develop methodologies to ensure a **fair comparison between fossil-based and bio-based** products including the review of the Product Environmental Footprint.
- **Review the EU Bioeconomy Strategy** by the end of 2025 taking into account the current societal, demographic and environmental challenges.

- Advocate for the **inclusion of biotech and biomanufacturing as part of the European Innovation Council Accelerator Work Programme 2025.**
- Accelerate the uptake of AI in biotechnology together with stakeholders.

The Commission has identified **biotech as one of four critical technologies**, (alongside advanced semiconductors, artificial intelligence, and quantum) where there are economic and societal risks from the potential leakage of technologies following rising tensions with China. A risk assessment, due to be published by the end of 2024, will evaluate the EU's dependencies and vulnerabilities in these areas. Advances in life sciences, supported by digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI), and the potential of solutions based on biology to solve societal issues, make biotech a promising technological area to help the EU to modernise its agriculture, forestry, energy, food and feed sectors and industry.

New European Bauhaus Facility

Tentative plans for a new EU Mission on the [New European Bauhaus \(NEB\)](#) are no longer going ahead. Announced in 2020, the Commission intended the New European Bauhaus as new cultural project for Europe, fostering sustainable solutions for transforming the built environment and lifestyles under the green transition. It was conceived that architects, artists, students, engineers, designers would work together co-create a wave of European renovation. Now, rather than an additional Mission, the New European Bauhaus will be a cross-cluster 'Facility' for 2025-27, with a **new dedicated part of the Work Programme and funding of €120m p.a. from the clusters**. There will be two components – an initial R&I component (funded wholly by Horizon), followed by a 'roll-out component' establishing synergies with other relevant programmes (Cohesion, Life and Single Market Programme funds).

The Commission has published a [questionnaire](#) as part of a consultation - live until 17 September.

Sustainable Food Systems

A **Research Needs and Priorities Workshop** in January discussed the challenges facing the global food system and future research needs and priorities. This was jointly organised by the Strategic Working groups of the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR): ARCH, FOOD SYSTEMS and BIOECONOMY. A [short report](#) summarises general recommendations, research needs, and needs for research and innovation facilities for each of the following areas which were covered in the workshop:

- Safe and nutritious food and sustainable and healthy diets at the global level
- Equitable and fair global transformation of food systems
- Resilience and food security at European and global scales
- Governance and policies for sustainable food systems

Based on the workshop results, a policy brief will be published in late summer 2024. The results will also feed into the development of the 2025-2027 Horizon Europe Work Programmes and forward plans for FP10.

FutureFoodS, the selected **co-funded partnership on Food Systems of Horizon Europe Framework Programme commenced in June**. The partnership of 87 partners from 29 countries (details [here on CORDIS](#)) involves national funding agencies that will launch calls for research and innovation. There is no UK funder currently in the partnership. FutureFoodS will also develop Living Labs and create a new European food system observatory. Follow [FutureFoodS on LinkedIn](#).

The **Animal Task Force (ATF)**, a European Public-Private Partnership linking European industry and research providers for innovation in the livestock sector, is currently updating its Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda. In the meantime ATF has released a [Vision Paper for a sustainable livestock sector in Europe](#). This outlines the challenges and suggested priorities for research for Horizon Europe to enhance innovation and sustainability in the livestock production sector of Europe's food supply.

Development of Framework Programme 10 (FP10)

Horizon Europe (FP9) ends on 31 December 2027, although funded projects will continue until completion. Planning for the follow-on programme, FP10, started earlier this year. Agreement on the structure is

needed by the end of 2026 and budget agreement by the end of 2027. FP10 will commence on 01 January 2028, also running for seven years. The first calls will be launched during 2028.

Open Calls

Cluster 6: Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment

The main Cluster 6 2024 calls closed in February, however, in an update of the work programme (which can be accessed [here](#)) four new topics were added. These are currently open; **Deadline for submissions: 24 September 2024**

- [HORIZON-CL6-2024-FARM2FORK-03-1](#) Spotlight on plant priority pest: fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*)
- [HORIZON-CL6-2024-CLIMATE-02-1](#) New knowledge and innovations for climate-smart farming - connecting research stations
- [HORIZON-CL6-2024-CLIMATE-02-2](#) Closing the research gaps on Essential Biogeochemical Ocean Variables (EOVs) in support of global assessments
- [HORIZON-CL6-2024-CLIMATE-02-3](#) Overcoming barriers and delivering innovative solutions to enable the green transition

Circular Bio-Based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU)

The CBE JU call 2024 is open with a budget of €213 million available for 18 topics advancing the competitive circular bio-based industries in Europe. Topics can be access individually [here](#) on the Funding and Tenders Portal. Supporting information and guidance is available on the CBE JU's [Open calls page](#). **Deadline for submissions: 18 September 2024.**

Mission A Soil Deal for Europe

There are nine topics under the Soil Mission Call 2024 currently open for submission. The replay of the information event can be found at [EU Missions & cross-cutting activities: A Soil Deal for Europe Mission \(youtube.com\)](#). The deadline for submissions is **08 October 2024**. Looking ahead [European Mission Soil Week 2024](#) will be held on 12-13 November 2024 in Brussels.

Call - Research and Innovation and other actions to support the implementation 'A Soil Deal for Europe'

- HORIZON-MISS-2024-SOIL-01-01: Co-creating solutions for soil health in Living Labs
- HORIZON-MISS-2024-SOIL-01-02: Living Labs in urban areas for healthy soils
- HORIZON-MISS-2024-SOIL-01-03: Towards a dynamic monitoring system to assess status and spatiotemporal changes of soil erosion at European scale
- HORIZON-MISS-2024-SOIL-01-04: Systems to quantify nitrogen fluxes and uncertainties in European landscapes
- HORIZON-MISS-2024-SOIL-01-05: Soil health, pollinators and key ecosystem functions
- HORIZON-MISS-2024-SOIL-01-06: Harnessing the multifunctional potential of soil biodiversity for healthy cropping systems
- HORIZON-MISS-2024-SOIL-01-07: Development of high spatial-resolution monitoring approaches and geographically-explicit registry for carbon farming
- HORIZON-MISS-2024-SOIL-01-08: Managing forest peatsoils
- HORIZON-MISS-2024-SOIL-01-09: Assessment of Soil Health in Africa

Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030

There are seven topics across two calls under the Ocean Mission Call 2024 currently open for submission. For the latest information on the Ocean Mission check out the information on the [European Maritime Forum's Mission page](#) and the Commission's [Mission Ocean and Waters service portal](#). The deadline for submissions is **18 September 2024**.

Call 1 - Actions for the implementation of the Mission Restore our ocean and waters by 2030

- HORIZON-MISS-2024-OCEAN-01-01: European Blue Parks – Offshore marine protected areas
- HORIZON-MISS-2024-OCEAN-01-02: Danube river basin lighthouse – Protection and restoration of migratory fish habitats
- HORIZON-MISS-2024-OCEAN-01-03: Atlantic and Arctic sea basin lighthouse, Mediterranean Sea basin lighthouse, Baltic and North Sea basin lighthouse - Reducing the environmental impacts of fisheries on marine species and habitats
- HORIZON-MISS-2024-OCEAN-01-04: Science for Community – Building the marine Citizen Science data network of the future to valorise data coming from the ocean and increase engagement
- HORIZON-MISS-2024-OCEAN-01-05: Our Blue Future – Co-designing a future vision of a restored ocean and water system in the EU by 2030 and 2050

Call 2 - Support to communities of actors for the Mission Restore our ocean and waters by 2030

- HORIZON-MISS-2024-OCEAN-02-01: Community-led actions to restore our ocean, seas and waters
- HORIZON-MISS-2024-OCEAN-02-02: Support for the Coalition of waterfront cities, regions and islands for Mission Ocean and Waters

European Innovation Council Pathfinder Challenges 2024 (Pillar 3)

EIC Pathfinder Challenges provide funding for specific challenges and innovative technological solutions from high-risk/high-gain research and development. The complexity and high-risk nature of this research will require multidisciplinary collaborations. A portfolio of projects will be established that explore different perspectives, competing approaches or complementary aspects of each specific Challenge.

HORIZON-EIC-2024-PATHFINDERCHALLENGES-01-03 Nature inspired alternatives for food packaging and films for agriculture – aims to support ambitious interdisciplinary research leading to the development and production of sustainable alternatives for food packaging and agricultural production. These materials must have a reduced environmental impact, through design and production, while delivering the functional characteristics of plastics.

Deadline: 16 October 2024 For more details read the [EIC Work Programme 2024](#) (pg 27-33 – general description of the funding instrument; pg 41-44 detail of the specific challenge) Info Day [Recording](#) (Pathfinder Challenges section commences at approx. 10:35)

Forthcoming Calls

Cluster 5: Climate, Energy and Mobility 2024

Call topics with cross-over interest to Cluster 6 areas:

- [HORIZON-CL5-2024-D3-02-03](#) Development of smart concepts of integrated energy driven bio-refineries for co-production of advanced biofuels, bio-chemicals and biomaterials.
- [HORIZON-CL5-2024-D3-02-13](#) Support to the activities of the SET Plan Key Action area Renewable fuels and bioenergy
- [HORIZON-CL5-2024-D3-02-08](#) Minimisation of environmental, and optimisation of socio-economic impacts in the deployment, operation and decommissioning of offshore wind farms
- [HORIZON-CL5-2024-D3-02-04](#) Critical technologies for the future ocean energy farms

Deadline model: single-stage | Opening: 17 September 2024 | Deadline: 04 February 2025

Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions – Staff Exchanges 2024

MSCA Staff Exchanges (call: [Horizon-MSCA-2024-SE-01-01](#)) provides funding for travel and networking for international, inter-sectoral (academic ↔ industry) and interdisciplinary research collaborations. This is intended to enhance the research and innovation potential of organisations through staff mobility. Consortia may submit a proposal in any area. **Call Opens: 19 September 2024 | Deadline: 05 February 2025**

Other Funding Opportunities

EIT Food

EIT Food has launched a competitive [Impact Funding Framework](#) to promote ambitious, long-term collaboration that will lead to food systems changes. An [Introductory Webinar](#) is available (YouTube). The priority areas are regenerative agriculture, protein diversification and food labelling, packaging and transparency, and funding is focussed on two separate opportunity areas – **larger-scale collaborative programmes**, and **innovative single projects**. This call will be open for the next two years with multiple submission windows. The **next deadline is 14 November 2024** (after that the next one is in March 2025). Read more in the [EIT FOOD Call Guidelines](#).

Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call: Water for Circular Economy

UKRI is a partner in the Horizon Europe co-funded partnership 'Water4All' and therefore a funder in this call. Note. This call will include an additional call modality aiming at Early Career Researchers (in this case holding a PhD <10 years). Proposals should address at least one of the following themes:

- **Topic 1:** Enhancement of water circularity in industries.
- **Topic 2:** Urban water circularity.
- **Topic 3:** Resource recovery and valorization.
- **Topic 4:** Economic, environmental and social implications of water reuse and recovered products



[Joint Transnational Call Pre-announcement \(water4all-partnership.eu\)](https://water4all-partnership.eu)

Publication expected: 12 September 2024 | Deadline for preproposals: 13 November 2024

OECD CRP Call for Event Sponsorship and Fellowship Awards in 2025

The UK is amongst 30 OECD countries participating in the [Cooperative Research Programme on Sustainable Agricultural and Food Systems](#). The CRP supports research collaboration related to the sustainable use of natural resources in agriculture, food, forestry and fisheries. Applications should fit in to one of the following three research themes, full details of which can be found in the CRP's [research theme document](#):

1. Managing natural capital
2. Strengthening resilience in the face of multiple risks in a connected world
3. Transformational technologies and innovation

Further details of areas welcoming applications for the 2025 call can be found on [this NERC news page](#). **The CRP normally supports up to 10 events (conferences, symposia) and around 20 fellowships each year.** Please note the importance of explicitly addressing all the selection criteria in your applications to increase the chances of success. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to discuss their proposal with the relevant Theme coordinator on the [CRP Scientific Advisory Body](#) prior to submitting an application, to ensure eligibility and fit to CRP objectives. **Deadline: Tuesday 10 September 2024.** For further information contact: christopher.barker@defra.gov.uk

Cascade Funding from Successful Horizon Projects

Cascade funding under Horizon Europe arises as calls issued from projects that have been funded by the EC and have set aside part of the project budget for additional small sub-projects, delivered by organisations outside of the project consortium. These are funded by the Horizon Europe project under "Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP)". You can search the EU F&T Portal for [Cascading funding opportunities here](#).

FUTURAL Open Call (Digital Solutions)

- The [FUTURAL Call for co-creating digital smart solutions with rural communities](#) will accept applications from small consortia developing solutions in one of the 5 following domains:
 1. Circular bioeconomy, biodiversity and ecosystem management
 2. Resilience to shocks
 3. Citizen Engagement and Quality of Life
 4. Lifelong Education and Training
 5. Climate Adaptation and Mitigation

The Call will fund at least 10 projects, each of 12 months duration (min €60k and max €120k per project / min €30k euro and max €60k per each third party, i.e. partner of the consortium submitting a proposal). Selected consortia will receive funding for developing and applying their own original digital smart solution, i.e. different from the Smart Solutions developed by FUTURAL, within the domains described above.

Deadline: 30 September 2024

ICAERUS PULL Call (Drones)

- The [ICAERUS PULL Open Call: Potential of drones as multi-purpose vehicle – risks and added values](#) in the area of Farming, Forestry and Rural Challenges aims to attract end-users to utilise drones and services built around them for individual commercial needs (e.g., crop production, early warning systems) and/or community-related issues (e.g., disaster risk reduction, forest/wildlife conservation, etc.). The call will fund up to six sub-projects asking for up to €50,000. **Deadline: 16 October 2024**

CIRCULOOS Open Call (Circular Economy)

- The [CIRCULOOS open call](#) aims to engage supply chain actors across various manufacturing industries (e.g., metal, construction, electrical, furniture, leather, machinery, vehicles, wood, plastic) that want to engage with others to adopt circular practices like refurbishing, remanufacturing, and repurposing (R-strategies), collaborating regionally to implement circular strategies and demonstrate **new business models that improve circularity indexes**.
- **Expressions of Interest (EOI)** will be published to facilitate collaboration, allowing parties to form value chains and apply for funding in upcoming Open Calls #2 and #3. Register now to form partnerships in advance of the Demonstrator call (Open Call #2 **funding up to 240K€/team**) launch in Feb. 2025.

DALIA Rivers Revived

- [DALIA Rivers Revived - Call for Associated Regions](#) presents an opportunity for **Local and/or Regional Authorities**, aimed at enhancing water management and adaptation measures: validated concepts for new monitoring approaches, early-warning systems will be strengthened, ensuring proactive responses to water-related challenges. Innovative modeling, leveraging machine learning and neural networks, comprehensive analysis of fate and transport across varying temporal and spatial scales in soil, sediment, and water. **Deadline: 16 October 2024**

INSPIRE Innovative Solutions for Plastic Free European Rivers

- The [INSPIRE Call](#) will select proposals from local and regional authorities for scaling up, replication and exploitation of the lessons learnt from the project. Please consult the [INSPIRE website](#) for technologies and actions in the project that can be replicated in other regions. **Deadline: 29 November 2024**

European Partnership on Innovative SMEs

Innowwide CALL 3 (targeting SMEs)

- Innovative SMEs can apply to the [European Partnership on Innovative SMEs - Innowwide CALL 3](#) for a grant of 60,000 euros to assess the viability of their research or commercial ambitions in international markets. Innowwide will fund 70 projects. **Deadline: 15 October 2024**

Eurostars: joint transnational call for proposals

- [Eurostars Call 3](#) supports innovative SMEs and project partners, funding international collaborative R&D and innovation projects. projects are co-funded by EU and UK – see [Eureka collaborative R&D: Eurostars three call seven – UKRI](#). **Deadline: 12 September 2024**

Supports and 'How to'

European Commission Events - recordings available:

- ['Finding Opportunities and Submitting a Proposal in Horizon Europe'](#)
- ['Grant Agreement Preparation in Horizon Europe'](#)
- ['Grant Management in Horizon Europe'](#)
- [Lump Sum Funding in Horizon Europe: How does it work? How to write a proposal?](#) (Please also see the EC's website on [lump sum funding in Horizon Europe](#))

Research areas in which the European Commission works. The following pages have valuable summaries of specific related policy and links to key policy documents (which need to be referenced in proposals): [Environment](#) | [Biodiversity](#) | [Environmental observation](#) | [Agriculture, forestry and rural areas](#) | [Oceans and seas](#) | [Food systems](#)

The Funding & Tenders Portal: what's new? If you are unfamiliar with the Funding and Tenders Portal on which the Commission publishes its calls for proposals, the following short video guide will provide a quick tour https://youtu.be/alhCCeu_N7Q

Personnel Unit Cost in Horizon Europe. Organisations can request the use of a single daily rate for all staff in their Horizon Europe projects. This is a simplification intended for SMEs and those with only one or two successful projects (where typically there is reduced capacity EU Project claims). The [Personnel Unit Cost page](#) provides useful guidance and information. You can try out the [Personnel Unit Cost wizard](#) to calculate what daily rate would apply to your organisation! Explanatory webinar recording available [here](#).

CARE4BIO Annotated Templates for Cluster 6

CARE4BIO, the network of National Contact Points for Cluster 6, has developed four annotated templates specifically for Cluster 6. These templates are meant for both advisory purposes for NCPs and applicants preparing a proposal. They contain comments, tips & tricks, guiding questions and do's and don'ts. The annotated templates have been added to the [CARE4BIO repository](#):

The Northern Ireland Contact Point (NICP) Network

The NICP was set up in 2014 to support local applicants applying for European Horizon funding. Details are available on the [network's website](#) which has been updated for Horizon Europe. Services offered by the NICPs include:

- **Guidance** on choosing relevant Horizon topics and types of action
- **Advice** on administrative procedures and contractual issues
- **Training**, assistance and advice on proposal writing, to improve the quality of proposals
- **Signpost** to documentation (forms, guidelines, manuals etc.) and other supports available
- **Assistance** in partner searches

NICP Cluster 6 Newsletter:

Previous editions of this Cluster 6 newsletter are available for download: <https://horizoneuropeni.com/cluster-6-newsletter-archive/>