

European Partnerships under Horizon Europe

Draft Guidance document and proposal template – December 2023

The purpose of this document is to provide a common template and guidance for preparing European Partnerships. It provides references and assistance on how to meet the requirements stemming from the criteria in the Horizon Europe regulation (Article 8 and Annex III)¹. The proposal should be developed by potential partners, in close collaboration with and support from the Commission services leading the preparation of the respective partnership.

This guidance applies to all three modes of implementation of partnerships, and does not distinguish between them. This is due to the fact that the Horizon Europe Regulation sets common provisions and criteria for all European Partnerships, regardless of the form (co-programmed, co-funded and institutionalised partnerships)², and the final choice of implementation mode will in some cases only be made at later stages.

The following structure should be used as a template to present the main elements of the proposed partnership. The template consists of three parts: a) General information; 2) Context, objectives and expected impacts; 3) Planned implementation. Each part consists of sub-parts and guiding questions.

It is important to provide clear answers to all aspects of the questions to ensure that the proposal addresses the requirements set out by the criteria, notably that the European Partnership:

- is **more effective** than traditional Framework Programme calls **in achieving the related objectives**;
- ensures **coherence and synergies** within the EU research and innovation landscape;
- is **transparent and open** during its lifetime in the identification of priorities and in the involvement of relevant partners and stakeholders across the EU, and beyond Europe if appropriate;
- demonstrates ex-ante the **additionality and directionality**, including a common strategic vision, which should include measurable expected outcomes, results and impacts, a demonstration of leverage effects, approaches to ensure flexibility of implementation and consideration of possible exit strategies and measures for phasing out from Horizon Europe;
- demonstrates ex-ante the **private and/or public partners' long-term commitment**.

In developing the proposal, please take into account the exact conditions and criteria in the Horizon Europe Regulation and the Draft Criteria Framework for European Partnerships³.

Key steps:

1. Submission of the proposal by the partners to the Commission services leading the preparation
2. Submission of the draft SRIA/roadmap
3. Adoption of the SRIA/Roadmap
4. Commitments from partners (prior to launch of the partnerships)

The template is a living document. Preparing a proposal for a European Partnerships, based on the list of possible candidates identified in the strategic planning for Horizon Europe, does not imply that any decision has been taken. The preparation of partnerships needs to follow a step-by-step approach, taking into account the outcome of the strategic planning and, where relevant, impact assessment work, the available budget, and the criteria. Final steps follow the formal decision-making processes, notably

¹ [Horizon Europe Regulation; Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe.](#)

² With the exception of institutionalised Partnerships based on Articles 185 and 187 TFEU that have in some aspects higher thresholds, notably the need to demonstrate that other forms of Partnerships would not be effective in achieving the objectives, the requirement to have a share of contributions in financial form, and to have higher levels integrations in the form of central management of financial funds, the need to ensure access to results, and the requirement of the participation of at least 40% of the Member States for Art 185 proposals.

³ <https://www.era-learn.eu/documents/wk-14470-2018-init-en.pdf>

adoption of Horizon Europe Work Programmes in comitology (for co-programmed and co-funded partnerships) and legislative proposals (for institutionalised partnerships).

Recommended overall length: 30-60 pages

1 General information

1.1 Draft title of the European Partnerships

1.2 Lead entity (main contact)

1.3 Commission services (main contact)

1.4 Summary (max 500 characters)

2 Context, objectives, expected impacts

2.1 Context and problem definition

- Please explain the **context** in which the Partnership is considered: Why is this initiative being proposed now? What current **problems and/or strategic opportunities** does the initiative aim to tackle? What are the **causes ("drivers") of the problem and their relative importance**?
- Include **data and evidence on the state and scale of the problems and/or strategic opportunities** currently (status quo), and possible results from foresight on how this is expected to evolve in the future. In establishing and analysing this, **draw clear links with previous Framework Programme intervention** and results in this priority area – both in the context of work programmes, as well as R&I partnerships, if applicable;
- Describe the **underlying research, innovation, deployment or systemic bottlenecks and/or market failures** that are to be addressed by the Partnership and how this serves both private and public interest and delivery of public goods, including dissemination and exploitation issues;
- Demonstrate how it will take into account and build on the experience and outcomes of previous R&I Partnerships and the results of **evaluations and assessments**, if relevant.

2.2 Common vision, objectives and expected impacts

*Partnerships allow to **pool additional private and public R&I investments on EU priorities (additionality) and align them towards common objectives (directionality)**, thus facilitating the achievement of impacts that cannot be realised by other Framework Programme actions or national action alone. This requires a **common vision and a corresponding firm commitment** from partners from the beginning, with a clear idea of the impacts and objectives that need to be achieved, and the necessary resources, investments and activities. Since partnerships are by definition only receiving financial support from the Framework Programme for a limited duration, they have to also provide a clear concept on the **expected time necessary to achieve the objectives**, and the possible **phasing out from Union funding**. The common vision is an important element demonstrating the envisaged benefits for the partners and the society at large stemming from the desired additionality and directionality of the public and private R&I investments.*

- Describe the **general, specific and operational objectives of the proposed partnership**, based on a **clear intervention logic**. In establishing the objectives, link them to broader

policy objectives, in particular priorities set by the European Commission, including links with global strategies and agreements such as SDGs where EU has committed itself, where relevant. What is the expected timeframe to achieve the specific objectives?

- Outline the **common vision and ambition of the partnership** that includes information and qualitative and quantitative data from socio-economic, environmental and industrial/technological studies, recent research results, policies and strategies, as well as data on identifiable business/investment plans, as appropriate. In case of a predecessor Partnership under H2020: please describe what will be different, reflecting notably the raised ambition to realise the economic, social and ecological systemic transitions that Europe needs;
- Describe **links and/or collaboration opportunities identified at this stage** with other ongoing European Partnerships, other candidate partnerships included in the second Horizon Europe Strategic Plan, and Union programmes, in particular if co-financing of the partnership by other programmes, or upstream use of other programmes is planned;
- **Estimate how much R&I investments are overall necessary** to achieve the specific objectives, which parts will be contributed by partners, and which by other sources, in order to justify the investment from the Framework Programme (additionality, possible quantitative direct and indirect leverage effects). Explain how reaching those investment targets could be monitored throughout the programme;
- Demonstrate how the proposed partnership is expected to trigger relevant **transformational changes in the broader R&I ecosystem** (qualitative impacts) at national and/or sectorial level;
- Include a **clear and realistic transition strategy** and measures for phasing-out from Framework Programme funding.

*European Partnerships will be based on jointly developed SRIAs/roadmaps⁴ with clearly identified milestones and outcomes and their planned uptake. **The development of such a strategy is a precondition for launching a European Partnership**⁵. To meet the requirements set in Horizon Europe, the strategy process needs to be comprehensive, notably by ensuring strong and broad stakeholder involvement and by making connections to ongoing policy and strategy debates. **The SRIA/roadmap needs to be agreed with the Commission services**. It has to be sufficiently detailed to either build the basis for the drafting of work programmes, or otherwise clearly describe the process for further detailing the agenda of activities on an annual/multiannual basis. In the latter case, and depending on the area addressed and communities involved, it is appropriate to identify only high-level topics to be addressed, and describe the annual stakeholder consultation process in detail that translates this into the scope of annual activities. The level of detail should be agreed beforehand with the Commission Services.*

Depending on the progress in the preparation of the proposed partnership, please include an annex to the proposal that includes either:

- A description of the planned process for developing a SRIA/roadmap; or
- A SRIA/roadmap, including a description of the strategy process and evidence of the involvement of stakeholders in the identification of objectives.

⁴ identifies the foreseen portfolio of activities and measurable expected outcomes, deliverables and milestones within specific timeframes, as well as specific key scientific, economic and societal value for Europe. See [ERA Learn](#) for more information.

⁵ ERA Learn provides a number of resources on SRIAs, including a [guide for the SRIA development process](#).

2.3 Necessity for a European Partnership

*European Partnerships are established to address European or global challenges only in cases where they will more effectively achieve objectives of Horizon Europe than the Union alone and when compared to other forms of support from the Framework Programme. Therefore, **the proposal needs to demonstrate convincingly that the envisaged partnership will indeed be more effective** in achieving the related objectives of the programme. Depending on the intervention logic of the proposed partnership, the proposal needs to address to different degrees the following aspects:*

- Demonstrate how **the Partnership addresses the objectives of Horizon Europe and common political priorities of the EU and its Member States and Associated Countries**, with cooperation extending well beyond transnational joint calls and R&I projects, thus ensuring that structural and societal impacts contributing to the overarching policy objectives can be achieved;
- Demonstrate how the partnership will establish a **meaningful collaboration with Member States /Associated Countries and relevant national/regional authorities and their respective commitments** (e.g. by identifying and connecting with relevant national activities and programmes that allow addressing common challenged more effectively).

2.4 Partner composition and target group

- Describe how the partnership will **build, build upon, strengthen and/or expand collaboration networks and initiatives** that are currently existing at the EU level, beyond currently existing partnerships;
- Justify the **type and composition of partners** (public, private, foundations etc.) considered necessary for this partnership and describe the **ambition to include new types of partners** (in particular end-users), and to ensure the necessary **thematic and geographical coverage** to meet the objectives;
- Describe the **envisaged target groups / stakeholder community** (beyond the members of the partnership). Elaborate also on the **international dimension** and justify the **EU-added value** of including international partners and stakeholders, and provide a justification when specific strategic needs at European level should restrict the international dimension.

3 Planned Implementation

3.1 Activities

*The partnership should deploy the necessary **broad range of activities including calls for R&I proposals**, from concept to demonstration and validation, as well as joint activities beyond joint calls that effectively support achieving its objectives. Where appropriate, the partnership should take into account relevant standardisation, regulation and certification issues to maximise the impact of its actions and ensure market, regulatory or policy uptake.*

- Describe the envisaged **portfolio of activities** to support the full and effective achievement of the objectives and **expected impacts** of the proposed Partnership (to be elaborated in detail in the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA));
- Describe the mechanisms which will ensure the **complementarity of activities and help avoid unnecessary duplications** with other relevant initiatives of Horizon Europe, including with other relevant European Partnerships, missions and EU actions / initiatives beyond Horizon Europe;

- Demonstrate how the partnership will ensure **coherence and synergies in relation to major national (sectorial) policies, programmes and activities**;

3.2 Resources

A partnership will only be successful if all partners are and remain committed. Binding commitments to their contributions will be necessary to achieve the objectives.

- Please specify which types and levels of **contributions from partners** are necessary to achieve the objectives and impacts (financial contributions, in-kind contributions, activities/resources linked to market, regulatory, societal or policy uptake, broader investments, any other type of additional activities) and provide qualitative and quantitative information on these;
- Please specify which **other investments or framework conditions** are envisaged / relevant for the deployment.

3.3 Governance

- Outline the **governance and management of the partnership**, including advisory structures and mechanism to be established. Demonstrate how the governance and management of the partnership helps to achieve the defined vision and objectives. Describe how it will contribute to ensuring coherence and synergies with the EU R&I landscape and demonstrate, as well as transparency and openness during the partnership as regards the identification of its objectives, priorities, vision, SRIA and work programmes.
- Provide, with the support of the Commission services supporting the preparation, a **description of the involvement of the Commission** in the preparation and implementation of the partnership. In particular, describe the mechanisms for defining and defending the EU public interest in the framework of the partnership.

3.4 Openness and transparency

A partnership will maximise its impacts by involving all relevant partners and stakeholders beyond the narrow composition of core partners and by remaining open during its lifetime. Consequently, there should be a high level of openness and transparency regarding the identification of a common vision, and the involvement of partners and stakeholders from different sectors, including international ones when relevant. Also, the partnership should seek to remove barriers that hinder newcomers from entering and participating in the partnership or its activities. The implementation of the partnership should include regular activities that allow new players to enter, participate in and benefit from its activities, and add value to the partnership without compromising the ownership and commitment from the partners.

- Demonstrate that the proposed partnership will be established in a transparent way with no unjustified restriction in participation and with a broad, open and transparent approach towards different sectors and geographical areas, including international partners when relevant. Justify any restrictions for the openness of the partnership where it is deemed absolutely necessary;
- Describe the strategies and plans throughout the lifetime of the partnership to ensure easy and non-discriminatory access to information about the initiative and dissemination of and access to results (in line with Horizon Europe provisions), and to stimulate the participation of new partners and actors in the definition of common priorities and their participation in the partnerships itself or its activities (including eligibility for funding);

- Describe how the proposed partnership will establish a proactive recruitment policy which is dynamic and agile to allow a membership constituency responding to the evolution of the sector and the needs of the partnerships throughout its lifetime, across the Union and, where relevant beyond;
- Describe the process, during the implementation phase of the SRIA/roadmap, for establishing annual work programmes, and define measures to ensure an open and transparent methodology for consulting all constituent entities and relevant stakeholders for the identification of its priorities and the design of its activities.