



Brussels
RTD.G.4

NOTE FOR THE ATTENTION OF EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIPS

Subject: Phasing-out strategies: framing the future of each European Partnership

According to the Horizon Europe Regulation, European Partnerships are required to submit a phasing-out strategy. This note sets out the framework for the exercise: it explains the purpose and importance of phasing-out strategies, outlines the timeline and steps for their development, and provides guidance to support the preparation of sound and actionable strategies that support a meaningful transition beyond Framework Programme and EU funding.

1. CONTEXT

As part of their lifecycle and in line with the legal obligations set out in the Horizon Europe Regulation (Article 10.2(c) and Annex III.4(b)), each European Partnership is required to provide an ex-ante “exit-strategy and measures for phasing-out from the Programme”.

Phasing-out in this context refers to a (possibly gradual) discontinuation of funding from the Framework Programme (FP). Continued transnational funding by national or other Union programmes, or through private investments, is entirely possible and desirable.

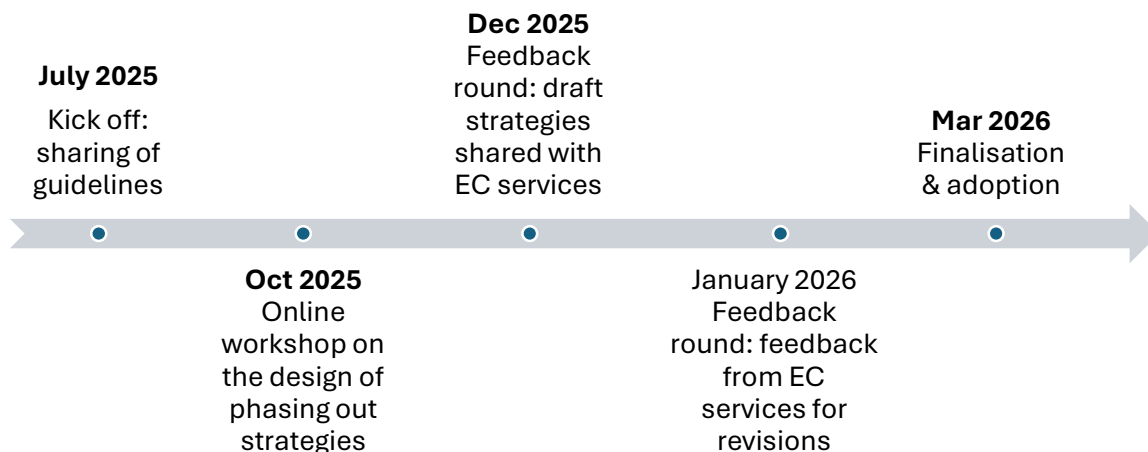
This process is not merely a compliance step. It is a critical forward-looking exercise to define how the partnership can transition beyond FP funding, capitalising on the momentum, knowledge, and collaboration built over time. It is an opportunity to articulate and communicate the partnership’s clear and strategic vision on its future role and evolution, notably in view of the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), such as possible transformations, merges, shifts in form or focus etc. It is also a strategic opportunity to secure the legacy of the partnership, to ensure the lasting impact of its results and position its community for the future.

The obligation of preparing a phasing-out strategy does not imply a mandatory phasing out of FP funding or discontinuation of the partnership under the next FP. However, failure to comply with this legal requirement may be considered a weakness when assessing the partnership's performance and future prospects.

2. PROCESS

While the development of phasing-out strategies is in principle an ex ante selection criterion for partnerships (Horizon Europe Regulation Annex III, Art. 1(c[iv])), the timelines for latest adoption dates of the phasing-out strategies depend on the type of European Partnership ⁽¹⁾, but will all be aligned for Q1 2026 to the extent possible for smoother coordination.

Tentative timeline:



Throughout the process of developing their phasing-out strategies, European Partnerships will be coordinated in thematic clusters and benefit from the guidance and support of the European Commission services (unit RTD.G.4 and the relevant thematic units). This collaborative setup will help ensure the elaboration of robust transition pathways, cross-fertilisation across strategies and alignment with broader strategic considerations.

This exercise is optional for Joint Undertakings and the KICs, as a specific processes for their phasing-out or financial sustainability strategies are already in place. They are however still welcome to share their knowledge with the partnership community and join the exercise if they wish to further refine their reflections, receive support, and benefit from cross-fertilisation with other partnerships.

3. GUIDELINES

The phasing-out strategy should be presented in a concise, strategic document of no more than three pages per scenario ⁽²⁾. It should offer clear reflections on how the partnership envisions its future, outlining concrete and realistic pathways forward.

In order to comply with the legal requirements, **each strategy must include at least one credible scenario that does not rely on continued funding from the EU Framework Programme**. While not mandatory, other options may also be explored ⁽³⁾, such as accessing other sources of public and/or private funding, consolidation with other

⁽¹⁾ See the annex for details.

⁽²⁾ Underlying reflections, scenarios, analyses, etc, where appropriate, shall be made available in supplementary materials.

⁽³⁾ Keeping in mind the requirements in terms of conciseness and robustness.

initiatives, implementation via a different instrument, discontinuation, decreasing funding rates etc.

Please note:

- This is not a box-ticking exercise. All proposed scenarios should be credible, meaningfully developed, supported by actionable steps for implementation and indicators to track progress towards completion.
- This exercise is not about listing achievements or past performance, as these are already captured through the Biennial Monitoring Reports. However, the strategies developed through this exercise will inform and contribute to the content of future Biennial Monitoring Reports on partnerships.
- The status quo (i.e. continuing the partnership as it currently operates with Union funding) does not constitute a scenario.

The phasing-out strategy will be a practical, living document which may be regularly reviewed and updated post its adoption to take into account the progress made, maturation of the reflections and evolution of the policy context. The partnerships are invited to make it public to ensure that stakeholders interacting with the partnership will be able to adjust in a meaningful way to the future possibilities with or outside of the partnership and thereby ensure continuity in the field.

Checklist

There is no one-size fits all approach: each partnership may follow a different approach to develop its phasing-out strategy. However, all strategies should include a common set of key elements to ensure the robustness, consistent quality, and comparability.

The following will serve as a checklist for these minimum requirements:

| Compulsory elements: | Yes | Partly | No |
|--|------------|---------------|-----------|
| The strategy includes at least one credible scenario without EU Framework Programme funding . | | | |
| Each fully-fledged scenario proposes an alternative implementation modality to achieve the policy purpose of the partnership, and develops a realistic, actionable pathway and an indicative timeline. | | | |
| Each scenario includes indicators for assessing progress towards the phasing out (e.g. amount of funding from other sources, etc). | | | |
| The scenarios are consistent with the overall strategic orientation of the partnership and coherent with their policy context at the time (i.e. do not duplicate or contradict other existing or foreseen initiatives or plans). | | | |

Other non-compulsory elements:

- Policy reflection on the benefits and drawbacks of each scenario.

ANNEX: LEGAL BASES & TIMELINES

Horizon Europe Regulation – applicable to all European Partnerships

Article 10

2. (c) European Partnerships shall: [...] have a clear life-cycle approach, be limited in time and include conditions for phasing-out the Programme funding.

Annex III

1. (c) Ex ante demonstration of additionality and directionality of the European Partnership, including a common strategic vision of the purpose of the European Partnership. That vision includes in particular: [...] exit-strategies and measures for phasing-out from the Programme.

4. (b) In the absence of renewal, appropriate measures ensuring phasing-out of the Programme funding according to the conditions and timeline agreed with the legally committed partners ex ante, without prejudice to possible continued transnational funding by national or other Union programmes, and without prejudice to private investment and on-going projects.

Implementation-type specific references and latest adoption dates of phasing-out strategies

| Implementation type | Specific legal base | Timeline |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Art. 187 (JUs) | Single Basic Act & EuroHPC Regulation | Q2 2025 |
| Art. 185 | Metrology & PRIMA Regulations | Not defined |
| EIT KICs | EIT KIC Partnership Agreements (financial sustainability strategies) | With the submission of the first Business Plan |
| Co-programmed | Memoranda of Understanding | 1 st Strategic Plan: before the interim evaluation of Horizon Europe (Q2 2025); 2 nd Strategic Plan: 1 year after MoU signature (Q2 2026) |
| Co-funded | Individual Grant Agreements | Defined individually in the Grant Agreements or undefined |