European Partnerships under Horizon Europe 2028-2034

State of play and outlook

ERA-LEARN Networking Event 2026: Bridging European Partnerships: Connecting, Sharing, Growing

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European Commission

From proposal to the next generation of partnership



Where we stand

The Commission proposal and the legislative negotiations



What we are working on

Turning the framework into operational arrangements and preparing the portfolio



What this means for you

Managing uncertainty, contributing constructively, and preparing for the future

Rethinking partnerships in Horizon Europe 2028-2034

- Partnerships showed fragmentation, rigidity, and implementation issues
- Use partnerships where EU action alone or other instruments cannot deliver the objectives
- The new Horizon Europe proposes a more strategic, simpler, and more flexible partnership model:
  - Based on lessons learned from Horizon Europe 2021-2027
  - Select a coherent portfolio with clear objectives and credible commitments
  - Revised instrument design and harmonised framework
  - Connect R&I better with uptake and deployment

Commission proposal: recap

Simplified Toolbox

- One default work programme-based instrument
- Tripartite collaboration as standard
- Art. 185/187 TFEU in exceptional cases

Harmonised Implementation Framework

- Revised contribution framework
- Central management of financial resources
- More transparent and comparable rules
- Continuous monitoring with common indicators
- Sunset clause and transition planning

Portfolio & Selection

- Limited number of partnerships
- Focus on a strategic and coherent portfolio
- Competitive, criteria-based selection

Negotiations: emerging positions

Dimension	Council PGA	ITRE report
Partnership models	WP-based and institutionalised partnerships; MoU + contract for financial contributions	Greater emphasis on Art. 185/187; contractual arrangements
Portfolio & selection	Limited portfolio; areas guided by Council; close MS involvement	Maximum 35 partnerships; Commission consults EP and MS; advice from High-Level Council
Partner contributions	MS responsible for national funding	Substantial budgetary commitments; in-kind contributions to additional activities possible
Governance	Partner representation and voting rights; jointly agreed SRIA	Greater EP oversight and independent expert input
Programming & ECF	Horizon for R&I; ECF potentially for deployment; deployment agenda where relevant	Shared Research, Innovation & Deployment Agenda; Horizon funding reserved for R&I
Monitoring & renewal	Common monitoring and lifecycle criteria; upfront phasing-out	Biennial portfolio report; independent evaluation before portfolio decisions/renewal

Navigating the transition together

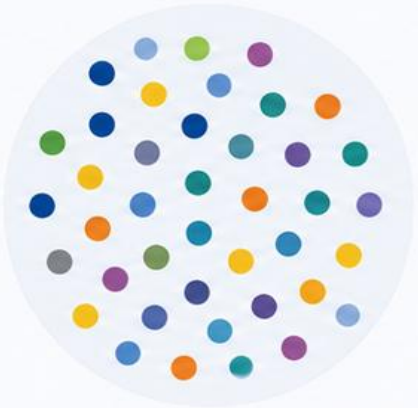
- New concepts that require out-of-the box thinking and testing
- Difficult trade-offs: prioritisation and simplification sometimes require tough decisions
- Constructive dialogue – room to help identify practical solutions
- Ambition meets budgetary pressure:
  - The Commission has proposed an ambitious Horizon Europe 2028-2034 envelope
  - Proposals to reduce the overall future MFF underline the pressure on EU spending, including on research

  → Shared evidence challenge

Towards a strategic portfolio: process

1 IDENTIFY THEMATICS

Collect a pool of candidate thematics

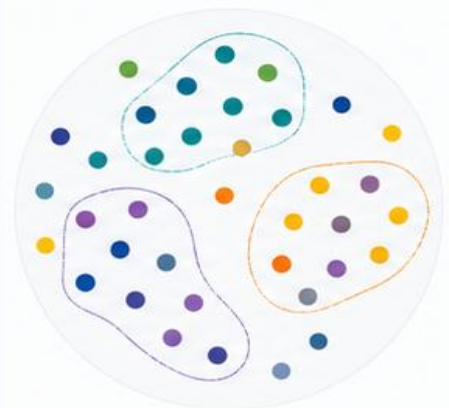


Each dot = one thematic

Input collected from MS/ACs and EC services

2 PARTNERSHIP AREAS

Explore different ways of grouping thematics into partnership areas



Many possible groupings

Flexible boundaries

Early exploration, not final

Input from EG

3 ASSESS PARTNER-SHIP NECESSITY

Assess each candidate partnership area: is a partnership the right instrument?

Candidate partnership areas

Necessity of partnership approach



Input from EG

4 BUILD PORTFOLIO OPTIONS

Use the areas assessed as necessary to build alternative portfolio configurations



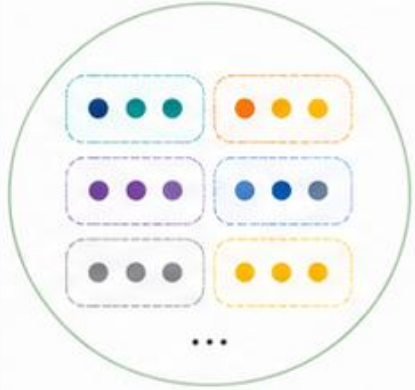
Compare options according to:

- *Strategic fit*
- *Coherence*
- *Balance across objectives*
- *Critical mass & efficiency*
- *Adaptability*

Input from EG

5 EMERGING PORTFOLIO

Converge on a portfolio option and refine partnership areas



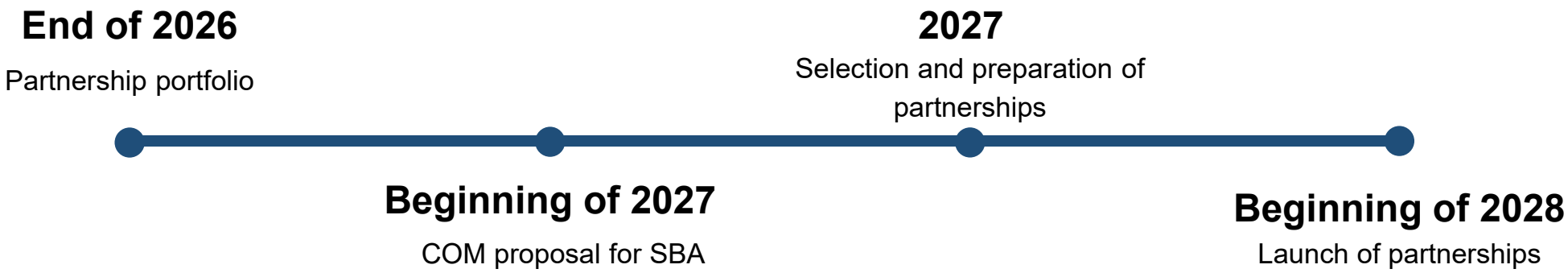
Balancing broad thematic coverage with streamlining and strategic prioritisation

Consider input collected from MS/ACs and stakeholders

May / June — **July / August** — **September / October** — **November / December**

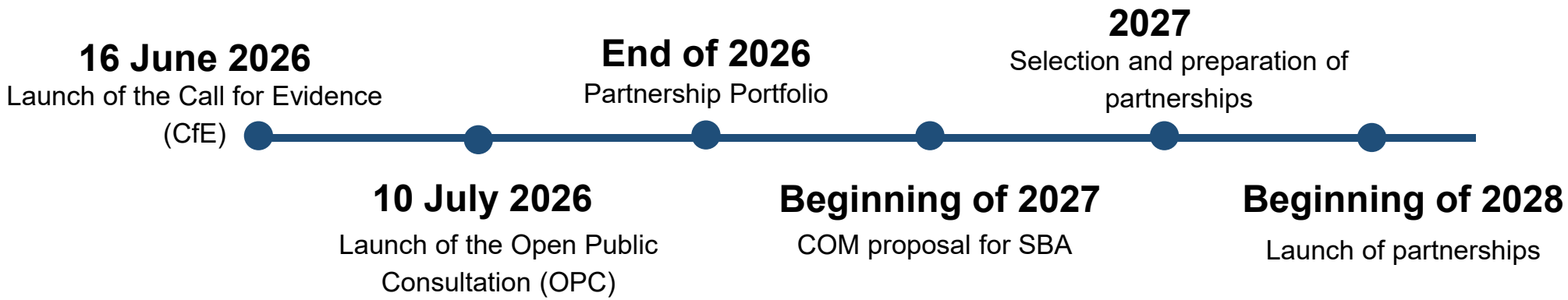
Preparation and selection

- Guiding principles: open and transparent, coordinated, newcomer-friendly, level playing field
- Preliminary process elements:
  - Call for expressions of interest and commitments
  - Matchmaking
  - Co-creation of proposals
  - Assessment
- Details and timelines will be communicated shortly



Preparing the future Single Basic Act

- Joint Undertakings (JUs) will be established under a Single Basic Act (SBA)
- Simplify and improve coherence of the JUs' implementation through the future SBA in accordance with the Horizon Europe 2028-2034 proposal
- Input from the Call for evidence and the Open Public consultation
- Drafting of the Impact Assessment and Staff working document is ongoing
- COM proposal in early 2027



Shape the future



Think ahead

Look beyond current structures – where could your activities, capabilities and networks contribute in FP10?



Help make it work

Provide constructive input



Tell the story

Show impact and help decision-makers understand why R&I investments matter

Thank you



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