

European Partnerships – involvement of Associated Countries / Summary Q&A Session

3 February 2022

On 3 February 2022, the European Commission and ERA-LEARN organised a webinar on the involvement of Associated Countries in European Partnerships

This document is a summary of the Q&A session.

General Questions

Q: General Budget: What is the rough distribution between the three different types of Partnerships – Co-funded, Co-programmed and Institutionalised (approx. 20 Billion € in total for all Partnerships)?

A: *The budget distribution is roughly the following: 10 % Co-Funded Partnerships, 35 % Co-Programmed Partnerships and 55 % Institutionalised Partnerships (45 % Art 185/7 and 10 % EIT KICs)*

It is important to mention that at first glance the share allocated to co-funded partnerships seems low. However, this type of partnerships typically receives a 30% funding rate, and therefore achieves a much higher leverage of funds than other types of partnerships.

Q: Are there any practical limitations for the full and equal access and participation for Associated States at all levels? Can a non-EU country be a WP leader or project coordinator?

A: *The same rights and obligations apply for Associated States as for the Member States. Work package lead is possible, as well as coordination of projects. A possible exception to this rule would be linked to the use of Art 22.5 of the Horizon Europe regulation (for actions related to Union strategic assets, interests, autonomy or security, details see: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32021R0695>). So far, no instances of the use of this article are foreseen for European Partnerships.*

Q: What is the benefit of Associated Countries to participate in European Partnerships

A: *Research cooperation is one of the main benefits. E.g. the Partnership on for Rare Diseases multinational cooperation is very important. Furthermore, there is the access to European funding, large networks and scientific knowledge, the increased quality of national research and innovation and the opportunity to cooperate at policy level with EC and other national funding*

agencies. The quality of science is enhanced by becoming partner of this community of the best in Europe. Furthermore, areas addressed in partnerships are not addressed in the other Horizon Europe calls.

Participation and financial conditions

Q: How can an Associated States get involved in European Partnerships?

A: Co-funded Partnerships: Depending on when the related calls were launched, the procedure might be different. In all cases you have to get in contact with the partnership coordinator. All contact details are available here: https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/european-partnerships-horizon-europe_en#partnership-candidates-and-contact-details

Co-programmed: The calls related to these partnerships will be launched in the Horizon Europe Work Programmes and are fully open to Associated Countries. Calls are launched in the “Funding & tender opportunities portal (<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-search>). Get in contact with the responsible associations if you want to become a partner. A complete list of Co-programmed Partnerships is available on the dedicated Commission webpage (see above).

Institutionalised Partnerships: All the founding members of Institutionalised Partnerships are listed in the regulations creating these partnerships. When the EC’s partners are private associations, it is possible to join the association after the Institutional Partnership is launched. The rules may vary depending on the partnership’s institutional set-up and their members, please contact the relevant EC contact point to receive more details.

Q: Can an institution in Associated Countries apply for involvement in specific partnership or should that be done on government/ministerial level? Is it possible to participate in the call if the country does not participate in the partnership?

A: An institution like a funding agency should get in touch with the EC and express its interest to join a partnership. However, the provision of commitments to a partnership should be provided on governmental/ministerial level.

It is possible for entities based in ACs to participate to the calls launched by Co-programmed and Institutionalised Partnerships even if entities from these countries are not partners. This is not possible in Co-funded Partnerships.

Q: Are the calls restricted only to the association members in Institutionalised Partnerships / Joint Undertakings?

A: There are in exceptional case calls only open for association members (e.g. European Partnership on Metrology) but the baseline is the criterion of openness.

Q: Is it possible that a MS/ AS who is partner in a European Partnership rejects to fund organizations from its country or decreases funding based on particular economic situation that occasionally arises during the project reviewing period? Is there any legal commitment to follow the decision of project selection committee? In which particular cases can the state put a veto on the project funding decision?

A: Co-programmed Partnerships: The calls related to these partnerships will be launched in the Horizon Europe Work Programmes. Therefore, no veto on the funding decision is possible.

Co-funded Partnerships: The Partnerships agrees on a mode how to use the EU financial contribution. In most cases the so-called “mixed mode” is used: a part of the available EU top-up is allocated to funding organisations proportionally to their own commitments (juste retour) while another part of the EU top-up is used as a “balancing pot” to fill gaps in the funding list. The partnerships are obliged to follow the rule that proposals must be ranked according to the evaluation results and the selection must be made on the basis of this ranking. Therefore, the partnerships agree on concrete rules to avoid blocking situation in the funding list in the consortium agreement. An agreement on the funding list is sought in the selection meeting. After the selection meeting, the highest ranked proposals are to be funded – The eligibility of each national organisation participating to a call will be assessed before ranking lists are established.

Institutionalised Partnerships: Partnerships have to choose between two approaches to administer their financial contributions: In case of centralised management of financial contributions, Partnerships delegate the administration of their financial contributions to the relevant Joint Undertaking (i.e. call publication, selection, award, contracting, payments, closure and ex post audits) and will get a right of veto over the use of their financial contributions. In case of close coordination, Partnerships contribute financially awarding grant agreements to national beneficiaries that have successfully participated in calls for proposals launched by the Joint Undertaking. The schedule for payments, reporting, etc. that follow will be based on rules agreed with the Joint Undertaking, and on EU selection criteria. For more details on the procedure to veto the funding of national beneficiaries in institutionalised partnerships, please get in touch with the relevant EC contact point.

Coherence and Synergies

Q: How are interfaces and synergies at programme level, area/theme/destination and at topic/project level going to be managed in a systematic way? Is there a need to facilitate participants to ensure complementarities and synergies?

A: European Partnerships are fully integrated in Horizon Europe. All European Partnerships had to develop a Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) or a Roadmap before their launch in order to ensure that the long-term vision is translated into concrete roadmaps with smart and measurable objectives. All partnerships are expected to establish formal and regular collaboration with other relevant research and innovation initiatives. The coherence part of the Partnership Website should be a basis for further cooperation:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/european-partnerships-horizon-europe_en#synergies

Q: Are there plans to establish new Partnerships in addition to the 49 partnerships mentioned?

A: Yes, there will be additional Partnerships for the period after 2025 within the frame of the Second Strategic Plan of Horizon Europe. The European Commission will propose new Partnership Initiatives and discuss these Proposals with the Strategic Programme Committee of Horizon Europe.

Commitments to Partnerships

Q: On 30 April 2022, MS/ AS will have to submit the letter of commitments for the Partnerships with MS/ AS involvement. Is this also the deadline to join the Partnerships, or will it be possible to decide participation and commitment at a later stage?

A: You should answer within that deadline as the budget planning for 2023/24 partnerships will be based on the commitments the Commission receives by 30 April, 2022. In the letter you have the opportunity to add comments and specify in your answer e.g. when you like to join, so if you are not sure you want to participate, please mention it in your answer to the letter.

Q: What are the differences between the JUs in terms of countries funding obligation - do the countries need to yearly commit budget (like in KDT for example) in all JUs? What is the mechanism for Metrology?

A: See Article 12 of the Single Basic Act: Each participating state shall make an indicative commitment of the amount of their national financial contributions to the joint undertaking. Such commitment shall be made prior to the adoption of the work programme (which are annual).

Further information

European Partnerships website: https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/european-partnerships-horizon-europe_en

ERA.LEARN Database on Partnerships: <https://www.era-learn.eu/network-information>

H2020 Participation – EC dashboard:

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/dashboard/sense/app/93297a69-09fd-4ef5-889f-b83c4e21d33e/sheet/PbZJnb/state/analysis>