



THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS AND THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The implementation of the Horizon Europe Specific Programme shall be facilitated by a multiannual Strategic R&I Plan ('the Strategic Plan') of research and innovation activities covering a maximum period of four years, which will also promote consistency between the work programmes, EU priorities and national priorities.

In particular, the strategic planning process aims to:

- implement Horizon Europe's programme-level objectives in an integrated manner and provide focus on impact for the Programme overall and coherence between its different pillars;
- promote synergies between Horizon Europe and other Union Programmes, including the funds dedicated to cohesion and the Euratom programme, thus becoming a point of reference for research and innovation in all related programmes across the EU budget and non-funding instruments;
- help to develop and realise EU policy for the relevant areas covered, and complement policy development and implementation in the Member States;
- reduce fragmentation of efforts and avoid duplication and overlaps between funding possibilities;
- provide the frame for linking the direct research actions of the Joint Research Centre and other actions supported under the Programme, including the use of results and data for support to policy;
- ensure a balanced and broad approach to research and innovation, at all stages of development, which is not only limited to fostering frontier research, the development of new products processes and services on the basis of scientific and technological knowledge and breakthroughs, but also incorporates the use of existing technologies in novel applications and continuous improvement and non-technological and social innovation;
- ensure a systemic, cross-disciplinary, cross-sectoral and cross-policy approach to research and innovation in order to tackle challenges while also giving rise to new competitive businesses and industries, fostering competition, stimulating private investments and preserving the level playing field in the internal market.

The strategic planning process shall focus in particular on Pillar II 'Global challenges and European industrial competitiveness' and cover also relevant activities in other pillars and the part 'Widening Participation and Strengthening the European Research Area', also in close coordination and synergy with the planning of the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) of the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT).

The Commission will ensure early involvement and extensive exchanges with the Member States, and extensive exchanges with the European Parliament, complemented by consultation with stakeholders and the public at large in the desirable frame of a stronger engagement with citizens and civil society in a novel co-design process.

The result of this strategic planning process shall be set out in a multiannual Strategic Plan (the first one for 2021-2024), for preparing the content of the work programmes, while retaining sufficient flexibility to respond rapidly to new and emerging challenges, unexpected opportunities and crises. The work programmes should be then prepared in time for the first calls under Horizon Europe to be launched in a timely manner to ensure continuity with Horizon 2020, which finishes on 31 December 2020.

The Strategic Plan shall be a Commission implementing act, adopted in accordance with comitology procedures, after the opinion of the Programme Committee, which is composed on MS representatives. It shall contain the following elements:

- a. Key strategic orientations for R&I support, including a description of expected impacts, cross-cluster issues and intervention areas covered;
- b. Identification of co-funded and co-programmed European Partnerships - Institutionalised partnerships, based on Articles 185 and 187 TFEU, as well as the Knowledge and Innovation Communities of the EIT, will follow the arrangements defined in their legislation;
- c. Identification of Missions;
- d. Areas for international cooperation, actions to be aligned with Research & Innovation of other nations and regions of the world at major scale, or actions to be carried out in cooperation with organisations in third countries;
- e. Specific issues, such as the balance between research and innovation; the integration of Social Sciences and Humanities; the role of Key Enabling Technologies and strategic value chains; gender equality, including the integration of gender dimension in the R&I content; adherence to the highest ethics and integrity standards; priorities for dissemination and exploitation.

The Strategic Plan shall take into account an analysis covering at least the following elements:

- a. Political, socio-economic and environmental drivers which are relevant for the EU and Member States' policy priorities;
- b. The contribution of research and innovation to the realisation of EU policy objectives, while capitalizing on studies, other scientific evidence and relevant initiatives at EU and national level, including institutionalised partnerships;
- c. Evidence-base resulting from foresight activities, S&T and innovation indicators, international developments such as the implementation of the SDGs and feedback from implementation, including monitoring the implementation of specific measures with regard to widening participation and sharing excellence and participation of SMEs;
- d. Priorities with the potential to be implemented in synergy with other EU programmes;
- e. A description of the various approaches for stakeholder consultation and citizen engagement as part of the work to develop Work Programmes;
- f. Complementarity and synergies with planning of the KICs of the EIT.

The strategic planning process shall be complemented by a strategic coordinating process for European Partnerships, with participation of Member States and the Commission on equal footing. It shall function as an entry point for foresight analysis, analysis and advice on the portfolio development, possible setup, implementation, monitoring and phasing out of R&I partnerships and be guided by a comprehensive criteria framework, based on Annex III of the Horizon Europe Regulation.

Work programmes

Horizon Europe shall be implemented by work programmes adopted by the Commission for the implementation of the specific programme or the equivalent document in content and structure adopted by a funding body (the following relate to the former). They shall set out the expected impacts and be prepared following the strategic planning process and the establishment of the strategic plan described above, with the use of the related governance structures, especially for the programmable parts, and any other special arrangements provided by the Horizon Europe legal acts.

The Commission shall regularly and from an early stage inform the Programme Committee of the overall progress of the implementation of the specific programme, including missions, also to allow the Committee to provide early appropriate input in the course of the strategic planning process and on the preparation of the work programmes, especially on missions.

The Commission shall adopt separate work programmes, by means of Commission implementing acts, as follows:

- a. the ERC, where the work programme shall be established by the Scientific Council. The Commission shall depart from the work programme established by the Scientific Council only when it considers that it is not in accordance with the provisions of the Specific Programme;
- b. all clusters under the pillar 'Global Challenges and Competitiveness of European Industry', MSCA, research infrastructures, support to innovation ecosystems, widening participation and spreading excellence, and reforming and enhancing the European R&I System. This work programme will include 'usual' calls (including for co-programmed and co-funded partnerships, which are implemented through the work programme) and calls for proposals as part of missions. The calls, while strategically planned, will be as non-prescriptive as possible as to the approach to be taken by actions and put emphasis on impact to be achieved, in particular with regard to EU strategic and policy objectives and possible synergies with other Union programmes;
- c. the EIC, where the work programme shall be prepared following the advice of the EIC Board;
- d. the JRC, where the multi-annual work programme shall take into account the opinion provided by the Board of Governors of the JRC;
- e. the Euratom work programme for the implementation of the indirect actions under Euratom. ESFRI has also had an important impact on fostering a strategic approach to Research Infrastructures at national level, as 22 Member States have prepared national roadmaps in recent years, many of them following the ESFRI methodology and in growing alignment with the European priorities.