

# Widening participation & spreading excellence

WIDERA WP26/27



Anselmo Sosa Méndez. NCP Widening  
Infoday 26th November 2025. Webinar



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europea

# Scope of this presentation



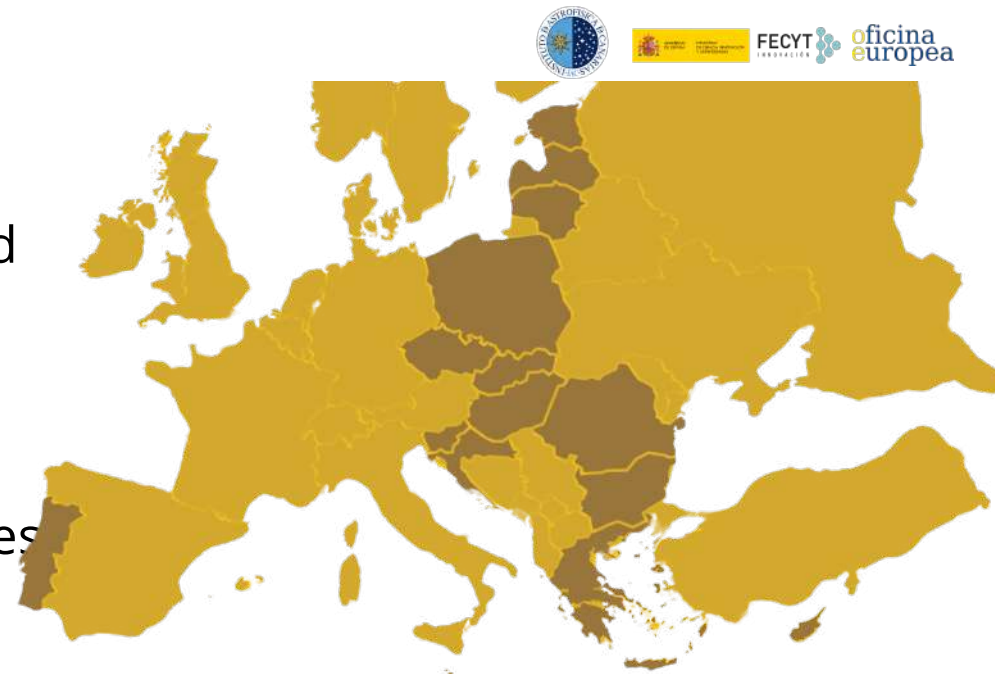
- Focus on the *Widening participation and spreading excellence* Destination
- Overview of all expected Widening calls in 2026–27
- Key eligibility requirements and expected outcomes

# What is Widening?

A sub-workprogramme (**1 destination**) aimed to:

1. Reduce R&I performance gaps across Europe
2. Supports institutions in Widening Countries to build excellence
3. Strengthens long-term partnerships with leading EU/AC institutions
4. Integrated set of actions to strengthen capacity, talent, and impact

**Widening pursues a pan-European approach of collaboration and mutual knowledge sharing**



**The European Research Area**



# R&D Expenditure at EU level



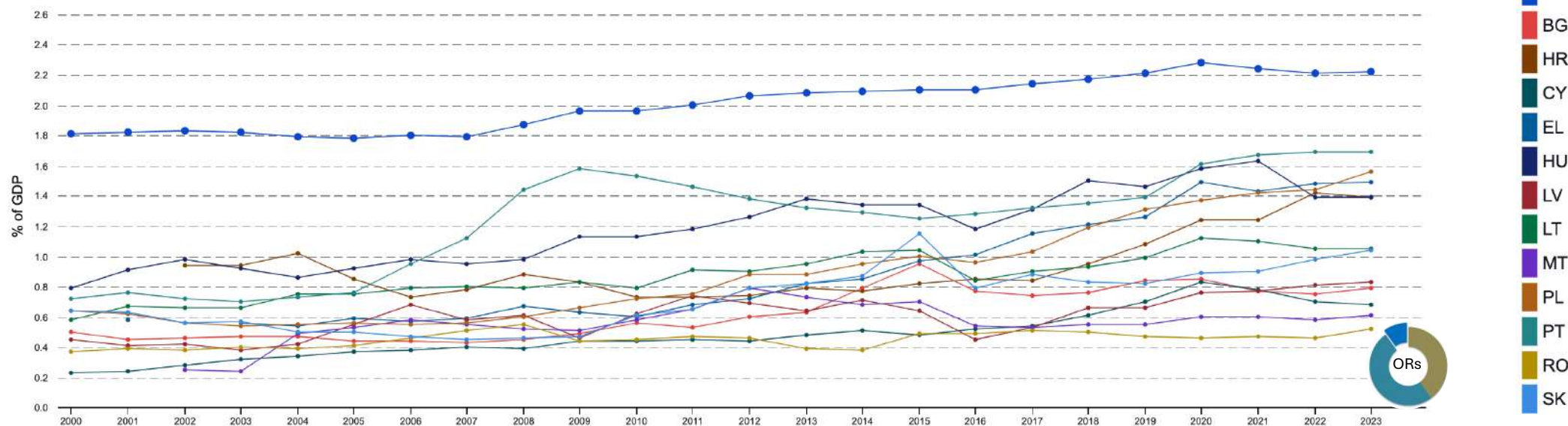
eurostat

## R&D expenditure (as % of GDP)

13 countries selected



R&D expenditure



Source: Eurostat - [access to dataset](#)

# WIDENING COUNTRIES

as defined in the WP 2026–2027



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1. Bulgaria
2. Croatia
3. Cyprus
4. Czechia
5. Estonia
6. Greece
7. Hungary
8. Latvia
9. Lithuania
10. Malta
11. Poland
12. Portugal
13. Romania
14. Slovakia
15. Slovenia

**+ Outermost  
regions** +

- Albania
- Armenia
- Bosnia & Herzegovina
- Faroe Islands
- Georgia
- Kosovo
- Moldova
- Montenegro
- North Macedonia
- Serbia
- Tunisia
- Turkey
- Ukraine
- Morocco





# HORIZON EUROPE

**Strategic Plan**  
**2021 - 2024**

**Strategic Plan Analysis**

**Strategic Plan**  
**2025 - 2027**

**Work Programme**  
**2021 - 2022**

**Work Programme**  
**2023 - 2024**

**Work Programme**

**PROJECT**

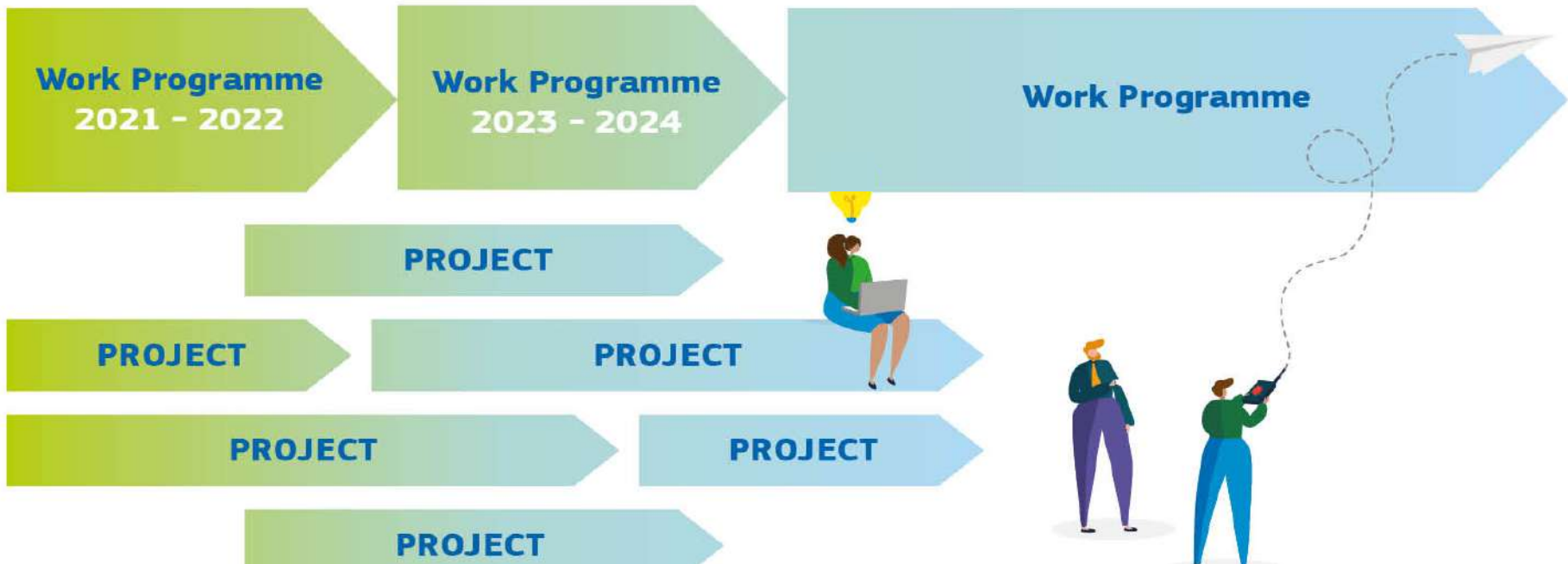
**PROJECT**

**PROJECT**

**PROJECT**

**PROJECT**

**PROJECT**



# HORIZON EUROPE WIDERA WORK PROGRAMMES

FP10

## WP 2026 2027

WIDENING: SINGLE DESTINATION: Widening Participation and Spreading Excellence. 10 calls (5 <2026> +5 <2027>)

(Approval expected December 2025)

705 M€

## WP 2023 2025

WIDENING: DESTINATION 1: Access to Excellence. 9 calls  
DESTINATION 2: Attract talent. 5 calls

March 2023

1217 M€

214 M€

March 2025

WIDENING: WP 2025

DESTINATION 1: Access to Excellence. 5 calls  
No Destination 2 in WP2025

935 M€

May 2021

## WP 2021 2022

WIDENING: DESTINATION 1: Access to Excellence. 7 calls  
DESTINATION 2: Attract talent. 4 calls

Note: Budget includes the actions to strengthen the European Research Area

# Destination: Widening Participation & Spreading Excellence. 2026–2027



Horizon Europe – Work Programme 2026–2027 Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area	
EN	
Horizon Europe	
Work Programme 2026–2027	
11. Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area	
DISCLAIMER	
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HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-04-WIDENING-01: ERA Fellowships	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-WIDENING-01: Excellence Hubs	
Destination: Reforming and enhancing the European research and innovation system	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-01: Pillar I: Accelerating open access and research assessment reforms in ERA	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-02: Pillar II: Building institutional capacities for ethical, equitable, open, and inclusive ERA	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-03: Pillar II: Strengthening ecosystems for open, ethical, and sustainable ERA	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-04: Pillar II: Piloting innovative approaches to support academic startups and spinoffs	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-05: Pillar III: Fostering citizen engagement for more responsible and democratic R&I	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-06: Pillar III: European Citizens' Hackathon	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-07: Pillar III: Science careers to 2028	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-08: Pillar IV: Advancing Knowledge for ERA	
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HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-ERA-02: Pillar II: Talent ecosystems for attractive early research careers	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-ERA-03: Pillar III: Science careers to 2029	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-ERA-04: Pillar III: Promoting public engagement in R&I and scientific literacy	
HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-05-ERA-05: Pillar IV: Upgrading the EU's independent knowledge on Future Science, Technology and Innovation system	
PRIZES	
1. EU Award for Gender Equality Champions 2026	
2. EU Award for Gender Equality Champions 2027	
GRANTS TO IDENTIFIED BENEFICIARIES	
1. Presidency conferences with a European regional dimension – WIRE 2026	
2. Future Hubs for the R&I foresight community	
3. Promotion and valorisation of the ERA Policy Agenda results and related activities	
4. Advancing operational excellence of EURAXESS	
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Horizon Europe – Work Programme 2026–2027 Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area	
5. Support to the operations of CoARA	
6. Policy coordination to support gender equality and inclusiveness in the ERA	
PUBLIC PROCUREMENT	
1. Studies and communication	
2. Euraxess Worldwide – implementation	
3. Administrative management of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers	
4. Horizon Policy Support Facility	
5. Learning labs for value creation	
6. She Figures: Monitoring gender equality in R&I	
7. Implementation of ERA mentoring	
8. ERA Talent Platform: Enhancing research careers and mobility in Europe	
9. EURAXESS Worldwide – Framework contract (2024–2031)	
10. Gender Equality Competence Facility – Framework Contract (2028–2031)	
EXTERNAL EXPERT ACTIONS	
1. Use of individual experts for all hoc tasks related to the implementation of the Horizon Europe Ethics Appraisal	
2. Use of individual experts in support of the ERA's objectives	
3. External expertise for evaluation and monitoring of Widening and ERA actions	
OTHER ACTIONS NOT SUBJECT TO CALLS FOR PROPOSALS	
1. COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology)	
Budget	
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**DESTINATION:**  
Widening participation  
and spreading  
excellence

**DESTINATION:**  
Reforming and  
enhancing the  
ERA system

**PRIZES**

**GRANTS TO  
IDENTIFIED  
BENEFICIARIES**

**PUBLIC  
PROCUREMENT**

**EXTERNAL  
EXPERT  
ACTIONS**

**COST**



# Destination : Widening Participation & Spreading Excellence. 2026–2027



## 2026 Calls

1. Teaming Synergies
2. **Twinning**
3. Hop-On Facility
4. Research Management Facility
5. ERA Fellowships (*Widening version*)

## 2027 Calls

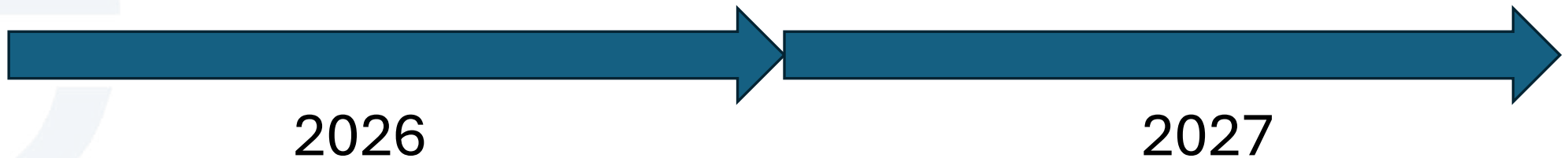
**EIC Pre-accelerator – Widening**

**ERA Chairs**

**ERA Research Managers**

**ERA Fellowships (*Widening version*)**

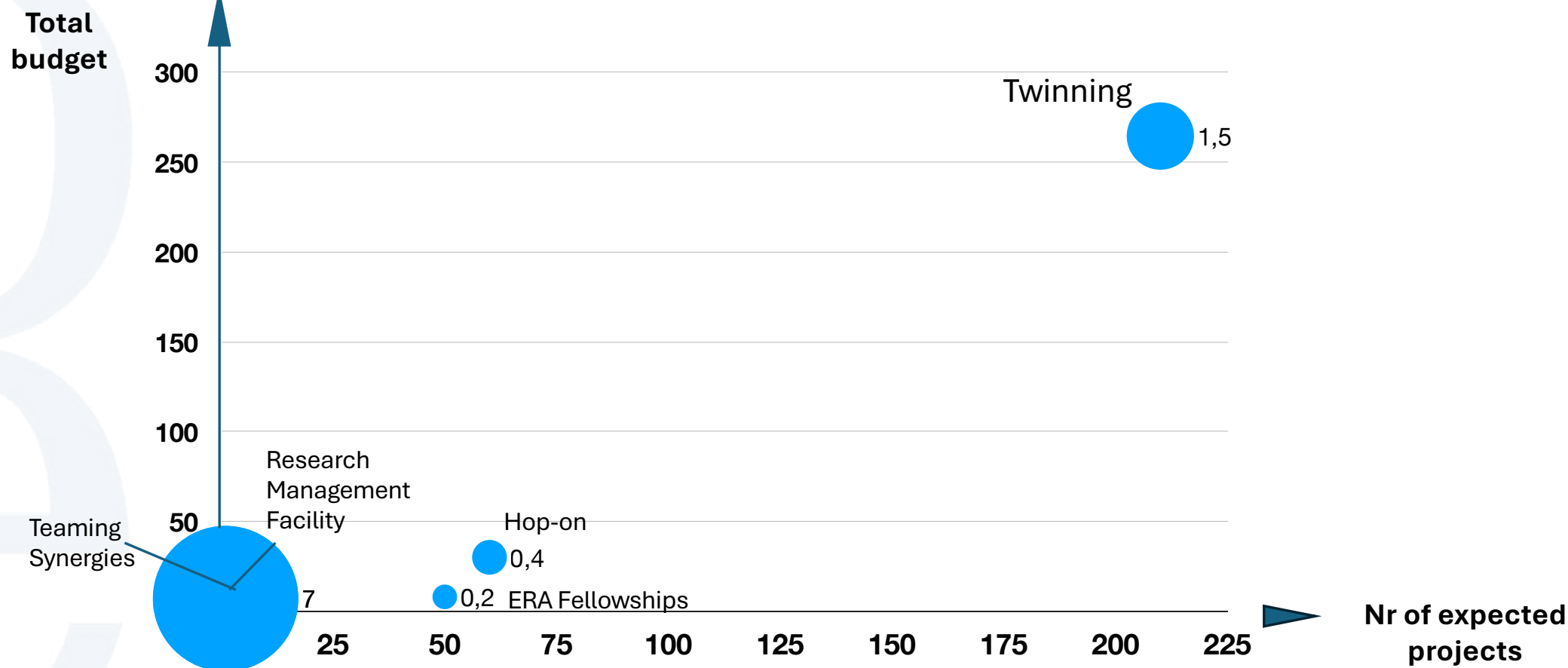
**Excellence Hubs**



# Destination 2026–2027: Widening Participation & Spreading Excellence



2026



# Teaming Synergies

## HORIZON-WIDERA-2026- WIDENING-01

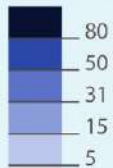
Action type	Budget	Othe conditions	Timeline
Coordination and Support Action (CSA)	Estimated budget: EUR 7 million per project	<b>Coordinators must be established in a Widening Country</b> Project duration: 5 years	<b>Opening date:</b> 23 April 2026 <b>Deadline:</b> 24 September 2026



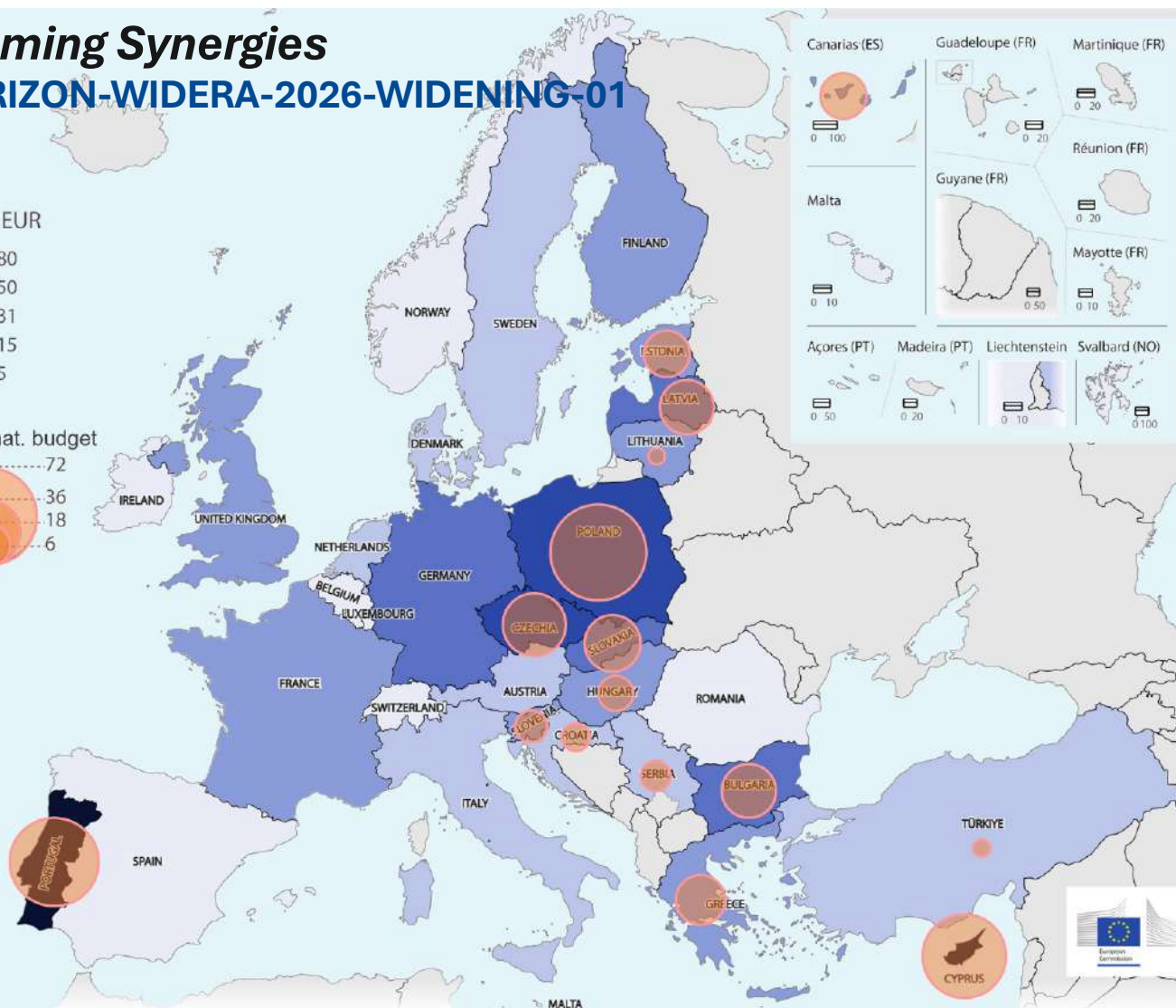
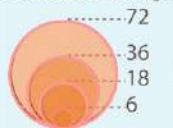
# Teaming Synergies

## HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-WIDENING-01

Million EUR



Coordinat. budget



Countries with at least one retained proposal are represented  
Source: REA.C3

Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics © UN-FAO © Turkstat  
Cartography: Eurostat – IMAGE, 09/2024



## 51 Teaming Centres of Excellence (H2020 & HE Calls)

### From H2020:

-10 Teaming CoE from 2016/2017 Call

-14 Teaming CoE from 2018/2019 Call

**24 Teaming CoE - 390 M€ total EU Contrib.**

### From HE:

-14 Teaming CoE from 2021/2022 Call

-13 NEW Teaming CoE 2023/2024 Call (in GAP)

**27 Teaming CoE - 383 M€ total EU Contrib.**

### Ongoing 2025 call:

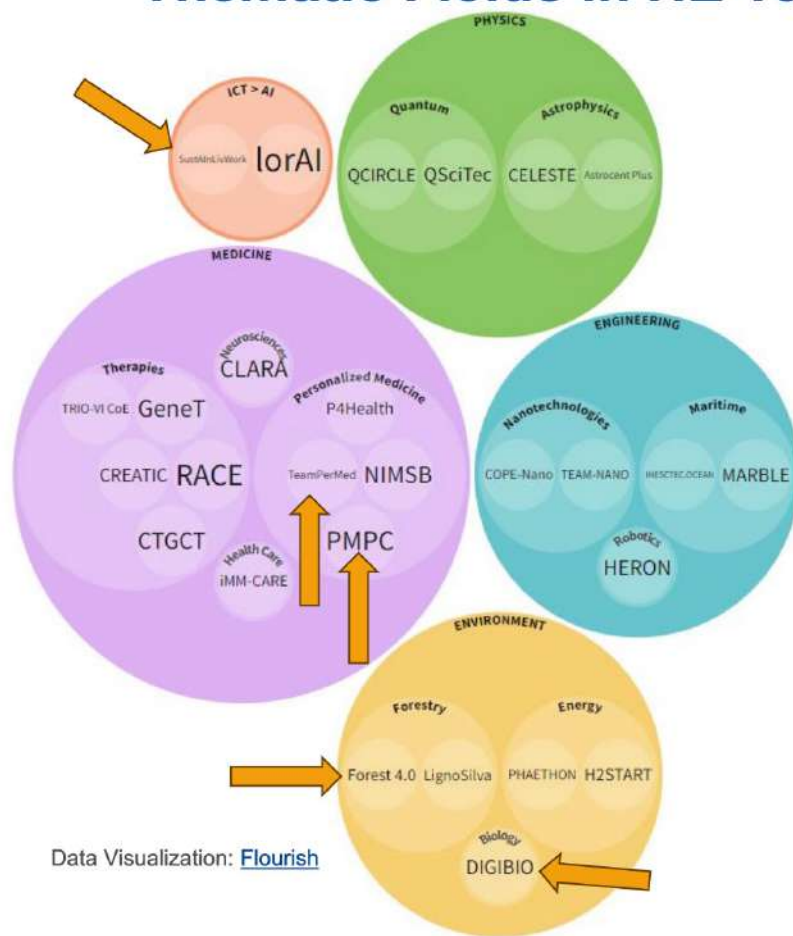
- aprox. 18 Teaming CoE

- 270 Mill EUR

*Note: countries with at least one retained proposal are represented.*



### Thematic Fields in HE Teaming Projects



Data Visualization: [Flourish](#)

#### MEDICINE

- Therapies
- Personalised Medicine
- Neurosciences
- Health Care

#### ENVIRONMENT

- Forestry
- Energy
- Biology

#### PHYSICS

- Quantum
- Astrophysics

#### ENGINEERING

- Nanotechnologies
- Maritime
- Robotics

#### ICT

- Artificial Intelligence

Source: REA.C.3 - Teaming: HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ACCESS-01-two-stage and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-01-two-stage



## Teaming Synergies (2026). Scope

- Supports collaboration between existing and future Centres of Excellence
- Creates thematic clusters based on capacity, research areas and innovation potential
- Pilots coordinated activities across geographically distributed CoEs
- Builds capacity for knowledge valorisation and strengthens links with industry, investors and policymakers)

### Key Facts

- **Action type:** (CSA)
- **Budget:** EUR 7 million per project
- **Project duration:** 5 years
- **Opening date:** 23 April 2026
- **Deadline:** 24 September 2026

### Eligibility

- **Coordinators must be established in a Widening Country**



# Teaming Synergies (2026).

## Expected Outcomes

- ✓ Long-term collaboration among participating CoE through structured joint initiatives
- ✓ Support to national/regional R&I reforms and strengthened institutional cooperation
- ✓ Multidisciplinary and transnational collaboration to address EU and global challenges
- ✓ Advancement of ERA priorities, including responsible AI and knowledge valorisation
- ✓ Increased visibility and recognition of Centres of Excellence at all levels
- ✓ Stronger synergies with EU and national programmes to attract additional funding

Action type	Budget	Othe conditions	Timeline
Coordination and Support Action (CSA)	<p>Estimated budget: EUR 238 million / EUR 207.50 million (2026)</p> <p>EUR 30.50 million (2027)</p> <p>Expected EU contribution per project: EUR 0.80 – 1.50 million (around 200 projects)</p>	<p><b>Coordinators must be established in a Widening Country.</b></p> <p><b>The Joint Research Centre (JRC)</b> may participate in the project to provide specific expertise.</p>	<p><b>Opening:</b> 8 January 2026</p> <p><b>Deadline:</b> 9 April 2026</p> <p><b>Project Duration:</b> Up to 3 years</p>



**Twinning aims to enhance networking activities between research institutions of the Widening countries and top-class leading counterparts at EU level**

# Twinning

## HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-WIDENING-02



## **Twinning. Scope**

- Builds long-term collaboration between a Widening institution and two leading EU/AC institutions
- Strengthens research excellence through joint research, training, and mobility
- Enhances scientific skills, knowledge exchange, and networking capacity
- Includes a research component (up to 30%) aligned with the Twinning strategy
- Supports improvements in research management and institutional processes

## **Example of activities:**

- short-term staff exchanges; expert visits and training.
- organization of workshops and school-type activities
- conference attendance
- dissemination and outreach activities
- activities to improve proposal preparation and project management
- exploratory research project



## **Twinning. Expected Outcomes**

- Improved scientific excellence and research quality of the Widening institution
- Sustained long-term collaboration with two leading EU/AC institutions
- Enhanced skills, human capital, and research management capacity
- Increased participation of the Widening institution in Horizon Europe projects
- Stronger integration into European research networks, infrastructures and communities



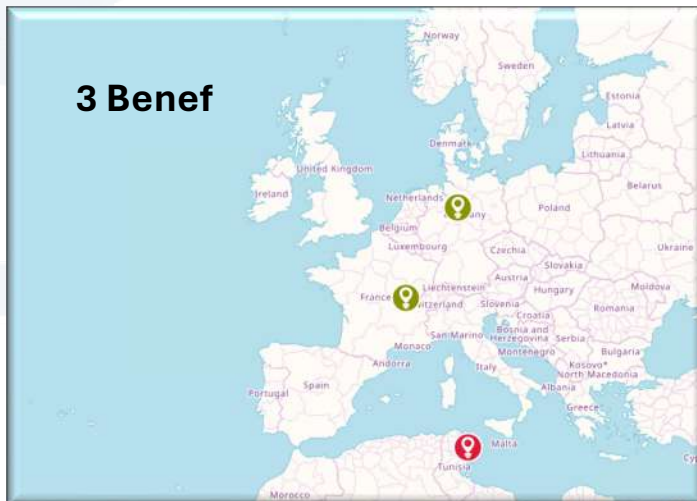


## **Twinning. Key facts**

- Action type: Coordination and Support Action (CSA)
- Total envelope 2026: ~ EUR 223 million
- Typical project budget: EUR 0.8–1.5 million
- Research component: up to 30% of the total budget
- Project duration: usually 36 months
- Opening date: 8 January 2026
- Deadline: 9 April 2026

# Twinning. Eligibility Requirements

- **Coordinator** must be established in a Widening Country
- Consortium must include at least three independent entities:
  - 1 Widening coordinator
  - 2 leading institutions from two different EU Member States or Associated Countries
- All institutions must be independent of each other
- Open to all scientific fields but demonstrated excellence and “leading expertise”



# Twinning. Legal and financial set up of GAs

## Eligible costs will take the form of a Lump Sum

Defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027)”

### Lump sum grants - costs

- ☐ The overall lump sum is fixed in the grant agreement
- ☐ The breakdown of lump sum shares per beneficiary and per work package is in Annex 2 of the grant agreement
- ☐ Payment does not depend on costs incurred: lump sum contribution paid for **the work packages completed and approved by REA for the reporting period.**
- ☐ It is only possible to declare and have partial payment for partially completed work packages at the final payment (interim payment covers only completed work packages)

Action type	Budget	Othe conditions	Timeline
Research and Innovation Actions)	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 30.00 million.	<p>1. The proposal must include only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One legal entity, as a beneficiary, established in a Widening country.</li> <li>• One legal entity which is the coordinator of an 'eligible already funded action'.</li> </ul> <p>2. The proposal must be submitted by the coordinator of the 'eligible already funded action'.</p> <p>No more than 10% of the maximum grant amount can be allocated to the coordinator as a coordination fee for the integration of the new widening beneficiary. No less than 90% of the max grant amount must be allocated to the widening beneficiary</p>	Opening: 13 Jan 2026 Deadline(s): 24 Sep 2026

## Hop-on Facility

# HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-WIDENING-03

**Be part of ongoing eligible projects !!**

The screenshot shows the 'Funding & tender opportunities' page on the European Commission's Single Electronic Data Interchange Area (SEDIA). The page displays search results for 170 items found. Two specific projects are highlighted:

ID	Topic	Programme part
101046182	Novel, orally available immune modulator MP1032 with anti-SARS-CoV-2 and anti-cytokine activity	Health
101045989	SARS-coV2 variants Evaluation in pRegnancy and paeDiatrics cohorts	Health

Each project entry includes a 'Contact' button. The search filters on the left include 'Match whole words only', 'Topic', and 'Programme part'.

# Hop-on Facility

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-WIDENING-03



EUROPEAN UNION

Allows the legal entities from widening countries to join ongoing collaborative projects with no other widening partner participating yet

Collaborative projects have to be from Pillar II or EIC Pathfinder:

## Scope

- Strengthens inclusion of Widening institutions in excellent consortia with top-performing research groups
- Adds new RTD&I activities aligned with the original project
- Add complementary expertise and clear added value



**Pillar II**  
GLOBAL CHALLENGES &  
EUROPEAN INDUSTRIAL  
COMPETITIVENESS

Clusters

- Health
- Culture, Creativity & Inclusive Society
- Civil Security for Society
- Digital, Industry & Space
- Climate, Energy & Mobility
- Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture & Environment



**Pillar III**  
INNOVATIVE EUROPE

European Innovation  
Council



## Expected Outcomes :

- Stronger participation of Widening institutions in high-quality Horizon Europe projects
- Enhanced scientific excellence and innovation capacity of the new Widening partner
- Improved integration of the Widening institution into European research networks
- Additional activities that reinforce the impact and outcomes of the existing project
- Sustained collaboration between the original consortium and the new



EUROPEAN UNION

## Key Facts :

- Action type: Coordination and Support Action (CSA)
- Total budget (2026): EUR 30 million
- Funding per Hop-On action: typically EUR 100k – 500k
- Eligible hosts: existing Horizon Europe projects (mainly Pillar II and EIC Pathfinder)
- Project duration: aligned with the original project (no extension required)
- Opening date: 13 January 2026
- Deadline: 24 September 2026

**Furthermore, the ongoing grant agreement is between 1 to 12 months from its starting date by the submission deadline.**

## Eligibility

- The new partner must be established in a Widening Country
- Only existing Horizon Europe projects can apply (mainly Pillar II and EIC Pathfinder)
- The original consortium must agree to include the new partner
- The new Widening partner must provide clear added scientific value
- Activities must be aligned with the ongoing project and not duplicate existing work
- The Hop-On partner must be independent from all existing

Action type	Budget	Othe conditions	Timeline
Coordination and Support Action (CSA)	Estimated budget: EUR 7 million (1 project)	(No additional conditions listed)	<b>Opening:</b> 23 April 2026 <b>Deadline:</b> 24 September 2026

Applications must be submitted by a consortium that includes, as beneficiaries, at least three independent legal entities: each established in a different Member State or Associated Country, and at least two of them must be established in a Member State.

# Research Management Facility

## HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-WIDENING-04



## Research Management Facility. Scope

- Supports institutions in Widening countries to strengthen research management
- Provides tailored assessment, training, and capacity-building services
- Promotes peer learning and exchange of best practices
- Enhances alignment with ERA priorities and research integrity
- Facilitates networking within the European research management community

## Why join the consortium?

- European leadership in research management and visibility across the Widening community
- Direct access to funding for internal capacity-building and staff development
- Influence on European RM standards and future ERA priorities
- Privileged networks with top research management organisations and experts
- Long-term institutional strengthening and enhanced competitiveness in future calls



# Research Management Facility. Expected Outcomes

- Stronger research management capacity in Widening institutions
- Better alignment with European standards and ERA principles
- More professional research support systems and skilled staff
- Wider uptake of best practices and peer-learning models
- Improved integration in European research management networks

## Key Facts

- Action type: Coordination and Support Action (CSA)
- Total budget (2026): EUR 7 million (single project)
- Project duration: Up to 3 years
- Coordinator: Must be based in a Widening Country
- Minimum: 3 independent entities from 3 different MS/AC
- Opening date: 23 April 2026
- Deadline: 24 September 2026



# Research Management Facility.

## Eligibility Requirements

- Coordinator must be established in a **Widening Country**
- Minimum consortium: 3 independent legal entities from 3 different MS/AC
- At least 2 of them must be from EU Member States
- Open to organisations with roles in research management, support or administration
- Entities hosting WIDERA NCPs in Widening Countries may exceptionally participate
- All partners must demonstrate capacity and expertise in research manageme

Action type	Budget	Othe conditions	Timeline
MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships – European Fellowships (TMA – ERA Fellowships)	<b>Estimated budget:</b> EUR 8 million <b>Expected number of funded projects:</b> around 50 fellowships	<b>Proposals submitted under ERA Fellowships must comply with all admissibility and eligibility requirements of the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2026 call, and must pass all evaluation thresholds</b> of that call.	<b>Opening:</b> 9 April 2026 <b>Deadline:</b> 9 September 2026

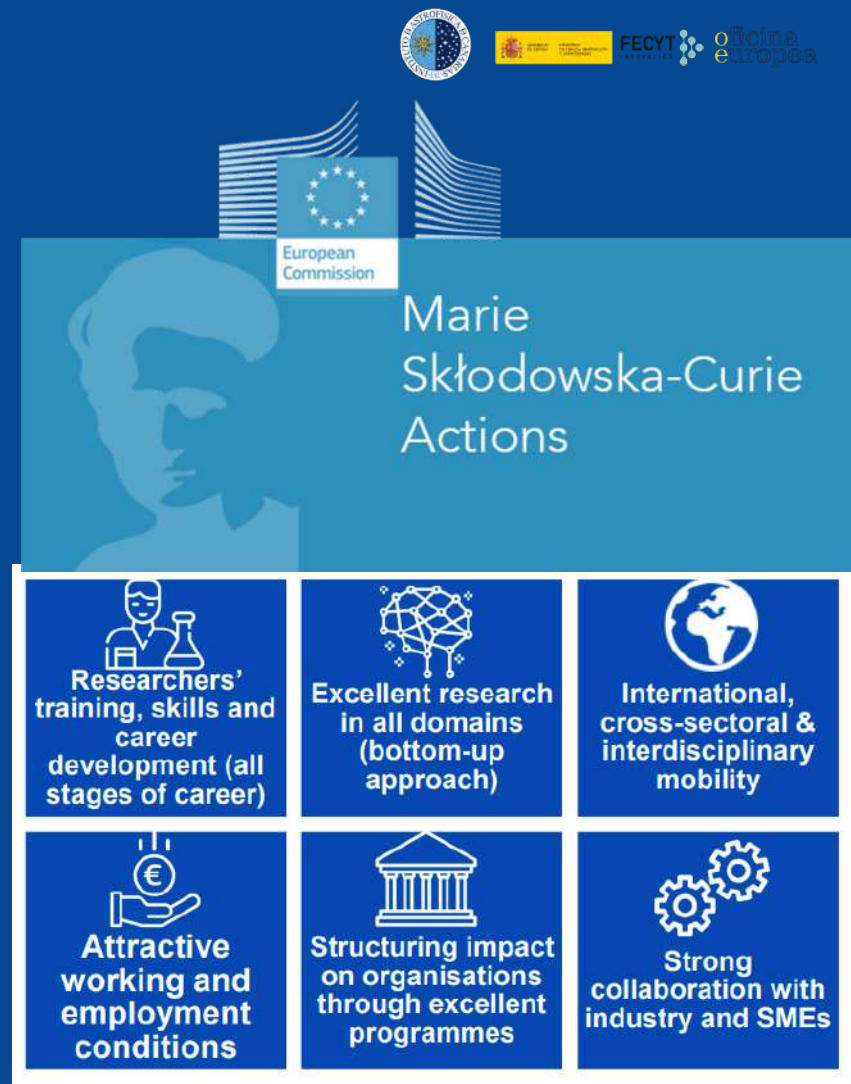
# ***ERA Fellowships*** **HORIZON-WIDERA-2026- WIDENING-05**



Marie  
Skłodowska-Curie  
Actions

# ERA Fellowships

- Supports postdoctoral researchers who apply to MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships but are **hosted by institutions in Widening Countries**
- Follows the same rules, structure and evaluation criteria as MSCA PF 2026
- Funds excellent researchers from any nationality in any scientific discipline
- Enhances research excellence, mobility and career development within Widening institutions
- Strengthens integration of Widening organisations into the European Research Area





Marie  
Skłodowska-Curie  
Actions

# ERA Fellowships

## Eligibility & Selection Mechanism



- Single submission to MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (European Fellowships)
- Host institution must be located in a Widening Country
- Proposal must be admissible and eligible under MSCA-PF rules
- Applicant must agree to be considered for ERA Fellowships
- Proposal must pass all MSCA evaluation thresholds
- Proposal must not reach the main funded list under MSCA-PF





Marie  
Skłodowska-Curie  
Actions

# ERA Fellowships

## Key Facts



- Action type: MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships – European Fellowships (ERA track)
- Total budget (2026): EUR 8 million
- Expected number of fellowships:  $\approx 50$
- Funding scheme: Single MSCA-PF submission and evaluation
- Eligibility: Host must be located in a Widening Country
- Evaluation: Must pass all MSCA thresholds but fall below the MSCA main list
- Opening date: 9 April 2026
- Deadline: 9 September 2026



Marie  
Skłodowska-Curie  
Actions



# ERA Fellowships

## Mobility, Training Opportunities

- Optional research stays worldwide (max. one third of fellowship)
- Non-academic placement of up to 6 months at the end of the fellowship
- Placements must be included and justified in the proposal
- Training in transversal skills, innovation & entrepreneurship
- Training in research integrity and Open Science
- A Career Development Plan jointly prepared with the supervisor

## Expected Outcomes

- Enhanced career development and mobility of postdoctoral researchers in Widening institutions
- Strengthened research excellence through high-level MSCA-quality projects
- Improved integration of Widening institutions into European research networks
- Increased participation of Widening organisations in MSCA and Horizon Europe
- Attraction and retention of talent in Widening countries

# Destination 2026–2027: Widening Participation & Spreading Excellence



## 2026 Calls

1. Teaming Synergies
2. Twinning
3. Hop-On Facility
4. Research Management Facility
5. ERA Fellowships (*Widening version*)

## 2027 Calls

**EIC Pre-accelerator – Widening**  
**ERA Chairs**  
**ERA Research Managers**  
**ERA Fellowships (*Widening version*)**  
**Excellence Hubs**

2026

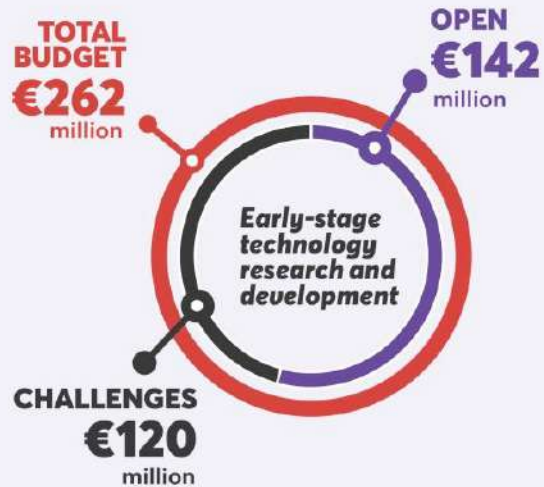
2027



# EIC WORK PROGRAMME 2025



## EIC PATHFINDER



## EIC TRANSITION



## EIC ACCELERATOR




## EIC STEP

EIC STRATEGIC TECHNOLOGIES  
FOR EUROPE PLATFORM






## TRL1 - TRL3 / 4

**PATHFINDER**

**EIC Pathfinder**  
Research & Innovation grants for breakthrough research from laboratory to prototype.

## TRL4 - TRL6

**TRANSITION**

**EIC Transition**  
Market-readiness grants for preparing to enter the market

## TRL6 - TRL9

**ACCELERATOR**

**EIC Accelerator**  
"Scale-Up Grants & Investments" for scaling up business

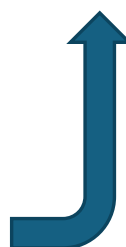
**STEP Scale Up**

**STEP Scale Up**  
Major investments to help companies become global leaders



## EIC pre-Accelerator

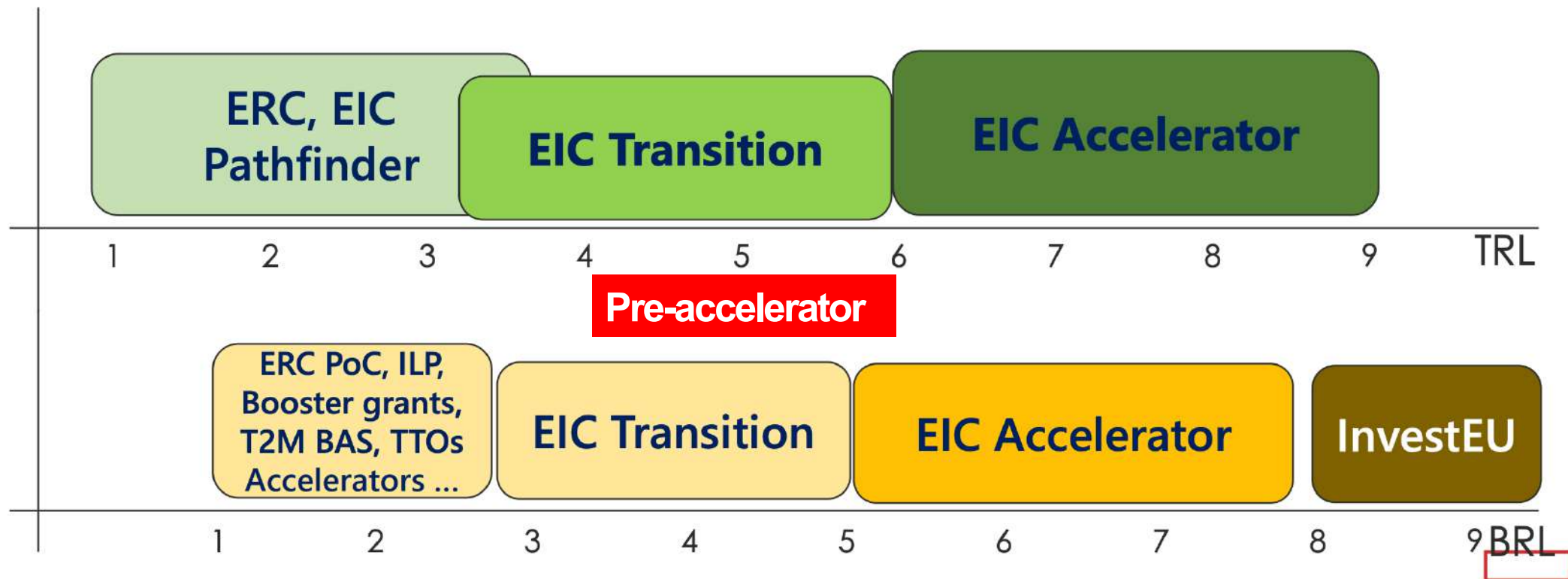
Call for support  
WIDENING  
Countries

- 
- Total budget: EUR 40 million
  - Expected number of projects: 100
  - Funding per project: EUR 300k–500k
  - Funding rate: 70%
  - Action type: CSA
  - Project duration: up to 24 months



# Technology and business maturation go hand in hand!

European  
Innovation  
Council



## EIC PRE-Accelerator. Scope

- Supports high-potential **deep-tech startups** in Widening countries
- Helps increase business, investor and technology readiness
- Prepares companies for EIC Accelerator and private investment
- Supports maturation and validation of technologies at TRL 4–6
- Strengthens market assessment, IP strategy and business modelling

### Form of support:

- Grant funding up to **EUR 500,000 (lump-sum)**
- Typical duration: up to 24 months
- Supports TRL 4–6 technology maturation and validation
- Covers market analysis, competitor mapping, IP strategy, and business case development
- Provides access to EIC Business Acceleration Services
- Provides Fast Track access to EIC Accelerator



# ELC pre-accelerator - Widening

- HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-01-WIDENING-01:

**Possible questions to address!!**

- **Technological breakthrough:**
  - Does the technology have a **high degree of novelty and higher performance** compared to other technologies available or in development?
  - Does the technology indicate **high commercial potential**?
- **Economic and/or societal benefits:**
  - To what extent does the proposed innovation have **scale up potential** including high capacity to gain or **create new European or global markets**?
  - To what extent is the proposed innovation expected to generate **positive impacts** for the European Union, Member States or Associated Countries (e.g., strategic autonomy, employment etc.)?



# ELC pre-accelerator - Widening

- **HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-01-WIDENING-01:**

- **Remote Evaluation (3 independent experts )**

Criteria	Threshold
Excellence	4 / max 5
Impact	4 / max 5
Efficiency	3 / max 5

# EIC pre-accelerator - Widening

- **HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-01-WIDENING-01 :**



- **Access to EIC Business Acceleration Services (BAS):**
  - Participation in International Trade Fairs programmes
  - Investor and strategic partner matchmaking programmes
  - Partnership programmes with European corporations
  - Networking and tailored business mentoring

**Fast Track to the EIC Accelerator, improving chances of later funding**

**Possibility to obtain alternative national or regional funding through programmes such as the Seal of Excellence**







# ELC pre-accelerator - Widening

NEWS ARTICLE | 25 November 2025 | European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency | 1 min read

## High interest in first ELC Pre-Accelerator call underscores relevance of new instrument

### PRE-ACCELERATOR

### PROPOSALS SUBMITTED

DEADLINE NOVEMBER 2025



1083

Proposals submitted



€479 Million

Requested budget



26%

Female-led companies



30

Countries



2026

Results Spring 2026

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- Action type: CSA (**lump sum**)
- Mono-beneficiary action
- Coordinator must be in a Widening Country
- Duration: up to 5 years

# **ERA Chairs and Research Managers *HORIZON-WIDERA- 2027-02***

***HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-02-  
WIDENING-01: ERA Chairs***

***HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-02-  
WIDENING-02: ERA Research  
Managers***



# ERA Chairs (Researchers):

## Scope

- Attract an **outstanding researcher** to a Widening institution
- Create a **new permanent research group of excellence**
- Support structural reforms and long-term institutional change
- Strengthen integration into the European Research Area
- Improve competitiveness in EU and global funding

## Who can apply?

- Single applicant: one university or research organisation
- Coordinator must be in a Widening Country
- Proposal must include the ERA Chair holder
- ERA Chair must be an excellent international researcher (R3/R4)
- Any scientific field is eligible



# ERA Chairs (Researchers): Who can apply?

## Key requirements

- CV (Europass) of the ERA Chair holder
- Two commitment letters (Chair + institution)
- Plan to establish a new research group
- Clear contribution to institutional change
- Description of facilities and long-term support



# ERA Chairs (Researchers) Expected Outcomes

## System Level

- Increased mobility of top researchers
- Reversal of brain drain
- Improved use of research infrastructures
- Stronger integration in the ERA
- Better R&I human capital in Widening countries

## Organisation Level

- Permanent research group of excellence
- Higher research quality and visibility
- Improved capacity to win competitive funding
- Institutional and organisational reforms
- New collaborations and partnerships



# ERA Chairs (Researchers):

## Budget

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>24</sup>	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2027		
Opening: 06 Apr 2027 Deadline(s): 14 Sep 2027				
Destination: Widening participation and spreading excellence				
HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-02-WIDENING-01: ERA Chairs	CSA	175.00	1.50 to 2.50	80
HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-02-WIDENING-02: ERA Research Managers	CSA	65.00	1.50 to 2.50	30
Overall indicative budget		240.00		



# ERA Research Managers:

## Scope

1. Strengthen institutional capacity in research management
2. Attract an experienced research manager to the institution
3. Improve grant management and proposal support
4. Enhance Open Science, integrity and data management practices
5. Support strategic planning and alignment with ERA priorities
6. Foster sustainable reforms in research support structures



# ERA Research Managers:

## Who can apply

1. Public or private research-performing organisations established in a Widening country.
2. Institutions with the capacity to host and provide long-term support to a Research Manager (RM).
3. Organisations committed to implementing structural improvements in research management and administration.
4. Entities able to provide a sustainable career pathway for the incoming RM after the project.

## Action Type

Coordination and Support Action (CSA)

## Budget

Overall indicative budget: EUR 100 million

Expected EU contribution per project:

EUR 1.5–4.5 million

## Other Conditions

Proposals must include at least two R&I ecosystems from two participating Widening countries.

The funding rate is 70% of eligible costs.

The expected project duration is up to 5 years.

## Timeline

Opening: 2 September 2026

Deadline: 4 March 2027

# *Excellence Hubs*

## HORIZON-WIDERA- 2027-WIDENING-04

# Excellence Hubs:

## Scope

**The projects will foster a regional innovation culture in Widening countries, aligned with regional or national smart specialization strategies.**

1. Strengthen innovation ecosystems in Widening countries
2. Connect regional innovation actors across borders
3. Foster collaboration between universities, companies, public authorities and society
4. Support joint strategies for innovation-driven regional development
5. Promote long-term partnerships aligned with smart specialisation strategies
6. Encourage cross-border value chains and shared R&I agendas



## Excellence Hubs: Who can apply?

- Consortia of at least 2 different regional innovation ecosystems from 2 Widening countries.
- Each ecosystem must include **four types of actors** (academic institutions/research centers, companies, public authorities, societal actors).
- Total consortium: typically 8-15 partners from multiple ecosystems.
- Coordination can be done by any eligible entity, but involvement of regional authorities is strongly encouraged.
- Ecosystems must present a joint strategy and shared innovation agenda.





## Excellence Hubs: **Key facts**

- Action type: Coordination and Support Action (CSA)
- Total budget for 2027: €100 million
- Expected number of projects: around 30
- Indicative funding per project: €1,5–4,5 million (70% cofunded)
- Project duration: up to 5 years
- Consortium structure:
  - At least two regional innovation ecosystems
  - From at least two different eligible countries
- Each ecosystem: four independent entities (university/ research center, company, RTO, public authority, etc.)
- Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties ( SMEs and start-up companies).The maximum amount is EUR 60 000



## **Excellence Hubs:**

### **Expected Outcomes**

1. Stronger and more connected regional innovation ecosystems
2. Joint cross-border strategies and long-term cooperation frameworks
3. Improved alignment with Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3)
4. Enhanced innovation capacity and competitiveness of participating regions
5. Stronger collaboration between academia, industry, public authorities and society
6. New cross-border value chains and shared R&I portfolios
7. Increased ability to attract investment and participate in EU programmes



# Destination : Widening Participation & Spreading Excellence. 2026–2027

2026	WIDENING - Calls 2026	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	Teaming Synergies				23 opening					24 deadline			
	Twinning 	8 opening			9 deadline								
	Hop-On Facility			13 opening						24 deadline			
	Research Management Facility				23 opening					24 deadline			
	ERA Fellowships				9 opening					9 deadline			
	Excellence Hubs									2 opening			



European  
Commission

[Home](#) > [Events](#) > [Horizon Europe info days – WIDERA Work Programme Widening calls](#) > [Overview](#)

## The research and innovation community platform

Connecting researchers across borders and disciplines. Take part in events, access exclusive content, widen your network.

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COMING SOON

### Horizon Europe info days – WIDERA Work Programme Widening calls

This infoday aims to inform interested applicants about the Widening calls in the WIDERA Work Programme 2026 - 2027.

📅 22 January 2026 ⌚ 09:00 (GMT+00:00)

[Overview](#)

# Gracias

