



Horizon Europe: Building on the Success of Horizon 2020

The long wait is over. On 7 June 2018, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation Carlos Moedas held a press conference in Brussels launching the Commission's proposals for the successor programme to Horizon 2020 – Horizon Europe.

Having built a global reputation as a world leader in research and innovation programming, the Commission believes the successor to Horizon 2020 should capitalise on this strong brand name. Horizon Europe aims to enact an 'evolution not a revolution'. Set to launch in 2021, Horizon Europe will build on the achievements and success of Horizon 2020, bridging the past and the future of research and innovation in Europe.

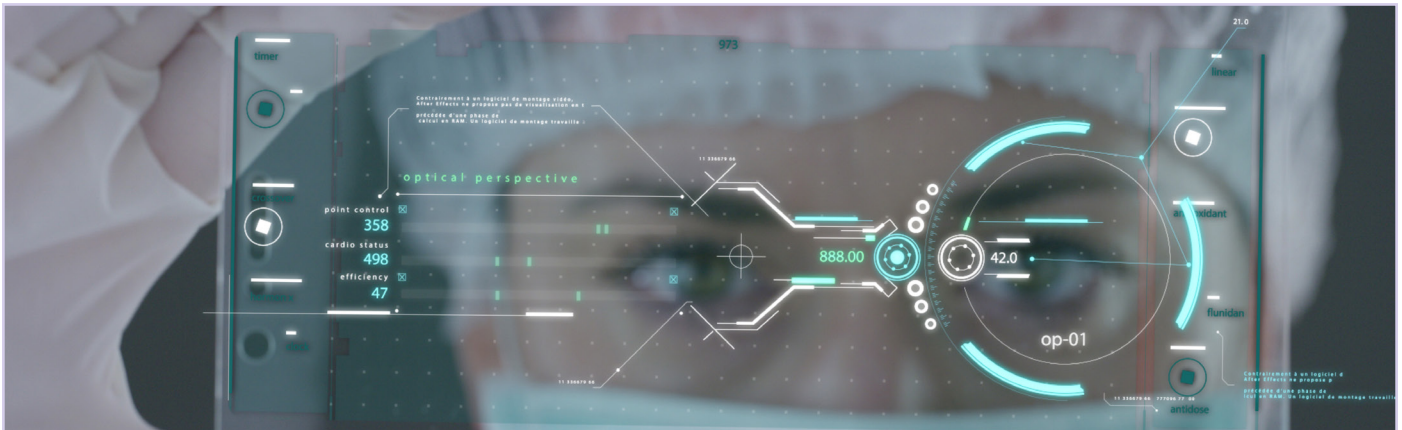
The European Commission is proposing a total budget of €100 billion for 2021-2027 for Horizon Europe and the Euratom Research and Training Programme. The new Framework Programme is intended to be the most ambitious research and innovation funding programme to date, described by Moedas as "*the biggest increase in absolute amounts ever.*"

In keeping with the design of its predecessor, Horizon Europe is divided into three pillars:

- » **Open Science**, with a budget of €25.8 billion.
- » **Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness**, with a budget of €52.7 billion.
- » **Open Innovation**, with a budget of €13.5 billion.

However, while Horizon 2020 was structured around seven main Societal Challenges, Horizon Europe identifies five overarching Global Challenges for action: Health (€7.7 billion over seven years); Inclusive and Secure Society (€2.8 billion); Digital and Industry (€15 billion); Climate, Energy, and Mobility (€15 billion); and Food and Natural Resources (€10 billion).

Horizon Europe will continue to drive Europe's scientific excellence through the European Research Council (ERC) and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellowships and exchanges and draw on the scientific advice, technical support and dedicated research of the Joint Research Centre (JRC). It will also add a new level of ambition and boost the scientific, economic and societal impact of EU funding.



Horizon Europe will also introduce several new main features:

- » A European Innovation Council (EIC) to help the EU become a frontrunner in market-creating innovation.
- » New EU-wide research and innovation missions focusing on societal challenges and industrial competitiveness.
- » Maximising the innovation potential across the EU.
- » The principle of 'open science' will become the modus operandi of Horizon Europe, requiring open access to publications and data.
- » A new generation of European Partnerships and increased collaboration with other EU programmes.

The 2021-2027 programme will also include 'Missions' cutting across Horizon Europe to orient research efforts. The number of missions and their subjects are to be determined, but Moedas confirmed each would pool between €5 billion and €10 billion combined from different funding lines.

The proposed budget allocation of €100 billion for 2021-2027 includes €97.6 billion under Horizon Europe (€3.5 billion of which will be allocated under the InvestEU Fund) and €2.4 billion for the Euratom Research and Training Programme. The Euratom programme, which funds research and training on nuclear safety, security and radiation protection, will have an increased focus on non-power applications such as healthcare and medical equipment, and will also support the mobility of nuclear researchers under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions.

Carlos Moedas said: *"Horizon 2020 is one of Europe's biggest success stories. The new Horizon Europe programme aims even higher. As part of this, we want to increase funding for the European Research Council to strengthen the EU's global scientific leadership, and reengage citizens by setting ambitious new missions for EU research. We are also proposing a new European Innovation Council to modernise funding for ground-breaking innovation in Europe"*.

European universities have expressed disappointment with the proposed 22% increase in overall funding and a perceived emphasis on innovation funding at the expense of basic research. Kurt Deketelaere, secretary-general of the League of European

Research Universities (LERU) in Leuven, Belgium, said: *"We will fight for a better distribution of the budget."*

On 21 March 2018, an open letter signed by 13 representative groups including LERU and the European University Association (EUA) said that increasing the budget for research and innovation under Horizon Europe to €160 billion would *"create an estimated €650,000 jobs by 2030 and add around 0.46% to GDP over the same period."* The university coalition argues that the current €77 billion Horizon 2020 research fund is not ambitious enough to improve the average success rate, since in some cases it supports less than one out of five high quality proposals (around 12%).

Organisations have also complained that health research is under-funded in the new proposal, with its share of the budget dropping from 9.7% to 8.2%. The German Foundation for World Population in Hanover, issued a statement saying: *"It smacks of a lack of ambition or willingness in the commission to tackle head-on the global health challenges facing us, on issues such as the fight against HIV & AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis."*

These initial reactions from the research community suggest that despite the Commission's desire for a speedy budget agreement, the negotiation period will be lengthy and hotly-contested.

The UK, Brexit and Horizon 2020

While full participation is usually only available to Member States, non-EU countries can take part in various European funding programmes, including Horizon 2020. The UK's future participation would ultimately depend on what transpires during further negotiations between the UK and the EU.

Strong support exists within the UK's research community to continue participating in current and future EU programmes. Writing on 6 June 2018, Beth Thompson, Head of UK/EU Policy at the Wellcome Trust, argued that post-Brexit, it will be possible to improve scientific collaboration with the UK's European neighbours. Thompson acknowledges that this would mean compromise on both sides, but suggests that *'...the gains will be great'*.

The UK remains eligible to apply for EU funding until the current programmes end, even if this is after March 2019. One possible option for future participation would be associated country status,



as in the example of Switzerland, which in December 2016 became eligible to participate fully in Horizon 2020 but only after it was agreed that there would be free movement of people from the entire EU. Membership of Horizon 2020 has enabled British scientists to participate in joint European research projects. Anything less than full association with future EU research programmes would deny UK researchers the right to influence the areas of research that are funded by Horizon Europe.

Speaking recently to RESEARCHconnect, Professor Lino Guzzella, President of ETH Zurich, which has many research collaborations with the UK, offered an example of concern from outside the UK. She said: *“Not being able to participate in the world’s largest research programme would of course be as damaging to the UK as it would be to Switzerland or any other European country. It would have a negative effect on research, innovation, education and the economy. But, as the example of Switzerland shows, EU membership is not absolutely necessary in order to be able to participate in various programmes.”*

Launching the Government’s Industrial Strategy Grand Challenges at Jodrell Bank on 21 May 2018, Prime Minister Theresa May signalled the UK’s wish to *“increase and extend”* scientific collaboration between the UK and the European Union and other partners around the world post-Brexit.

The Prime Minister said maintaining *“a deep science partnership”* with the EU after the UK leaves in 2019 was in the interest of both Britain and the Union. Hailing the status of the UK as a hub of international collaboration and recognising the value of collaboration with colleagues in other countries through EU-organised programmes, the Prime Minister confirmed for the first time that the UK will seek to *“fully associate”* with the excellence-based European science and innovation programmes – including Horizon Europe and Euratom R&T.

Mrs May acknowledged this would involve an appropriate UK financial contribution, which it would *“willingly make”*. In return, the UK would expect to maintain a *“suitable level of influence”* in line with both this contribution and other benefits that continued UK participation would bring to EU research programmes. The Prime Minister said that the UK is ready to discuss details of such a deal with the European Commission as soon as possible.

Mrs May also confirmed that the UK is in discussions with the EU to participate as a full member of Galileo, the EU’s global satellite navigation system, but would be prepared to set up its own separate programme if a deal could not be reached.

In a recent interview with RESEARCHconnect, Brigita Jurisic, IP Commercialisation and Incubator Manager, Research and Enterprise, at City, University of London said that from the conversations she has had with researchers at different universities, there remains a great deal of anxiety and concern about research collaborations with their EU colleagues:

“Higher education in [the] UK is in a lot of turmoil and Brexit is one more variable in the picture. I tend to be quite positive, however, and have confidence that Britain will work towards getting the best possible deal in general, and especially for HE as it was historically such an important sector gaining its economic importance by generating £95 billion for the country’s economy and supporting more than 940,000 jobs across the nation, according to an analysis from Universities UK.”

Horizon Europe – Timeline to 2021

The adoption of Horizon Europe will depend on agreement of the long-term EU budget for 2021-2027. This decision will fall to the European Council, acting by unanimity, with the consent of the European Parliament. The Commission has cautioned that negotiations on the current long-term EU budget took too long. As a result, this led to delays to key financial programmes.

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker urged for negotiations to be given the utmost priority, and pledged that the Commission will do everything in its power to allow for a swift agreement. Juncker called for agreement to be reached before the European Parliament elections and the summit in Sibiu on 9 May 2019.

Having published the proposed budget, the Commission is now engaging with stakeholders to carry out impact assessments ahead of its anticipated approval in Q2 2018, and launch on 1 January 2021.



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