



Cluster 2: Culture,
Creativity and Inclusive
society

Work Programme 2026

THE EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION PROGRAMME 2021 – 2027



Novelties in the 2026 Work Programme





Novelties in WP 2026-2027

- More strategic, focused, simpler, and accessible, with a reduction in fragmentation of the available budget.
- New part called "**Horizontal Activities**" which groups the horizontal calls and aims to create critical mass and avoid duplication of budget.
- A 33% reduction in length, fewer and more concise topics, and a relative **decrease in one-project-only topics**.
- Increased the use of **lump sums**, with at least 50% of the Horizon Europe call budget allocated through lump sums.
- **Simplified proposal forms** implying a reduction of the standard page limits by 5 pages.



Updated criterion RIA, IA, CSA, COFUND

Criterion 2, Impact, has been updated for RIA, IA, CSA and COFUND type of actions.

- The "**likely scale and significance of the contributions from the project**" is no longer part of the evaluation of impact.

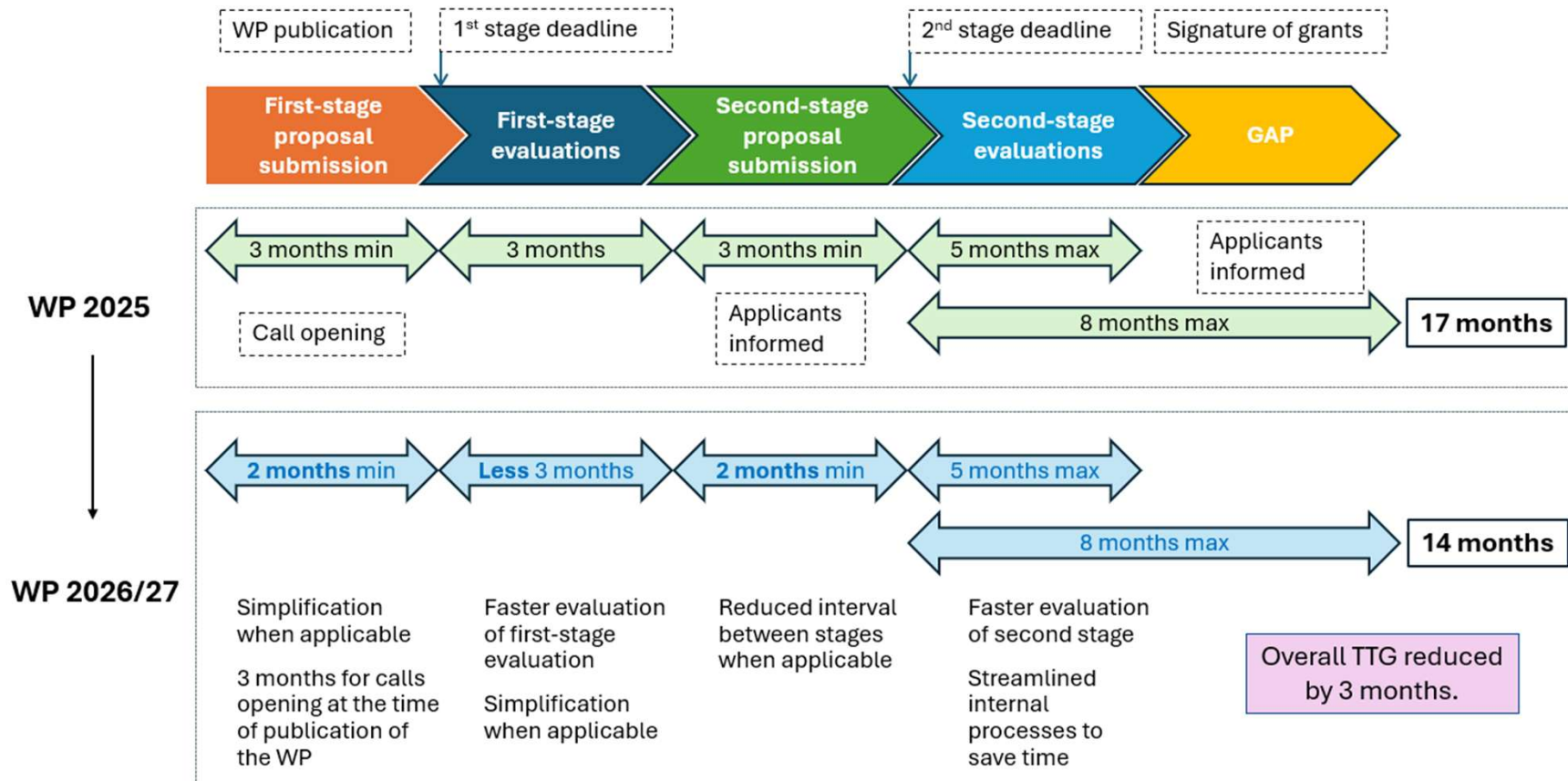
The updated impact criterium reads:

- Credibility of the pathways to achieve the expected outcomes and impacts specified in the work programme.
- Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities.

Excellence and implementation criteria are unchanged.



Reduction of overall time to grant in two-stage calls



Why do we use lump sum funding?

Significant simplification potential

- Despite all simplification, funding based on reimbursement of incurred costs remains complex and error-prone
- Lump sum project funding removes all obligations on actual cost reporting and financial ex-post audits – i.e. a major reduction of administrative burden
- Access to the programme becomes easier, especially for small organisations and newcomers

Focus on content

- Less focus on financial management, and more focus on the scientific-technical content of projects

Basic principles

Lump sum evaluation and grant agreement follow the standard approach with the same:

- Evaluation criteria
- Pre-financing and payment scheme
- Reporting periods and technical reporting, **though focusing on completion of work packages**

One lump sum share is fixed in the grant agreement for each work package:

➤ **Work package completed**  **payment**

- Payments do not depend on a successful outcome, but on the **completion of activities**.
 - Work packages can be modified through amendments (e.g. to take into account new scientific developments)
- No intention and nor basis for judging the performance of lump sum grants more strictly than the performance of other grants.



Cluster 2 *'Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Societies'* Work Programme 2026



Cluster 2 – Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society Work Programme 2026 - 2027 at a glance



**Published on 12 December 2025,
with a total budget of approx. EUR 697 million**

- Final Cluster 2 Work Programme under Horizon Europe
- Addresses key challenges & remaining gaps identified in the Strategic Plan 2025-27
 - strengthening democratic resilience, safeguarding fundamental rights & inclusive citizenship,
 - harnessing CCIs for sustainable prosperity, preserving and promoting cultural heritage,
 - addressing inequalities & fostering inclusive growth, navigating the twin & demographic transitions
- Launches a new European Partnership on Social Transformations and Resilience



Cluster 2 - Work Programme 2026



Opening of the calls 12 May 2026

Work Programme budget for 2026 Approx. EUR 360 million

Call Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026



Closure of the call (deadline): 23 Sept 26

Informing applicants: February 2027



26 topics (EUR 298.5 million)

Other actions

Co-funded European Partnership for Social Transformations and Resilience



Closure of the call (deadline): 13 Oct 26

Informing applicants: December 2026



1 topic (max EU Co-fund EUR 60 million)





Destination Democracy and Governance (2026)

10 topics - EUR 112.5 mil.

- 8 Research & Innovation Actions (RIA)
- 1 Innovation Action (IA)
- 1 Coordination & Support Action (CSA)



Cluster 2 topics in 2026

Destination Innovative Research on Democracy and Governance

- DEMOCRACY-01:** Tackling gender-based violence against politically active women and LGBTIQ people (RIA, 12 mil.)
- DEMOCRACY-02:** Understanding the forms of local democracy in low-income and low-middle income countries (RIA, 12 mil.)
- DEMOCRACY-03:** Government in transition – how governments change the way they work and prepare the civil service for the future (RIA, 8 mil.)
- DEMOCRACY-04:** Sustainable paths to media viability (IA, 12 mil.)
- DEMOCRACY-05:** Research and Innovation Network for a Union of Equality (CSA, 4.5 mil.)
- DEMOCRACY-06:** Governing global commons sustainably (RIA, 12 mil.)
- DEMOCRACY-07:** Supporting post-conflict democracy and reconstruction (RIA, 12 mil.)
- DEMOCRACY-08:** Electoral integrity in the digital context (RIA, 12 mil.)
- DEMOCRACY-09:** Citizenship education as part of lifelong learning (RIA, 16 mil.)
- DEMOCRACY-10:** Digital and media literacy as drivers for democratic and civic resilience (RIA, 12 mil.)





Destination European Cultural Heritage & Cultural and Creative industries (2026)

7 topics – EUR 85.5 mil.

- 4 Research & Innovation Actions (RIA)
- 2 Innovation Actions (IA)
- 1 Coordination & Support Action (CSA)



Cluster 2 topics in 2026

Destination Innovative Research on European Cultural Heritage and Cultural and Creative Industries

- HERITAGE-01** “Artistic intelligence” : harnessing the power of the arts to address complex challenges, enhance soft skills and boost innovation and competitiveness (RIA, 15 mil.)
- HERITAGE-02** Boosting creative startups for disruptive innovation (IA, 12 mil.)
- HERITAGE-03** AI integration in CCSI work practice: catalysing innovation and competitiveness (IA, 15 mil.)
- HERITAGE-04** Towards a fair and transparent market for cultural and creative content in the era of generative AI (RIA, 12 mil.)
- HERITAGE-05** Creative alliances: Fostering global partnerships in cultural policies and CCI innovation (RIA, 15 mil.)
- HERITAGE-06** Safeguarding linguistic diversity in Europe (RIA, 11.5 mil.)
- HERITAGE-07** Preventing and fighting illicit trafficking of cultural goods (CSA, 5 mil.)





Destination Social & Economic Transformations (2026)

9 topics – EUR 100.5 mil.

- 8 Research & Innovation Actions (RIA)
- 1 Coordination & Support Action (CSA)

+ 1 Co-funded European partnership for Social Transformations and Resilience (TRANSFO-01; EUR 60 mil.)



Cluster 2 topics in 2026

Destination Innovative Research on Social & Economic Transformations

- TRANSFO-02** Open topic: Strengthen Europe's social model and sustainable competitiveness through productivity (RIA, 12 mil.)
- TRANSFO-03** Tackling child poverty and ensuring disadvantaged children's access to Early Childhood Education and Care (RIA, 12 mil.)
- TRANSFO-04** The impact of the use of digital tools outside school and for communication on educational outcomes and mental health (RIA, 12 mil.)
- TRANSFO-05** Contribution of basic skills to productivity, innovation, competitiveness and economic growth (RIA, 12 mil.)
- TRANSFO-06** Making Europe a global magnet for talent - Attracting and retaining students, researchers and high-skilled workers from outside the EU (RIA, 10 mil.)
- TRANSFO-07** Fostering competences for the green transition (RIA, 12 mil.)
- TRANSFO-08** Strengthened implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum and a focus on inclusion, integration, and health (RIA, 12 mil.)
- TRANSFO-09** Rethinking long-term care policy in the face of EU demographic shifts (RIA, 15 mil.)
- TRANSFO-10** Fostering cooperation and integration between SSH and STEM research and innovation in the EU (CSA, 3.5 mil)



Social Sciences & Humanities in Cluster 2 and beyond

- Cluster 2 is the “home” of Social Sciences & Humanities in Horizon Europe (*while encouraging collaboration with STEM disciplines*)
- 2025-2027: additional and continued focus on the role of the Arts in the sustainability and resilience of societies (select actions)
- **SSH integration in Horizon Europe:**
 - Cooperation between STEM and SSH disciplines to improve societal outcomes; a human-centric approach in research.
 - Opportunities for inter- / transdisciplinary research with involvement of researchers from SSH disciplines in technology-oriented projects from **other Clusters** (such as health, industry, transport etc.)
 - Search and filter for “SSH-flagged” topics from any Cluster in the [Funding and Tenders Portal](#)
 - Such topics call for the involvement of SSH-researchers. Ideally, cooperation between STEM and SSH researchers begin from the proposal phase, as to increase the relevance and impact of all disciplines for the proposal and project



Horizon Europe – Stay informed & Get involved



Cluster 2 Info day on **26 March** ([CL2 Infoday 2026](#))

[Horizon Implementation day](#) on **20 January** (Novelties in the 2026-2027 Horizon Europe Work Programme)

Horizon Europe Work Programmes ([WP 2026](#))
Programme Guide ([Guide](#))

Horizon Europe website ([HE](#))



Consult your **NCP!**

Sign up as an **evaluator** for Horizon Europe calls: [Experts - EC](#)

Register to receive the latest updates of developments
via **EC portal for Funding & Tenders Opportunities**: [click here](#)





Social Transformations and Resilience Partnership



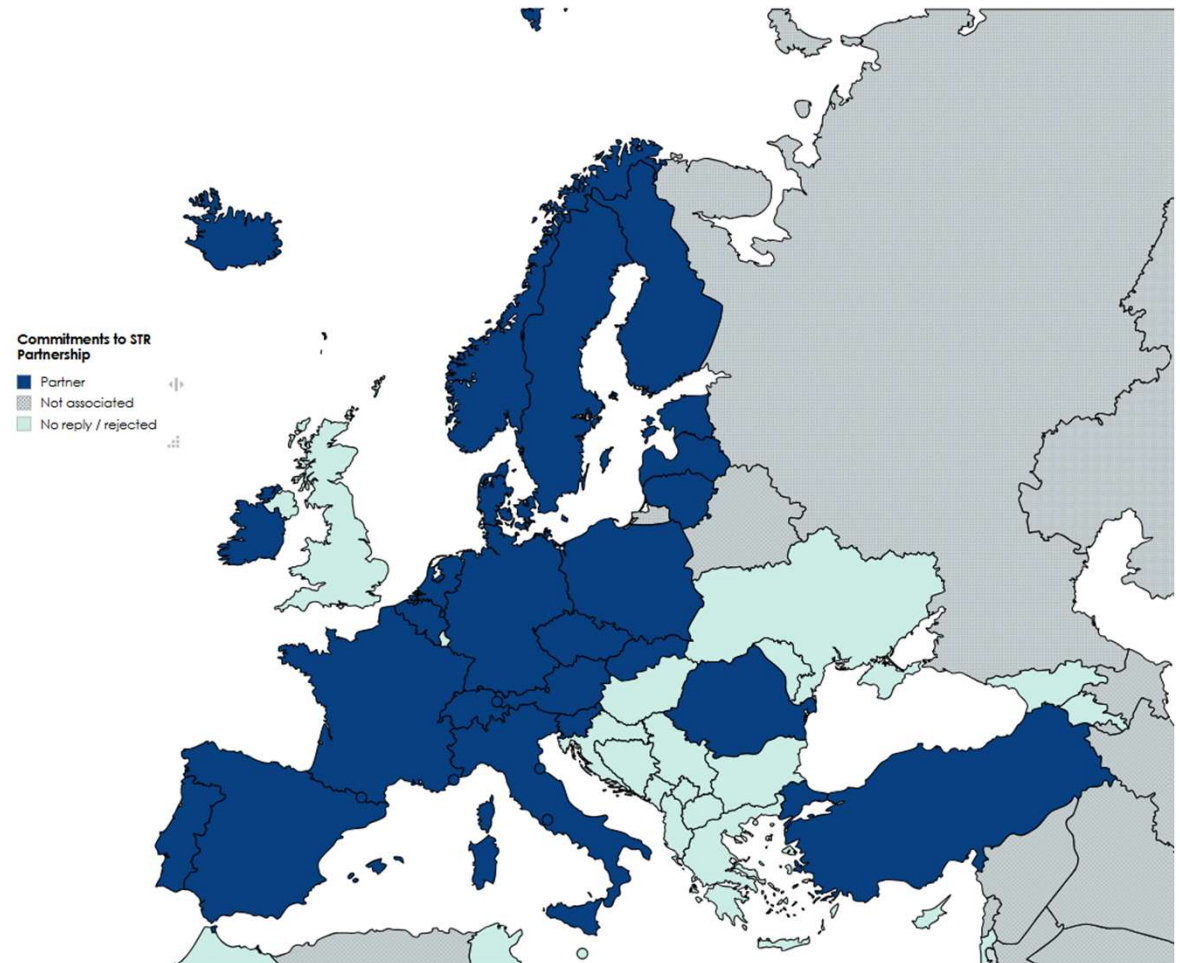
STR partnership

- **Co-funded partnership** under [Cluster 2 'Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society' Work Programme 2026](#) with the aim to:
 - Create a transformative R&I programme between **social sciences and humanities (SSH)** to build resilience, ensure fairness and inclusiveness and foster social cohesion in the light of changes in climate, environment, technology, demography and unexpected shocks.
 - Develop **knowledge, tools and innovative solutions** to address contemporary social challenges in a collaborative, interdisciplinary and systematic way.
 - Contribute to **new strategies and policy solutions** at European, national and regional level.
- **Expected partners:** Research funders; Ministries and national authorities in labour and social affairs/education/R&I;
- **Coordinator:** National Science Centre, Poland
- **Envisioned duration:** 2027 – 2034 (possibly beyond)
- **Estimate total budget:** 185M – 200M EUR (incl. 30% EU co-funding contribution)



Partners

- Austria,
- Belgium,
- the Czech Republic,
- Denmark
- Estonia,
- Finland,
- France,
- Germany,
- Iceland,
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia,
- the Netherlands,
- Norway,
- Poland,
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovakia,
- Slovenia,
- Spain
- Sweden,
- Switzerland,
- Turkey.



Activities – what will the partnership do?

- ✓ **Fund transnational calls for proposals in the four impact areas** (at least 6 calls expected)
- ✓ **Strategic development** of the Partnership (including update of SRIA and collaboration with EU missions, Partnerships and European Social Fund)
- ✓ Supporting **cross-project collaboration & exchange** between funded consortia and relevant stakeholders
- ✓ Reinforcing the link between **R&I projects and research infrastructure**
- ✓ Training and promotion of **open research, open data and data accessibility**
- ✓ **Uptake of research results** and increasing impact of R&I programmes and projects, connecting researchers with stakeholders and citizens
- ✓ Supporting the development of **evidence-based public policies and strategies**
- ✓ **Capacity Building & Widening**, including alignment with national agendas and stakeholder groups

Thematic impact areas

Social protection and essential services

- Use of social policy to increase resilience and reduce inequalities
- Stability and effectiveness of social security systems
- Reappraisal and reviews of established principles like 'universality' and 'insurance'
- Sustainability of financing and taxation models
- Changing norms in the delivery of welfare

→ [Scoping study](#) by Olli Kangas & Pascale Vielle

Future of work

- Re-organisation of work and businesses (impact of new technologies; effects of digitalisation and climate adaptation)
- Work quality and wellbeing
- Functioning labour markets and access to work
- Social cohesion and inequalities

→ [Scoping study](#) by Werner Eichhorst and Isabelle Berrebi-Hoffmann

Education and skills

- STEM and ICT skills; development of entrepreneurial, transversal and soft skills; "right to training"
- Skills intelligence and anticipation tools
- Labour and skills shortages; horizontal segregation.
- Learning for environmental sustainability

→ [Scoping study](#) by Mikolaj Herbst and Geraldine Mooney-Simmie

Fair transition towards climate neutrality

- Conceptualising fairness; examining attitudes, values and lifestyles
- Building trust and legitimacy
- Distributional impact of climate policies and instruments
- Systemic design approaches
- Democratisation of the green transition

→ [Scoping study](#) by Edoardo Croci and Zuzana Harmáčková

Work package and task leaders

WP1 – Management and Financial Coordination

Leader: National Science Centre, Poland

WP2 – Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda & STR thematic management

Leader: FORTE, Sweden

Task Leader: NCN

WP3 – R&I Funding

Leader: NCN, Poland (interim)

Task Leaders: ANR, France; AEI/FECYT, Spain

WP4: Data re(use) and reinforcing links with Research infrastructure

Leader: European Centre for Social Policy and Research, Austria

Task Leaders: CESSDA; Federal Public Service Social Security, Belgium;

Contribution: Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research, Austria

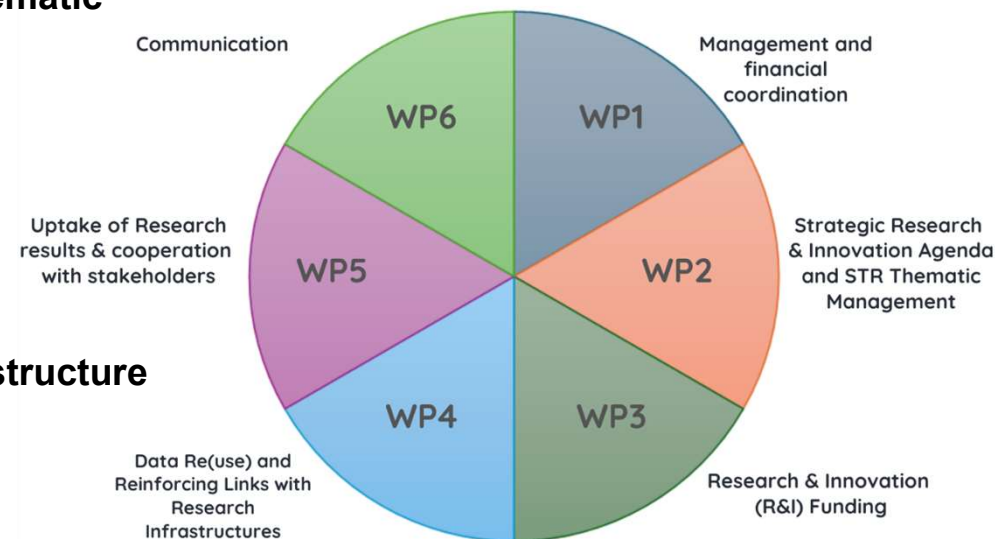
WP5 – Uptake of research and collaboration with stakeholders

Leader: NWO, the Netherlands

Task Leaders: BELSPO (tbc)

WP6 – Communication

Leader: ProMIS, Italy



Timeline



More information and contact:

STR Partnership:

- Website: <https://chanse.org/social-transformations-and-resilience-partnership-candidate/>
- Contact coordinator: str@ncn.gov.pl
- Contact European Commission:



Thank you!

HorizonEU

<http://ec.europa.eu/horizon-europe>



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