



## ERA Factsheet

### No.1

# Reforming and Enhancing the European Research and Innovation System in Horizon Europe - the ERA part briefly explained

**This Horizon Europe part supports efforts to reform and enhance the European research and innovation system.** A broad range of topics contribute to achieving this goal, such as: foster an efficient exchange of knowledge and research results, strengthen gender equality, uphold high ethical standards, address joint programming and agenda setting, encourage institutional changes at

universities or promote the active contribution of citizens to research. Importantly, all these activities aim at strengthening the European Research Area (ERA), which is the central anchor point for setting the goals and themes of calls in this programme part.

The budget is about 440 million euros for the seven-year period of Horizon Europe (2021-2027).

## Structure

The part Reforming and enhancing the European Research & Innovation System belongs to the programme part Widening Participation and Strengthening the ERA (WIDERA) which is separate from the three main pillars of Horizon

Europe. WIDERA consists of two components, one component being Widening participation and spreading excellence, abbreviated as WIDENING, and the other Reforming and enhancing the European R&I System, called ERA part for short.



## Context and content

**The ERA part is policy-oriented, as it is intended to contribute to further enhancing the ERA along the current policy priorities.**

Politics on regional, national and European level continue in their efforts to shape the ERA into a single borderless market for research, innovation and technology. From its launch in the year 2000, the central aim for the ERA has been the free movement of researchers, knowledge and innovation. Several recent policy developments underline and renew these ambitions for the ERA.

The [Communication on the new European Research Area](#) and the [Pact for Research and Innovation](#) with its [ERA Policy Agenda](#) set new

objectives and priorities, embrace values and define concrete actions that are particularly relevant to the ERA part.

Each ERA call topic is assigned to one of the four priorities of the new ERA – prioritise investments and reforms in research and innovation, improve access to excellence, translate research and innovation results into the economy and society, and deepen the ERA – and will contribute to implementing the twenty actions of the joint ERA Policy Agenda. This means that call topics support specific actions of the ERA policy agenda, such as “better knowledge valorization” (no. 7) or “bring science closer to citizens” (no. 14).

**The topics in the ERA part are closely connected to the current priorities of the ERA, and are defined and described as broad lines in the legal texts for Horizon Europe, especially in the Specific Programme:**

- Strengthening the **evidence base** for R&I policy for a better understanding of research and innovation ecosystems;
- **Foresight activities** to anticipate emerging needs and trends;
- **Support for policy makers** to the ERA development to support programme level cooperation between national R&I programmes to implement transnational joint activities;
- Support to national **R&I policy reform**, including through a strengthened set of services of the Policy Support Facility;
- Providing researchers with **attractive career environments**, skills and competences and supporting the **modernization of universities** and other R&I institutions;
- Accelerating the transition towards **open science** by monitoring, analysing and supporting the development and uptake of open science policies and practices;
- **Citizen science**, supporting science education, ensuring a more effective and responsible engagement of citizens;

- Supporting and monitoring **gender equality** as well as other forms of diversity in scientific careers and in decision-making;
- **Ethics and integrity** to further develop a coherent Union framework in adherence with the highest ethics standards;
- Support to **international cooperation** through policy dialogues and other activities such as collecting knowledge;
- **Scientific input to other policies**, through the creation and maintenance of advisory and monitoring structures;
- Support to the **Programme implementation**, including collecting and analysing evidence;
- Support to **dissemination & exploitation** of R&I results, data and knowledge, through dedicated support to beneficiaries, targeted communication activities

These broad lines are translated into concrete call topics. For example, a topic in support of reforming research assessment reflects the overarching open science goals, a topic funding good practices for value creation and transfer to the economy and society contributes to dissemination and exploitation goals, a topic on the implementation of inclusive gender equality plans strengthens gender equality objectives, etc.

## Target groups

These diverse broad lines address a similarly wide-ranging set of actors from the research, education and innovation system as well as from civil society and the economic sector. **Depending on the topic, a single consortium might comprise very diverse partners from various disciplines and fields.** Likewise, policy-makers, research funders, research performing organizations, including

research managers and practice partners from civil society, education and business, might be indispensable participants.

**Participation as coordinating or partner organization is equally open to entities from EU member states and from countries associated to Horizon Europe.**

## Calls



**An ERA call for proposals for Enhancing the European R&I system is published once a year on the [Funding & Tenders Portal](#)**, which is also the platform for submitting the project proposals. The call topics, the programme objectives and the expected impacts are set out in multiannual work programmes that include both components, WIDENING and ERA. The WIDERA

work programmes comprise topics under three destinations, with the first two destinations being dedicated to WIDENING objectives and the third destination to Reforming and enhancing the EU research and innovation system. ERA call topics always carry the abbreviations WIDERA and ERA in the so-called “topic identifier” of the topic title (i.e. HORIZON-**WIDERA**-2023-**ERA**-01-01).

- ERA call topics follow a top-down approach, they are precisely predefined. Proposals must address the specified scope and the expected outcome accordingly.

- Funding is mainly provided for so-called Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) which often support capacity building activities, such as facilitating the exchange of information, mutual learning, best practice sharing, training and awareness-raising activities. In general, it is recommended to build a consortium even if one legal entity would formally suffice.

- Due to its wide range of broad lines and a limited budget, the allocated budget and number of projects per call topic are rather small in the ERA part. It also means that there are only one, two or sometimes even no call topics in a call year for the individual broad lines (such as gender equality, open science, policy support).

- Potential proposers should therefore always keep a close eye on the ERA part. Around 20 projects are funded in a call for proposals, which comprises a dozen or so call topics, and the average project budget is about 2 million euros.

The ERA part also includes so called “other actions”, i.e. grants to identified beneficiaries, expert contracts, public procurements and prizes like the EU Award for Gender Equality

Champions. These activities are not included in the annual call for proposals.

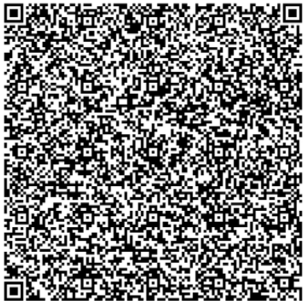
**Funded ERA projects can be found in the [CORDIS](#) database.**

## Information and advice

The [WIDERA National Contact Points](#) provide free and confidential advice on all questions related to the ERA part and the application process. They also offer proposal checks.

### Documents and links

- [ERA part Reforming and enhancing the European Research and Innovation system \(europa.eu\)](#) and [Horizon Europe: Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system \(europa.eu\)](#)
- ERA Calls in the Funding & tender opportunities portal [Search Funding & Tenders \(europa.eu\)](#)
- [WIDERA Work Programme Reference Documents \(europa.eu\)](#)
- [WIDERA National Contact Points Funding & tenders \(europa.eu\)](#)
- The [European Research Area European research area \(europa.eu\)](#)
- The Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe [EUR-Lex - 32021D0764 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)



#### ERA call page in the Funding & Tenders Portal

[NCP WIDERA.NET](#) is the European network of WIDERA National Contact Points. Visit us on [www.ncpwideranet.eu](http://www.ncpwideranet.eu), register for our newsletter and follow us on Twitter and LinkedIn to stay up to date on ERA and WIDENING.

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Task leader:



Task co-leader:



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