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Annex IX

Horizon Europe

Work Programme 2026-2027

*9. Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and
Environment*

DISCLAIMER

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Introduction

Horizon Europe Cluster 6 will serve the new Commission priorities for 2024-2029 with a focus on “Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature” and “A new plan for Europe’s sustainable prosperity and competitiveness”. The Cluster will further contribute to the priorities “Supporting people, strengthening our societies and our social model” and “Protecting our democracy, upholding our values”.

The Horizon Europe mandate for Cluster 6 is to provide research and innovation opportunities to strengthen and balance environmental, social and economic goals and to set human economic activities on a path towards sustainability. Cluster 6 supports transformative change of the EU economy and society to reduce environmental degradation, halt and reverse the decline of biodiversity, better manage natural resources, and meet the EU’s climate objectives. This needs to happen while ensuring food and water security and fostering the sustainable prosperity and competitiveness of the EU, taking into account the evolving geopolitical context. The Work Programme builds on the new research and innovation (R&I) priorities outlined in the Horizon Europe Strategic Plan 2025-2027¹.

Activities in this Work Programme contribute to all Key Strategic Orientations (KSOs) defined by the Strategic Plan, namely: 1) the green transition; 2) the digital transition; and 3) a more resilient, competitive, inclusive and democratic Europe.

To contribute to these programme-level KSOs, Cluster 6 delivers on six specific expected impacts defined in the Strategic Plan. In this Work Programme, each expected impact has been developed into one or two specific destination(s). Activities in a given destination may be of a cross-cutting nature and may often contribute to several expected impacts. The specific contribution to the overall expected impacts is explained in the narrative of each destination.

Expected impact (Strategic Plan 2025-2027)	Destination (Cluster 6 work programme)
27. Fostering mitigation of and adaptation to climate change in areas and sectors covered by Cluster 6.	Destination 5: Land, ocean and water for climate action
28. Putting biodiversity on a path to recovery, and protecting and restoring ecosystems and their services.	Destination 1: Biodiversity and ecosystem services
29. Achieving healthy soils and forests, as well as clean air, fresh water and marine water, whilst ensuring water resilience and the transition to a clean, competitive and circular economy and sustainable	Destination 3: Circular economy and bioeconomy sectors Destination 4: Clean environment and zero pollution

¹ [Horizon Europe strategic plan 2025-2027 - Publications Office of the EU \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/en/press-room/pages/press-room.aspx?pid=24387)

bioeconomy.	
30. Ensuring healthy food and nutrition security by making agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and food systems sustainable, resilient, inclusive and within planetary boundaries.	Destination 2: Fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption
31. Sustainably developing rural, urban and coastal areas.	Destination 6: Resilient, inclusive, healthy and green rural, coastal and urban communities
32. Developing innovative governance models and tools enabling sustainability and resilience.	Destination 7: Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal

Cluster 6 supports the new innovation agenda for Europe and helps accelerate the green transition by implementing the European Green Deal². Achieving climate neutrality by 2050 and climate resilience in line with the European Climate Law³ will be done by preserving Earth's natural carbon sinks and stocks in ecosystems, including soils and plants, forests, farmed lands and wetlands and freshwater and marine environment. This requires substantially reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the forestry and agricultural sectors and transforming the food system. In addition, activities foster innovation on circular economy in line with the upcoming Circular Economy Act announced in the Clean Industrial Deal and exploit the potential of biological resources for renewable products. This is crucial to reduce the EU's dependence on resources and emissions/waste from industrial processes, transforming waste into resources and using more sustainable bio-based systems.

In addition to the EU's climate policy, Cluster 6 supports the objectives and implementation of the EU Competitiveness Compass⁴ and of the European Green Deal for a competitive, resilient and sustainable agri-food system, the EU vision for agriculture and food, the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030⁵ and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework⁶, the EU Clean Industrial Deal and the announced Circular Economy Act, the EU zero pollution action plan⁷, the updated EU bioeconomy strategy, the EU forest strategy for 2030⁸, the EU soil strategy for 2030⁹, the European Ocean Pact¹⁰, the long-term vision for the EU's rural

² [A European Green Deal | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021R1119)

³ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021R1119.](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021R1119)

⁴ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-competitiveness/competitiveness-compass_en

⁵ [EUR-Lex - 52020DC0380 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf)

⁶ [https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf.](https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf)

⁷ [EUR-Lex - 52021DC0400 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\).](https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf)

⁸ [Forest strategy - European Commission](https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf)

⁹ [EUR-Lex - 52021SC0323 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\).](https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf)

¹⁰ [The European Ocean Pact - European Commission](https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf)

areas¹¹, the chemicals strategy for sustainability¹², the European Chemicals Industry Action Plan¹³ and the EU plastics strategy¹⁴.

R&I activities in this cluster help meet the long-term priority objectives to 2030 set out in the 8th Environment Action Programme¹⁵ and contribute to ensuring that policy development is firmly anchored to the latest science and knowledge. This cluster also contributes to achieving the target of dedicating 10% of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 annual spending to biodiversity as of 2025 and the at least 35% of the Horizon Europe expenditure to climate action.

Protecting and restoring the integrity of ecosystems and their capacity to deliver essential services is fundamental to achieving European Green Deal objectives. This will put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030, as required by the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030. This cluster deals with agriculture, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries, food and bio-based systems, which have significant environmental impacts and are also affected by global environmental changes, while providing opportunities for economic and social sustainability in the context of Europe's strategic autonomy.

Cluster 6 helps accelerate the transition to competitive, resilient, sustainable, healthy and inclusive food systems to achieve the objectives of the European Green Deal, the Vision for agriculture and food and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). R&I activities aim at empowering farmers, fishers and aquaculture producers to efficiently transform their production methods, making the best use of Nature-based Solutions, technological, digital and social innovations and transferable knowledge while supporting fair incomes and the competitiveness of the entire EU food value chain. This will accelerate climate mitigation and result in positive environmental outcomes, increased climate resilience and reduced dependency on pesticides and antimicrobials, fostering multi-disciplinary approaches including the One Health approach¹⁶. Furthermore, it will also provide consumers with affordable, safe, nutritious, healthy and sustainable food.

R&I also seek to stimulate sustainable practices at all stages of the food system, (from production to processing services, the use and valorisation of waste and by-products and surplus management) and to ensure safe and sustainable food and enable a shift to sustainable and healthy diets for all. The Cluster also supports the design, implementation and monitoring of the common agricultural policy (CAP), the common fisheries policy (CFP) and the EU General Food Law¹⁷.

Improved knowledge and innovations are essential for the transition towards a sustainable and circular economy and the zero-pollution ambition of the European Green Deal to halt and

¹¹ [The long-term vision for the EU's rural areas: key achievements and ways forward - European Union \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/e300042f-323d-4761-9957-3f3f14c79f3d/p1020120main_en.pdf)

¹² [Chemicals strategy - European Commission.](https://ec.europa.eu/chemicals/strategy_en)

¹³ [European Chemicals Industry Action Plan - European Commission](https://ec.europa.eu/chemicals/industry/action-plan_en)

¹⁴ [Plastics strategy - European Commission.](https://ec.europa.eu/plastics/strategy_en)

¹⁵ [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/strategy/environment-action-programme-2030_en.](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/strategy/environment-action-programme-2030_en)

¹⁶ https://health.ec.europa.eu/one-health/overview_en

¹⁷ [General Food Law - European Commission](https://ec.europa.eu/food/food-law_en)

prevent pollution. Therefore, this cluster supports EU environmental legislation and policies that target a higher level of protection for biodiversity, soil, water, air and marine resources, including the Nature Restoration Regulation¹⁸, the Birds Directive¹⁹ and the Habitats Directive²⁰, the EU pollinators initiative²¹, the Water Resilience Strategy, the Water Framework Directive²², the Marine Strategy Framework Directive²³, the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive, the revised Ambient Air Quality Directives²⁴, the EU waste legislation²⁵, the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation²⁶, the European Ocean Pact and the EU Arctic policy as well as the objectives of the proposal for a directive on soil monitoring and resilience²⁷ and of the proposal for a regulation on a Forest Monitoring Framework²⁸. It also helps to address the financing gap for nature restoration by developing and testing nature credits as proposed in the Nature Credits Roadmap²⁹.

The cluster helps develop resilient and vibrant rural, coastal and urban communities in line with the Commission priority ‘Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature’. To support the long-term vision for rural areas by 2040, R&I actions are expected to foster thriving rural innovation ecosystems by supporting and/or establishing synergetic initiatives such as living labs, smart and start-up villages, European Innovation Partnership for Agriculture Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI) operational groups. The cluster is also expected to foster the development of innovative governance models to stay the course of the European Green Deal, ensuring a fair and just transition leaving no one behind. The cluster plays a critical role in fostering the use, uptake and deployment of environmental observations and takes advantage of data and digital solutions in line with the EU priorities ‘A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness’ and “Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature”.

To ensure that projects results will not lead to negative consequences for the environment and the climate, R&I actions in Cluster 6 are designed in compliance with the ‘Do no significant harm’ (DNSH) principle. Where relevant, proposals should benefit from the use of advanced digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence, to accelerate and maximise the impact of policies on environmental protection and climate change, as stated in the European Green Deal.

To be more effective in achieving a positive impact, proposals should synergise with relevant Horizon Europe initiatives, including European Partnerships, Missions and the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology

¹⁸ [Regulation - EU - 2024/1991 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

¹⁹ [EUR-Lex - 32009L0147 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\).](#)

²⁰ [EUR-Lex - 31992L0043 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\).](#)

²¹ [EUR-Lex - 52018DC0395 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\).](#)

²² [EUR-Lex - 32000L0060 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\).](#)

²³ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2008/56/oj>

²⁴ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air/air-quality_en.

²⁵ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/waste-and-recycling/waste-law_en.

²⁶ [EUR-Lex - 52022PC0142 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

²⁷ [EUR-Lex - 52023PC0416 - EN - EUR-Lex.](#)

²⁸ [Proposal for a Regulation on a Forest Monitoring Framework - European Commission.](#)

²⁹ [EUR-Lex - 52025DC0374 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

(EIT). Through Cluster 6, special attention will be given to ensuring cooperation between universities, scientific communities and industry, including SMEs, citizens and civil society and their representatives. This allows bridging gaps and reducing inequalities between genders, territories, generations and regional cultures, supporting women innovators and caring for the needs of young people in shaping Europe's future.

In this context, applicants should consider and actively seek synergies with, and, where appropriate, possibilities for further funding from other R&I-relevant EU, national or regional programmes, such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)³⁰, the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the Just Transition Fund (JTF), the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the LIFE Programme, InvestEU and private funds or financial instruments.

Synergies are also sought with the work of the European Space Agency (ESA) to ensure complementarities and mutual benefits with R&I actions conducted by ESA, contributing to the European Commission-ESA Earth System Science initiative to support significant breakthrough in the areas covered by the Cluster.

Research on a societal and political framework is necessary to achieve the transformation expected and R&I investments under Cluster 6 will therefore emphasise the essential role played by the social sciences and humanities (SSH) for accelerating the fair green transition as well as gender aspects, citizens and societal engagement and inter- and trans-disciplinary and systems approaches. R&I will build on existing research infrastructures.

Cluster 6 activities will support international cooperation, which should take place in a value-based way – creating linkages, not dependencies – and will sustain the EU's ambition in international fora on biodiversity, climate change, natural resources management, seas and ocean, zero pollution, sustainable agriculture, food safety and food and nutrition security. In line with the EU's global approach to research and innovation, and in support of the global gateway strategy, projects involving international partners will lead to increased scientific knowledge and transfer of technology, to address global challenges while fostering sustainable growth and job creation in the sectors covered by the Cluster. Special attention is given to the EU-African Union Partnership on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA). Eligibility to participate is also subject to the 'Participation of Chinese universities linked to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT)' eligibility condition (see General Annex B of the General Annexes).

The cluster is strongly committed to the UN SDGs which have an important impact on food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and the environment, notably SDG 2 (Zero hunger), SDG 3 (Good health and well-being), SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation), SDG 8

³⁰ The ERDF (including Interreg) focuses, among others, on the development and strengthening of regional and local R&I ecosystems and smart economic transformation, in line with regional/national smart specialisation strategies. It can support investment in research infrastructure, activities for applied research and innovation, including industrial research, experimental development and feasibility studies, building research and innovation capacities, uptake of advanced technologies and roll-out of innovative solutions from EU R&I Framework Programmes.

(Decent work and economic growth), SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (Climate action), SDG 14 (Life below water) and SDG 15 (Life on land).

Applicants are encouraged to consider, where relevant, their possible contribution to Joint Research Centre (JRC) relevant platforms for capitalizing on the knowledge developed in their projects, and becoming more policy relevant, contributing in terms of data, indicators and knowledge³¹. For instance, they could make reference to: the [European Platform on Life Cycle Assessment](#) (LCA) and to the [Environmental footprint method](#) when applying LCA; the [Raw Materials Information System](#); the [European Soil Observatory](#); the [Integrated Natural Capital Accounting platform](#); the [EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity](#); the [EC Knowledge Centre for Global Food and Nutrition Security](#), the [EC Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy](#), the [Africa Knowledge Platform](#); the [EC Knowledge Centre on Earth Observation](#); [Innovation in the Built Environment \(iBUILT+\)](#) and/or the [EU Forests Observatory](#).

Applicants are also encouraged to consider, where relevant, the services offered by the EU-funded European Research Infrastructures, notably those prioritised by the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI)³², European Research Infrastructure Consortia (ERICs)³³ and the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC)³⁴.

³¹ Contributions with relevant data, indicators or knowledge to these JRC managed platform do not require having the JRC as a partner (associated partner/beneficiary requesting zero funding) in a project, unless it is explicitly mentioned in a specific topic.

³² The catalogue of European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) research infrastructures portfolio can be browsed from ESFRI website <https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/>.

³³ The ERIC Landscape <https://www.eric-forum.eu/the-eric-landscape/>.

³⁴ [Home | European Open Science Cloud - EU Node](#).

Specific conditions for multi-actor projects

Proposals submitted for topics including the eligibility condition to follow the multi-actor approach must meet all of the requirements below. The multi-actor approach is a form of interactive, transdisciplinary and responsible R&I that aims to make the R&I process more co-creative and inclusive, and thereby its outcomes are more co-owned, reliable, demand-driven and relevant to society. It also aims to extensively share these outcomes and to widely use them in practice. This entails more than just widely disseminating the projects' results or listening to the views of a board of stakeholders. A multi-actor project ensures the genuine and sufficient involvement of a targeted array of actors in co-creation, which serves the objectives of the project proposal.

These actors include: i) researchers, ii) farmers / farmers' groups and associations, iii) foresters / foresters' groups and associations, iv) aquaculture producers, v) fishers / fishers' groups and associations, vi) advisors, vii) food and bioeconomy businesses, viii) other businesses, ix) consumer associations, x) local communities, xi) citizens, xii) civil society organisations including NGOs and social economy actors, and xiii) government representatives. The selection of key actors that are relevant to participate depends on the objective(s) of the proposal that respond(s) to the needs of the (end-)users of the project results. The key actors are essentially the (end-)users³⁵ of the project results who are backed up by any other useful intermediaries and actors who can contribute with further expertise and innovative ideas relevant to the topic's objectives, and support communication and dissemination. The genuine and sufficient involvement of such actors should take place over the whole course of the project: from participation in the development of the project idea, planning and experiments to implementation, communication and dissemination of results and to a possible demonstration phase.

Building blocks for the project proposal are expected to come from science as well as from practice: it is a 'co-creation' process. (End-)users are involved in the project activities not as a study-object, but to use their practical and local knowledge and/or entrepreneurial skills to develop solutions and to create 'co-ownership' of results for (end-) users. This should speed and scale up the acceptability and uptake of new ideas, approaches and solutions developed in the project in practice.

Therefore, a multi-actor project proposal must meet the following requirements:

- it must demonstrate how the description of the project concept, including the proposed objectives, activities and planning, are targeting the needs/challenges/opportunities for the (end-)users of the project results;
- it must demonstrate how the composition of the consortium fits into the project concept and reflects a balanced choice of relevant actors who have complementary types of

³⁵ An "(end-) user" of project result is a person who is him/herself using the project results in practice.

knowledge (scientific, practical, etc.) and skills to achieve the project objective, and to ensure that project results are ready for practice and broadly implemented;

- it must demonstrate how the project intends to use existing practices and tacit knowledge. This should be illustrated in the proposal methodology with a sufficient number of high-quality knowledge exchange activities outlining the precise and active roles of the different, relevant non-scientific actors in the co-creation and sharing of R&I contents. The cross-fertilisation of skills, experiences, competencies and ideas between actors should generate innovative findings and solutions that are more likely to be widely applied in practice;
- it must demonstrate how the project will facilitate the multi-actor engagement process by making use of the most appropriate methods and expertise and what mechanisms the project will set up to maintain engagement of different, relevant actors, in particular non-scientific actors, during the whole project lifecycle;
- it must demonstrate the project's added-value for the (end-)users: how it will complement and advance state-of-the-art, including existing knowledge and best practices;
- it must demonstrate how the project will result in practical and ready to use knowledge, solutions, approaches, tools, products, processes or services that are easily understandable and accessible for (end-)users;
- it must demonstrate how these results ready for practice will be widely and effectively disseminated, and feed into the existing dissemination channels most consulted and trusted by the (end-)users of the project results in countries and regions.

In addition, to ensure Europe-wide communication and dissemination in all areas related to the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI)³⁶ and the common agricultural policy (CAP) specific objectives³⁷, in particular agriculture, forestry and rural development, the new knowledge and innovation generated by the multi-actor projects must be summarised in an appropriate number of 'practice abstracts' in the common EIP-AGRI format for Horizon³⁸. The number of 'practice abstracts' depends on the size of the project and the volume of results which are ready to be applied in practice. The 'practice abstracts' stemming from Horizon Europe projects should be uploaded to the

³⁶ For the areas covered by the EIP-AGRI see section 8 (pp.8-9) of the Commission Communication 2012(79) final: eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012DC0079&from=EN : Increased agricultural productivity, output, and resource efficiency, the bioeconomy, biodiversity, climate, ecosystem services and soil functionality, products and services for the integrated supply chain, and food quality, food safety and healthy lifestyles.

³⁷ For areas covered by the CAP specific objectives see Article 6 of the Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2021.435.01.0001.01.ENG.

³⁸ The EIP common format for "practice abstracts" is available at the following link: [Practice abstracts | EU CAP Network](#)).

EIP-AGRI project database using a dedicated online form accessible via the EU CAP Network website ³⁹.

For areas falling outside the remit of EIP-AGRI and CAP specific objectives, other similarly effective solutions ensuring dissemination at European level should be sought.

Where appropriate, it is strongly recommended to involve interactive innovation groups such as the EIP-AGRI operational groups funded under the CAP.

³⁹ [Practice abstracts | EU CAP Network.](#)

Calls

Call - Call 01 - single stage (2026)

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01

Overview of this call⁴⁰

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ⁴¹	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2026		
Opening: 17 Apr 2026 Deadline(s): 17 Sep 2026				
Destination - Biodiversity and ecosystem services				
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-01: Understanding and tackling the decline of insects	RIA	13.00	Around 6.50	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-02: Developing methods to assess the presence, functions and sensitivity of groundwater ecosystems	RIA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-03: Pushing the frontier of knowledge and conservation action for deep sea ecosystems	RIA	18.00	Around 9.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-04: Ensuring continuous effectiveness of protected areas in conserving habitats and species while	RIA	13.00	Around 6.50	2

⁴⁰ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027.

⁴¹ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment

facing intensifying drivers of biodiversity loss				
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-05: Advancing integrated scenarios and prediction models for informing transition to a nature positive society	RIA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-06: Boosting agrobiodiversity for food security and sustainable competitiveness	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
Destination - Circular economy and bioeconomy sectors				
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-01: Improving circularity of multilayer flexible plastic food contact packaging	IA	11.00	5.00 to 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-02: Advancing recycling technologies for mixed post-consumer textiles waste from blended products	IA	11.00	5.00 to 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-03: Advanced recovery of critical raw materials from Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)	RIA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-04: Demonstrating and deploying innovative collection, sorting-for-reuse and repair systems for textiles at city/region level (Circular Cities and Regions Initiative topic)	IA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-05: Understanding biomass flows in Europe	RIA	6.00	Around 3.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-06: Bioeconomy policy support hub for Member States, regions and sectors	CSA	3.00	Around 3.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-07: Advancing the European bio-based innovation enabled by biotechnology and biomanufacturing concepts	RIA	12.00	Around 4.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-08: Supporting pre-normative research for	RIA	8.00	Around 4.00	2

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Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment

standardization of the bio-based products				
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-09: Balancing food security, bioeconomy, climate and biodiversity objectives to unlock sustainable value chains	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-10: Bio-based innovation in society: supporting the sustainable way of living	RIA	8.00	Around 4.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-11: Harnessing the unique properties of marine organisms to deliver sustainable blue bio-based products	RIA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
Destination - Clean environment and zero pollution				
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-ZEROPOLLUTION-01: Toward a comprehensive assessment of the disturbance of marine ecosystems by anthropogenic underwater noise	RIA	10.00	Around 10.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-ZEROPOLLUTION-02: Bioremediation of Ukraine's ecosystems contaminated by conflicts	IA	11.00	5.00 to 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-ZEROPOLLUTION-03: Developing managed aquifer recharge techniques (MAR) in a rural context	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
Overall indicative budget		210.00		

General conditions relating to this call

<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.

<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Call - Call 02 - single stage (2026)

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02

Overview of this call⁴²

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ⁴³	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2026		
Opening: 14 Jan 2026 Deadline(s): 14 Apr 2026				
Destination - Fair, healthy and environment-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption				
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-01: Developing innovative phytosanitary treatments for regulated plant pests to support safe international trade	IA	12.00	Around 6.00	2

⁴² The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027.

⁴³ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
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HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-02: Tackling pesticide resistance: early detection, management strategies, and foresight	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-03: Boosting the competitiveness of protein crops in Europe	IA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-04: Accelerating the development of breeding tools for perennial crops, specifically fruits and nuts	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-05: Boosting circularity and diversification strategies of terrestrial livestock production systems	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-06: Advanced innovative solutions for improved competitiveness and sustainability in controlled environment agriculture (CEA)	IA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-07: Strengthening the EU plant protection ecosystem for a future-proof agriculture	CSA	3.00	Around 3.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-08: Advancing basic knowledge and developing tools for sustainable management of key migratory fish species	RIA	14.00	Around 7.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-09: Sustainable and healthy diets for cardiovascular diseases prevention with the support of digital applications	IA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-10: Sustainable and healthy diets based on health status and socio-economic risk factors of ageing population	CSA	2.00	Around 2.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-11: Integrating a holistic perspective in microbiome research for resilient, competitive and sustainable food systems	RIA	11.00	5.00 to 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-12:	CSA	2.00	Around	1

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment

Leveraging R&I knowledge on microbiome			2.00	
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-13: Boosting plant health and reducing losses on farm and during storage for sustainable growth in Africa (FNSSA)	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-14: Green Transition Food Processing Africa	RIA	11.00	5.00 to 6.00	2
Destination - Land, ocean and water for climate action				
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-CLIMATE-01: Towards more effective, fair and coherent policies for climate change mitigation and adaptation in agriculture and forestry	RIA	6.00	Around 6.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-CLIMATE-02: Towards the water infrastructures of the future	RIA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
Destination - Resilient, inclusive, healthy and green rural, coastal and urban communities				
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-COMMUNITIES-01: Boosting sustainable competitiveness in rural areas through innovation	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
Overall indicative budget		167.00		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.

<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Call - Call 03 - single stage (2026)

HORIZON-CL6-2026-03

Overview of this call⁴⁴

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)		Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ⁴⁵	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2026	2027		
Opening: 14 Jan 2026 Deadline(s): 15 Apr 2026					
Destination - Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal					
HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-GOVERNANCE-01: Additional activities for the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership (SBEP)	COFUND	22.00	16.00	Around 38.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-GOVERNANCE-02: Improving analytical capacity and understanding of social drivers in agriculture to better assess social sustainability in the sector	RIA	11.00		5.00 to 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-GOVERNANCE-03: Empowering the	CSA	9.00		Around	3

⁴⁴ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027.

⁴⁵ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment

UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development				3.00	
HORIZON-CL6-2026-03- GOVERNANCE-04: Supporting All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance	CSA	4.50		Around 4.50	1
HORIZON-CL6-2026-03- GOVERNANCE-05: Coordinated European contribution to the WMO Global Greenhouse Gas Watch and its international governance	RIA	7.00		Around 7.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2026-03- GOVERNANCE-06: A services and business incubator for geospatial open-source developments	CSA	6.00		Around 6.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2026-03- GOVERNANCE-07: Interconnect Earth Observation research for addressing environmental policies	CSA	5.40		Around 5.40	1
HORIZON-CL6-2026-03- GOVERNANCE-08: Boosting data availability and AI solutions in food for consumers and food service professionals	IA	15.00		Around 7.50	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-03- GOVERNANCE-09: Increasing knowledge flows to practice within AKIS via EU thematic knowledge hubs	CSA	7.00		Around 3.50	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-03- GOVERNANCE-10: Embracing innovation in agriculture by peer-to-peer learning via on farm-demonstrations and cost-benefit analysis	RIA	10.00		Around 5.00	2
Overall indicative budget		96.90	16.00		

General conditions relating to this call

<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Call - Call 04 - single stage (2026)

HORIZON-CL6-2026-04

Overview of this call⁴⁶

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)		Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ⁴⁷	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2026	2027		
Opening: 25 Aug 2026 Deadline(s): 26 Nov 2026					

⁴⁶ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027.

⁴⁷ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

Destination - Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal					
HORIZON-CL6-2026-04-GOVERNANCE-01: Additional activities for the European Partnership of Agriculture of Data	COFUND	23.00	37.00	Around 60.00	1
Overall indicative budget		23.00	37.00		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Call - Call 01 - two stage (2026)

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-two-stage

Overview of this call⁴⁸

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

⁴⁸ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027.

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ⁴⁹	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2026		
Opening: 12 Feb 2026				
Deadline(s): 16 Apr 2026 (First Stage), 23 Sep 2026 (Second Stage)				
Destination - Biodiversity and ecosystem services				
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-01-two-stage: Living labs for co-creating solutions for the restoration of ecosystems	RIA	14.00	Around 7.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-02-two-stage: Open topic: Uncovering the causes of specific species' rapid decline and exploring actionable solutions	RIA	12.00	Around 3.00	4
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-03-two-stage: Unlocking the potential of citizen action for nature protection and restoration	IA	10.00	Around 10.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-04-two-stage: Mainstreaming and scaling-up evidence-based Nature-Based Solutions towards a nature positive and climate-resilient economy	RIA	18.00	Around 6.00	3
Destination - Circular economy and bioeconomy sectors				
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-01-two-stage: Deploying circular systemic solutions through living labs in cities and regions (Circular Cities and Regions Initiative topic)	IA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-02-two-stage: Open topic: Using the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative to strengthen urban manufacturing in support of the Clean Industrial Deal	IA	18.00	Around 6.00	3

⁴⁹ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

Destination - Clean environment and zero pollution				
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-two-stage: Decontaminate and bioremediate aquatic pollution	RIA	23.00	7.00 to 8.00	3
Overall indicative budget		105.00		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Call - Call 02 - two-stage (2026)

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-two-stage

Overview of this call⁵⁰

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type	Budgets	Expected	Indicative

⁵⁰ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027.

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment

	of Action	(EUR million) 2026	EU contribution per project (EUR million) ⁵¹	number of projects expected to be funded
Opening: 12 Feb 2026 Deadline(s): 14 Apr 2026 (First Stage), 15 Sep 2026 (Second Stage)				
Destination - Fair, healthy and environment-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption				
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-01- two-stage: Open topic: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural sector by enhancing the efficient and sustainable use of agricultural production factors	IA	13,50	Around 4.50	3
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-02- two-stage: Open topic: Boosting organic farming for a competitive, sustainable and resilient farming sector	IA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
Overall indicative budget		25.50		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General

⁵¹ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

	Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Call - Call 03 - two-stage (2026)

HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-two-stage

Overview of this call⁵²

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ⁵³	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2026		
Opening: 12 Feb 2026				
Deadline(s): 15 Apr 2026 (First Stage), 30 Sep 2026 (Second Stage)				
Destination - Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal				
HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-GOVERNANCE-01-two-stage: Open topic: Develop Earth Intelligence solutions using environmental observations and state-of-the-art AI for sustainable competitiveness and policy making	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
Overall indicative budget		12.00		

General conditions relating to this call

<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General

⁵² The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027.

⁵³ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

	Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Call - Call 01 - single stage (2027)

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01

Overview of this call⁵⁴

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ⁵⁵	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2027		
Opening: 20 Apr 2027 Deadline(s): 22 Sep 2027				
Destination - Biodiversity and ecosystem services				

⁵⁴ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027.

⁵⁵ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-01: Integrating Remote Sensing and in-situ observations of Biodiversity, towards a fully interoperable observation and data framework	RIA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-02: Science-policy support to the implementation of EU and global biodiversity policies and strategies	CSA	7.00	Around 7.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-03: Technical innovation to protect ecosystems and to scale up their restoration	IA	14.00	Around 7.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-04: Living Labs for the eradication and/or management of invasive alien species	RIA	24.00	Around 8.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-05: Accelerating the transition to a nature positive economy: Integrating biodiversity into the private sector	RIA	14.00	Around 7.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-06: Living labs driving transformative change via knowledge integration and inclusive governance	RIA	14.00	Around 7.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-07: Health of ecosystems and wild species, predictions and impacts on human health, in the face of existing and emerging stressors, from a One Health approach	RIA	14.00	Around 7.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-08: Fostering common farmland birds and mammals for resilient food production systems	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-09: Enhancing the competitiveness of organic crop breeding: focus on intercropping adapted varieties	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
Destination - Circular economy and bioeconomy sectors				
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-01: Enhancing ecodesign and circularity of	IA	10.00	Around 5.00	2

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consumer electronics				
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-02: Enhancing ecodesign and circularity of construction products	IA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-03: Developing novel recycling technologies for complex plastic materials applying biotech solutions	RIA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-04: Capacity building for extending product lifecycles through repair and refurbishment	RIA	9.00	4.00 to 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-05: Innovative circular solutions for end-of-life footwear through collection, sorting and recycling	RIA	9.00	4.00 to 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-06: Towards a Europe of Bioeconomy Places	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-07: Improving biomass flows for a sustainable and circular bioeconomy	IA	14.00	Around 7.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-08: Biotechnology application for CCU	IA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-09: Increasing the circularity of bio-based sector: upcycling and recycling for higher value and environmental benefits	IA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-10: Strengthening forest research for the support of Ukraine	RIA	6.00	Around 6.00	1
Destination - Clean environment and zero pollution				
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01- ZEROPOLLUTION-01: Replacing hazardous substances in biocidal products	RIA	12.00	Around 4.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01- ZEROPOLLUTION-02: Developing effective air quality planning strategies through	RIA	10.00	Around 5.00	2

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
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innovative multi-scale modelling				
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-ZEROPOLLUTION-03: Improve the capacity to monitor and reduce air pollution from agriculture	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-ZEROPOLLUTION-04: Europe-wide environmental benchmarking system of the industrial bioeconomy sectors	CSA	3.00	Around 3.00	1
Overall indicative budget		262.00		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Call - Call 02 - single stage (2027)

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02

Overview of this call⁵⁶

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ⁵⁷	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2027		
Opening: 20 Apr 2027 Deadline(s): 23 Sep 2027				
Destination - Fair, healthy and environment-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption				
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-01: Increasing the resilience of agriculture in water and nutrient-scarce environments through digital innovations	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-02: Increasing mitigation of GHG emissions and feed efficiency through feed additives	IA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-03: Microbiome for terrestrial livestock sustainability and health within a One Health approach	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-04: Improving understanding of the contribution of the organic farming sector to sustainability	CSA	6.00	Around 6.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-05: Enhancing farmer's profitability and resilience through innovations for diversified crops and	IA	12.00	Around 6.00	2

⁵⁶ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027.

⁵⁷ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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value chains				
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-06: Unleashing the potential of sustainable small-scale aquatic food production and recreational fisheries for prosperous local communities	IA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-07: Towards commercialization of food systems microbiome solutions	IA	15.50	7.00 to 8.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-08: AI-powered foodome characterization	IA	8.00	Around 8.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-09: African Union – European Union Partnership on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA)	CSA	7.00	Around 7.00	1
Destination - Land, ocean and water for climate action				
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-CLIMATE-01: Governance, sustainable development and international politics of a future ice-free Arctic	RIA	16.00	Around 8.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-CLIMATE-02: Strengthening evidence-based policies for the resilience of European agriculture and forestry and related supply chains against crises and systemic risks	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-CLIMATE-03: Carbon farming innovation and scale-up	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-CLIMATE-04: Unlocking a safe operating space for Antarctica and the Southern Ocean	RIA	22.00	Around 11.00	2
Destination - Resilient, inclusive, healthy and green rural, coastal and urban communities				
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-COMMUNITIES-01: Strengthening rural communities' resilience to shocks	RIA	15.00	Around 5.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-COMMUNITIES-02: Empowering local urban food systems entrepreneurship and innovation	IA	12.00	Around 6.00	2

Overall indicative budget		183.50		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Call - Call 03 - single stage (2027)

HORIZON-CL6-2027-03

Overview of this call⁵⁸

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ⁵⁹	Indicative number of projects expected to be
		2027		

⁵⁸ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027.

⁵⁹ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2026-2027
Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment

				funded
Opening: 04 Feb 2027 Deadline(s): 11 May 2027				
Destination - Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal				
HORIZON-CL6-2027-03-GOVERNANCE-01: Strengthening the resilience of European farmers through improved capacity in coping with risks and crises	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-03-GOVERNANCE-02: Improving analytical capacity for sustainable competitiveness of the agricultural sector	RIA	6.00	Around 6.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2027-03-GOVERNANCE-03: International dimension of the circular bio-based economy: seeking win-win opportunities	CSA	3.00	Around 3.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2027-03-GOVERNANCE-04: AI supporting informed advice for farmers and foresters to improve competitiveness and sustainability	IA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-03-GOVERNANCE-05: Increasing knowledge flows to practice within AKIS via EU thematic knowledge hubs	CSA	7.00	Around 3.50	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-03-GOVERNANCE-06: Fostering generational renewal in agriculture via EU advisory network	CSA	4.50	Around 4.50	1
HORIZON-CL6-2027-03-GOVERNANCE-07: Strengthening strategic advice and synergies between EU and national Research and Innovation agendas and investments	CSA	5.00	Around 5.00	1
Overall indicative budget		49.50		

General conditions relating to this call

<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.

<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Call - Call 01 - two stage (2027)

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-two-stage

Overview of this call⁶⁰

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ⁶¹	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2027		
Opening: 04 Feb 2027				
Deadline(s): 08 Apr 2027 (First Stage), 16 Sep 2027 (Second Stage)				
Destination - Circular economy and bioeconomy sectors				
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-01-two-	IA	10.00	Around	2

⁶⁰ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027.

⁶¹ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

stage: Deploying circular systemic solutions through living labs in cities and regions (Circular Cities and Regions Initiative topic)			5.00	
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-02-two-stage: Open topic: Using the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative to strengthen urban manufacturing in support of the Clean Industrial Deal	IA	18.00	Around 6.00	3
Overall indicative budget		28.00		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Call - Call 02 - two-stage (2027)

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-two-stage

Overview of this call⁶²

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

⁶² The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027.

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Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ⁶³	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2027		
Opening: 04 Feb 2027				
Deadline(s): 08 Apr 2027 (First Stage), 14 Sep 2027 (Second Stage)				
Destination - Fair, healthy and environment-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption				
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-01-two-stage: Strengthening plant health: addressing emerging plant pest risks	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-02-two-stage: Optimising the water-nutrient-energy nexus for sustainable and climate smart agriculture in Africa (FNSSA)	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
Destination - Land, ocean and water for climate action				
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-CLIMATE-01-two-stage: Open topic: Innovative solutions for the Water Resilience Strategy	IA	11.00	Around 5.50	2
Overall indicative budget		35.00		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.

⁶³ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

DRAFT

Destinations

Destination - Biodiversity and ecosystem services

This destination will mostly support the EU Commission priority ‘Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature’.

The implementation of the EU Green Deal⁶⁴ will continue to guide R&I in this destination. R&I will develop knowledge and tools to support the implementation of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030⁶⁵ and notably the EU Nature Restoration Regulation⁶⁶, including with the development of nature credits as proposed in the Nature Credits Roadmap⁶⁷. This Destination will also address the EU proposal for a Directive on soil monitoring and resilience⁶⁸, the EU proposal for a Regulation on a forest monitoring framework⁶⁹ and will inform deliberations on EU biodiversity policy after 2030, thus protecting our natural world. Nature-based Solutions are deep-rooted in this Destination, which will support the EU climate adaptation strategy⁷⁰ and the EU climate mitigation targets by maintaining or improving natural carbon sinks, since natural ecosystems store large amounts of carbon globally and ecosystems’ carbon sequestration potential is tightly linked to their biological diversity. R&I should particularly assess the ecosystems ongoing ability to sequester carbon and, if necessary, focus more on ecosystems that reliably do so while also providing benefits to biodiversity.

Actions will contribute to the European Ocean Pact⁷¹, to the European Water Resilience Strategy⁷² and to the EU legislative proposal on pollutants in EU waters⁷³ (update of chemical substances listed for control).

R&I activities for sustainable farming, fishing and aquaculture will be supported in alignment with the Vision for Agriculture and Food⁷⁴, the Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture towards 2040⁷⁵, as well as with the environmental objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy⁷⁶ and the EU Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production⁷⁷. These efforts will enhance biodiversity and climate-resilient farming practices, ensuring the long-term competitiveness of these sectors within ecological boundaries, and foster innovation to drive sustainable food production.

⁶⁴ [The European Green Deal - European Commission](#)

⁶⁵ [Biodiversity strategy for 2030 - European Commission](#)

⁶⁶ [Regulation - EU - 2024/1991 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

⁶⁷ [EUR-Lex - 52025DC0374 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

⁶⁸ [EUR-Lex - 52023PC0416 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

⁶⁹ [Proposal for a Regulation on a Forest Monitoring Framework - European Commission](#)

⁷⁰ [EU Adaptation Strategy - European Commission](#)

⁷¹ [The European Ocean Pact - European Commission](#)

⁷² [Water resilience strategy - European Commission](#)

⁷³ [EUR-Lex - 52022PC0540 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

⁷⁴ [Vision for Agriculture and Food - European Commission](#)

⁷⁵ [EUR-Lex - 52025DC0075 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

⁷⁶ [Key policy objectives of the CAP 2023-27 - European Commission](#)

⁷⁷ [Organic action plan - European Commission](#)

R&I actions under this Destination will encourage international cooperation in line with the global approach on R&I, contributing to EU international biodiversity commitments, notably those taken under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)⁷⁸, which defines targets for the medium term (2030) and goals for the long term (2050). This Destination will also support the Paris Agreement⁷⁹, the Sustainable Development Goals⁸⁰ and the United Nations agreement on biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement)⁸¹. Support to processes of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)⁸² will be continued.

Complementarities and synergies will be ensured with the activities supported by the co-funded partnerships Biodiversa+⁸³, Water4All⁸⁴ and the co-funded partnership on Agroecology⁸⁵, and LIFE⁸⁶ projects, particularly on nature restoration and protection.

The Destination supports unlocking the unique assets for research and innovation of the EU outermost regions, in line with the EU strategy for outermost regions⁸⁷.

Expected impact: Proposals for topics under this destination should set out a credible pathway contributing to “**putting biodiversity on a path to recovery, and protecting and restoring ecosystems and their services**”, and more specifically to one or more of the following **expected impacts**:

- Knowledge on biodiversity status and trends and drivers of biodiversity loss is improved;
- Innovations, methods, pathways, models and tools are available and used to protect healthy and resilient ecosystems and to restore degraded ones, ensuring the continuous provision of ecosystem services, including for adaptation and/or mitigation to climate change;
- The ongoing biodiversity crisis and its consequences, notably on ecosystem functioning and their services, and the need to monitor, protect, restore and sustainably use biodiversity are better understood to better benefit the whole society in an inclusive way;
- Policymakers and stakeholders, all relevant economic sectors and society are aware and well informed of relevant challenges and opportunities of biodiversity protection, restoration and sustainable use, leading to better implementation of the biodiversity

⁷⁸ [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#)

⁷⁹ [The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC](#)

⁸⁰ [THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development](#)

⁸¹ [BBNJ Agreement | Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction](#)

⁸² [IPBES Home page | IPBES secretariat](#)

⁸³ [Biodiversa +](#)

⁸⁴ [Water Security for the Planet](#)

⁸⁵ [Agroecology Partnership](#)

⁸⁶ [LIFE - European Commission](#)

⁸⁷ COM(2022) Putting people first, securing sustainable and inclusive growth, unlocking the potential of the EU's outermost regions

legislation and better valuation of ecosystem services, leading to transformative change towards a nature positive economy;

- Farmers, foresters, land and sea managers, fishers and aquaculture producers have access to key information, and test and implement biodiversity-friendly management practices, while safeguarding food and water security and fostering competitiveness, demonstrating the long-term sustainability of these sectors;
- Progress towards international commitments worldwide on biodiversity is made.

2026

Consolidating biodiversity knowledge for nature and society

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-01: Understanding and tackling the decline of insects

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 13.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome:

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- researchers better understand the status and population trends of insect species and the drivers of their decline;
- competent authorities in charge of biodiversity policies at all levels are capable of taking informed decisions, based on better understanding and valuation of socioeconomic benefits and ecological importance of insects, including for climate action;
- society and relevant land managers are better informed and equipped to tackle the drivers of the decline of insects.

Scope: Insects play a vital role contributing to ecosystem functions in addition to pollination, such as decomposition and nutrient cycles, soil formation (including carbon sequestration) and pest control, control functions essential for maintaining ecosystem complexity, and are an indispensable part of the food chain. Those functions are key for climate change mitigation

and allows the provision of ecosystem services which have economic benefits and support human well-being. Additionally, insects play a key role in other socioeconomic areas such as medical and pharmaceutical applications (e.g. antimicrobial peptides), forensic science or biotechnology.

The dramatic decline of insects, estimated around 75% in the last three decades, is raising increasing concern among scientists and in the public, since it could have far-reaching implications. In order to be able to tackle this decline, there is a need to improve our understanding of the drivers of loss and how they interplay. A better knowledge of insects themselves is necessary.

With target 4 and 5 of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, the EU took, among others, the commitment that by 2030 habitats and species show no deterioration in conservation trend and status, at least 30% reach favourable conservation status or at least show a positive trend, and that the decline of pollinators is reversed. According to the EU Nature Restoration Regulation, Member States shall put in place appropriate and effective measures to improve pollinator diversity and reverse the decline of pollinators by 2030. This is reflected in target 4 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The European Climate Law requires Member States to adopt and implement national adaptation strategies and plans in which they should promote Nature-based Solutions and ecosystem-based adaptation. These policies and legislations have reached the implementation stage in the EU and worldwide.

Successful proposals are expected to:

- improve understanding and identification of insects' diversity, including through genomic approaches;
- focus on less known insect groups. In particular a solid knowledge has already been generated regarding pollination and pollinating insects through past and ongoing projects, therefore they are not expected to be subject to new research under this topic;
- assess the status and trends of insects and analyse multiple drivers affecting them, as well as the ecosystem services that insects provide, at different spatial scales. A comprehensive integrative taxonomy approach should be adopted, incorporating a multidisciplinary framework, including ecology and ecotoxicology, and integrating methods that address the diverse needs of insects across their entire lifecycle, ensuring the identification of essential habitat resources at each stage of development. To assess the status and trends of insects and the effectiveness of strategies, proposals should develop and test approaches for long-term monitoring schemes for insects, possibly building on existing national or EU biodiversity monitoring schemes and pilots developed by Biodiversa+;
- devise, test and promote effective strategies to mitigate the major drivers of insects' decline. Analyse the ecosystem functions underpinned by insects and undertake qualitative and quantitative valuation of ecosystem services emanating from those functions;

- explore how to implement ecosystem protection and restoration practises and actions that are beneficial for insects.

Concrete efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the context of the funded project is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable), exploring workflows that can provide “FAIR-by-design” data, i.e., data that is FAIR from its generation. Possibilities offered by the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) and by relevant European research infrastructures including the Catalogue of Life (COL), DiSSCo, LifeWatch ERIC, EMBRC, eLTER and MIRRI-ERIC⁸⁸ to store and give access to research data could be considered where relevant.

Proposals should foresee appropriate resources to ensure close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) and its Science Service and with other projects that work on understanding drivers of biodiversity decline.

International cooperation is encouraged.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-02: Developing methods to assess the presence, functions and sensitivity of groundwater ecosystems

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome:

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

⁸⁸ And any other relevant research infrastructure prioritised by the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI). The catalogue of European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) research infrastructures portfolio can be browsed from ESFRI website <https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/>

- the knowledge of existing groundwater ecosystems⁸⁹ is improved, supporting policymakers and technical experts in assessments of their presence, functions and condition or status, and their role for climate change mitigation;
- society benefits from enhanced knowledge and awareness of pollution and overexploitation risks to groundwater ecosystems and the ecosystem services provided by them, including of possible implications for other related ecosystems (associated aquatic and dependent terrestrial ecosystems) and for human health as well as for food and water security, disaster risk reduction and resilience building;
- the EU water policies are supported with new scientific evidence and public authorities are better equipped for setting effective measures for the protection of groundwater biodiversity and their possible links to groundwater-dependent ecosystems.

Scope: The European Environment Agency (EEA)'s report on Europe's state of water (2024)⁹⁰ highlighted that 77% of groundwater, which supplies two thirds of the EU's drinking water, is in good chemical status. For groundwater not reaching good chemical status, the report identified nitrates, pesticides and pharmaceuticals among main issues. However, less is known about contaminants of emerging concern, such as perfluorinated substances (e.g. PFAS), microplastics and antimicrobial resistance. The Commission proposal⁹¹ to revise the lists of surface- and groundwater pollutants and their standards in the Water Framework Directive, in the Groundwater Directive and in the Environmental Quality Standards Directive aims to address these concerns. Although freshwater standards can serve as a benchmark, standards that are protective for freshwater ecosystems may not be sufficiently protective for groundwater ecosystems.⁹² Much stronger evidence on presence, functions and sensitivity of groundwater ecosystems is required for a reliable hazard assessment.

Significant knowledge gaps exist regarding groundwater ecosystems and their biodiversity in Europe, making it challenging to establish their effective protection. Proposals should address such gaps, which would ultimately lead to better protection of our precious drinking water resources, as well as groundwater biodiversity and geodiversity, but also groundwater (aquatic and terrestrial)-dependent ecosystems and biodiversity.

More specifically proposals under this topic should include all of the following activities:

- improve and develop innovative methods, including by utilising sensors (e.g. biosensors, remote sensors), for assessing and characterising groundwater ecosystems and their

⁸⁹ Groundwater ecosystems, in a broad sense, encompass systems formed by organisms inhabiting water-filled spaces in the subsurface, including sediments and rocks, the hyporheic zone beneath rivers, the interfaces at springs and lakes, and the zone from the groundwater table surface down to the deepest habitable conditions, such as cave waters. These ecosystems are open systems that maintain direct connections with other aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.

⁹⁰ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/publications/europes-state-of-water-2024>

⁹¹ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/proposal-amending-water-directives_en

⁹² See for example EMA (European Medicines Agency, 2018). Guideline on assessing the environmental and human health risks of veterinary medicinal products in groundwater (EMA/CVMP/ERA/103555/2015, London).

sensitivity, and identifying the presence and functions of different taxonomic groups and organisms;

- establish harmonised, validated, and ultimately standardised, methods and generate reliable experimental data on acute and chronic effects for assessing ecotoxicity of pollutants as regards groundwater ecosystems and in particular sensitive/ vulnerable ecosystems, with the aim to prioritize substances and deriving groundwater standards to protect them;
- identify a suite of biological and physico-chemical quality elements in view of a possible future assessment and classification of groundwater ecological status for inclusion in EU water legislation. This should include developing criteria and targets related to the temporary or long-term impacts on groundwater ecosystems.

Where relevant, activities should build and expand on the results of past and ongoing EU-funded projects and initiatives, for example projects funded by the co-funded partnership “Water4All”, with focus on groundwaters, to share experiences, reach synergies and avoid duplication.

Proposals are encouraged to combine inter-disciplinary expertise and integrate perspectives from different governance levels.

Concrete efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the context of the funded project is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable), exploring workflows that can provide “FAIR-by-design” data, i.e., data that is FAIR from its generation. Possibilities offered by the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) and by relevant European research infrastructures including the Catalogue of Life (COL), DiSSCo, LifeWatch ERIC, eLTER and MIRRI-ERIC (and any other relevant research infrastructure prioritised by the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI)⁹³) to store and give access to research data could be considered where relevant.

Proposals should foresee appropriate resources to ensure close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) and its Science Service. The research actions are expected to yield valuable new insights and data, supporting and informing future assessments by IPBES.

The JRC can provide estimates of groundwater recharge and contribution of groundwater to streamflow, based on continental scale hydrological modelling, and consider testing the methods developed in the project, for the purposes of continental scale assessment of groundwater-dependent ecosystems.

International cooperation with Mediterranean countries is encouraged.

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<https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/>

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-03: Pushing the frontier of knowledge and conservation action for deep sea ecosystems

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 9.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 18.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: All international organisations are exceptionally eligible for funding. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Member States and Associated Countries contribute to the implementation of area-based management tools, such as protection targets and adaptive management approaches for deep-sea regions under the Treaty on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), for Regional fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) and for transitions areas with the EU exclusive economic zone notably by identifying Ecologically and biologically significant marine areas (EBSAS), and informing the next Global Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services;
- Public Authorities prioritize deep-sea areas for inclusion in their 30% protection target while enhancing maritime spatial planning achieved through science-based information, habitat mapping and ecosystem-based approach, aligned with the EU strategies for biodiversity and climate adaptation by 2030.

Scope: The deep-sea represents 90% of the Ocean volume and remains the least explored biome of the planet. Nevertheless, we know that the deep sea forms an extensive and complex ensemble of ecosystems which functioning is crucial to the rest of the biosphere, global biogeochemical cycles and ecosystems upon which much terrestrial life, including human civilisation, depends. The critical limiting factors in the definition and implementation of

protection and restoration measures are the lack of biodiversity knowledge and appropriate monitoring, especially in layers below 1000 m. The main reasons are the limited access and high cost of explorations of the diversity of biotopes in the deep sea, and the resources available to identify organisms across the full range of sizes (from microorganisms to megafauna) and describe ecosystems functioning.

In line with the objectives and targets of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, the EU Nature Restoration Regulation, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the EU climate adaptation strategy, the strategy for European life sciences, the EU ocean pact, the Treaty on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), proposals should:

- fill the gaps in geographical coverage in habitats mapping, species inventory, genetic diversity, ecological functioning, food webs and ecological connectivity (including migratory species) of deep sea ecosystems in the bathypelagic and abyssopelagic zones (abyssal seafloor, hydrothermal sites, seamounts, canyons and across the water column) between them and with shallower ocean zones (mesopelagic, epipelagic, coastal...);
- develop, integrate and deploy imaging, acoustic, multi-omics, genomics and taxonomic technologies and methodologies for the inventory and fast identification of deep-sea marine species from microbes, invertebrates to migratory species, apex predators such as sharks and mammals, corals and other habitat-forming species, generating reference datasets from identified voucher specimens and novel methods to improve biodiversity monitoring and inventory and the discovery of novel biological traits, enhancing understanding of ecosystem resilience to climate and anthropogenic pressures;
- contribute to the Global Taxonomy Initiative of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and to free and open access to the Global Biodiversity Information Facility's biodiversity data;
- establish baselines, spatial and temporal dynamics, assess and predict the cumulated impacts from climate change and other anthropogenic stressors including underwater noise, on ecosystems functioning and services, including the biological carbon pump fisheries stock,
- describe holistic interactions between the deep-sea, Ocean and planetary health and propose actionable knowledge by involving multiple stakeholders for identifying adaptive management approaches, and mitigation and conservation scenarios for prioritised deep-sea areas to reduce impacts of climate change and other anthropogenic stressors on ecosystem structure and functioning;
- identify the indicators and thresholds, such as Essential Ocean Variables (EOV) and Essential Biodiversity Variables (EBV) and propose cost-effective observation approaches and the data integration, for the long-term monitoring and the modelling of deep-sea biodiversity and ecosystems functioning, covering oxygen concentration,

carbon fluxes, nutrients and biogeochemistry, to inform management on impacts and conservation or mitigation measures.

Proposals should foresee dedicated tasks and resources for cooperating with projects funded under this topic as well as with other relevant international, Horizon Europe and Horizon 2020 projects on marine biodiversity, functional ecology and on observation, mapping, monitoring and modelling. Proposals should also foresee appropriate resources to ensure close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) and its Science Service. International cooperation is encouraged.

Restoring ecosystems for resilient society and economy

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-04: Ensuring continuous effectiveness of protected areas in conserving habitats and species while facing intensifying drivers of biodiversity loss

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 13.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: To ensure a balanced portfolio, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least also to one proposal within the research field A that is the highest ranked, and one proposal highest ranked within the research field B, provided that the applications attain all thresholds. Proposals shall clearly indicate the research field they are applying to.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the

	Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ⁹⁴ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- the effectiveness of the protection of habitats and species in protected areas is maintained even under intensifying impacts of the drivers of biodiversity loss, including climate change, thanks to an improved understanding of how they affect the conservation status of the protected habitats and species, for the benefit of society;
- managers of protected areas are able to anticipate the future impacts of drivers of biodiversity loss and can take better informed decisions for the protection of terrestrial, freshwater and/or marine habitats and species.

Scope: Protected areas are key to ensure the conservation of species and habitats. However, the intensification of the main drivers of biodiversity loss is raising questions on how their effectiveness will be maintained in the future.

This topic is expected to support the EU commitment to legally protect a minimum of 30% of the EU's land area and a minimum of 30% of the EU's sea area of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 (target 1) and the related legislation, and the corresponding target of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (target 3). Knowledge generated under this topic is also expected to inform deliberations on EU biodiversity policy after 2030 and the design and implementation of climate policies. Proposals should seek to address some knowledge gaps identified by the relevant IPBES assessments and if appropriate provide recommendations to policy makers.

Proposals should:

- analyse trends over time of the effects of drivers of biodiversity loss and their possible cumulative impacts. Direct drivers (changing use of sea and land, direct exploitation of organisms, climate change, pollution and invasive alien species) and indirect drivers should be considered, including socio-economic related ones;
- develop predictive tools to anticipate how the intensity of impacts will develop in the medium and long terms, taking into account relevant possible cumulative impacts;
- assess expected future impacts on the conservation status of protected habitats and species in protected areas;
- assess whether novel adaptive approaches for protection are needed and if so, explore options, possibly building on results of relevant LIFE projects and on the experience of

⁹⁴ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

climate refugia (areas where ecosystems sustain stability and resilience despite climate change) and of bright spots (where targeted conservation actions, climate adaptation strategies, or natural resilience mechanisms mitigate biodiversity loss). Assess the opportunity to rely on (new) practices such as assisted migration;

- define best practices and test innovative management approaches of protected areas, with performance indicators. To assess the effectiveness of management approaches, projects should build on methods and indicators developed under LIFE PAME Europe⁹⁵. Proposals should address various types of protected areas and assess how the results might be transposable;
- consider the need for long-term ecological monitoring of protected habitats and species, provide recommendations and consider possible options for such long-term monitoring;
- involve public authorities and/or entities which manage protected areas, and civil society organisations to ensure that the processes and outcomes of the R&I align with the needs, including for policy implementation, and values and expectations of society.

Proposals should address research field A: terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystems or research field B: marine biodiversity and ecosystems. Both research fields may include freshwater ecosystems. The research field (A or B) should be clearly indicated on the application.

This topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines and the involvement of SSH experts, institutions as well as the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise, in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities.

Proposals should foresee appropriate resources to ensure close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) and its Science Service, and ensure cooperation with the European partnership Biodiversa+.

Proposals are encouraged to consider, where relevant, the data, expertise and services offered by European research infrastructures⁹⁶ in the environment domain.

International cooperation is encouraged especially when protected areas expand over different countries and for exchange of experiences.

Transformative change towards a nature positive economy

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

⁹⁵ [LIFE PAME EUROPE - EUROPARC Federation](#)

⁹⁶ The catalogue of European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) research infrastructures portfolio can be browsed from ESFRI website <https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/>

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-05: Advancing integrated scenarios and prediction models for informing transition to a nature positive society

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ⁹⁷.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- advanced knowledge and understanding how ecosystems respond to multiple plausible futures shaped by human-induced pressures, supporting the design of long-term, nature positive and equitable policies;
- strengthened collaboration across bio-physical, socio-economic and humanities disciplines, resulting in more integrated and robust scenario frameworks that capture interactions, trade-offs and synergies across biodiversity, climate, food, water, air, health, energy and economy;
- advancement of comprehensive ecosystem prediction models and scenario-based assessments that integrate direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, applicable across terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems;

⁹⁷ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- a consistent and transparent framework for model intercomparison and cross-scale scenario building, improving the relevance and usability of modelling outputs for policy, business and international assessments (e.g. IPBES, IPCC).

Scope: To address the objectives of the European Green Deal, the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, the EU Nature Restoration Regulation and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), as well as Sustainable Development Goals, actions funded under this topic should support the scientific development of A) integrated scenarios, B) predictive models and C) model intercomparison experiments for Member States and Associated Countries. Developments should be verified in case studies covering at least 2 European biogeographic regions⁹⁸ and spanning key economic sectors to inform systemic policy transformations and enable long-term planning for a nature positive society. Proposals should:

- design and develop components of a European integrated prediction and scenario framework to forecast how natural ecosystems respond to a wide range of human-induced ecosystem interactions including climate change, pollution, socio-economic transitions such as conflicts, pressures, and policy interventions. These frameworks should link ecosystem functions with key economic sectors, such as agriculture and fisheries, and test their resilience and tipping points under multiple plausible futures;
- make use of long-term monitoring data across biodiversity, land use, climate, and socio-economic variables to improve reliability and real-world relevance. They should also quantify uncertainty in model projections and ensure scenarios incorporate dynamic feedback loops between ecosystems and socio-economic systems, and identify risk distributions relevant to frontline socio-ecological communities;
- test and assess the suitability of the IPBES Nature Futures Framework for European application and align modelling approaches with international efforts and assessments under IPBES and IPCC. Proposals should seek to address knowledge gaps identified by the relevant IPBES assessments and if appropriate provide recommendations to policymakers;
- advance model intercomparison capabilities to improve robustness, consistency and transparency in scenario-based assessments. To this end, the suitability of remote sensing data for scalability and intercomparison between different models and across different regions should be assessed.

Proposals should include case studies that cover at least two European biogeographic regions with global relevance to verify the developed scenarios, models and intercomparison experiments. Case studies should consider different geographical scales and explore ecosystem tele coupling across Europe and beyond. Scenario development should involve relevant stakeholders—including public authorities, economic sectors, and civil society—in co-creating narratives and ensuring policy applicability. Socio-economic transitions and equity and justice considerations concerning trade-offs and distributional impacts across

⁹⁸

[Biogeographical regions in Europe | European Environment Agency's home page](#)

regions and communities (i.e. across biodiversity, climate, food, water, air, health, energy and the economy) should be explicitly addressed in scenario assessments. Proposals are encouraged to address livelihood and distributional impacts linked to each nature-positive pathway. Proposals are encouraged to broadly and publicly communicate developed scenarios through interactive simulation interfaces (i.e. at the example of EN-ROADS⁹⁹).

Proposals should create synergies with and build on existing knowledge and results of other relevant EU-funded projects. Proposals should foresee appropriate resources to ensure close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) and its Science Service. To this end, proposals should include dedicated tasks and appropriate resources for coordination measures. This topic is part of a coordination initiative between ESA and the EC on Earth System Science (ESSI). Successful proposals are expected to cooperate with projects that will be selected under ESA's FutureEO programme. To this end, proposals should foresee sufficient means and resources for effective coordination.

Biodiversity friendly practices in agriculture

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-06: Boosting agrobiodiversity for food security and sustainable competitiveness

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B. The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.

⁹⁹ <https://www.climateinteractive.org/en-roads/>

<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁰⁰.

Expected Outcome:

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- land managers, farmers, foresters, agri-businesses (including SMEs), and policy makers gain access to practical knowledge of clear demonstrations of benefits and trade-offs associated with biologically diversifying their agroecosystem;
- farmers, land managers and foresters are incentivised and rewarded for implementing practices that improve agrobiodiversity, leading to higher incomes and long-term sustainability and resilience of agriculture, greater food security, competitiveness, and healthier ecosystems;
- enhanced capabilities for farmers to store, process, and market their diverse raw materials and products, derived from greater agrobiodiversity, while improving their market access and strengthening their position within the value chain.

Scope: Genetic erosion poses a significant threat to agricultural resilience, as genetic diversity is crucial for crops to withstand environmental stresses such as climate variations, pests, and diseases. As the global population grows, the demand for increased food production often drives large-scale agriculture, which compromises biodiversity and long-term productivity. While promoting and expanding agrobiodiversity enhances agricultural resilience, socio-economic obstacles hinder broader adoption. Beyond highlighting the importance of conserving agricultural biodiversity for food security, it is essential to demonstrate its role in enhancing food production, increasing farmers' incomes, and safeguarding livelihoods against environmental challenges. A significant obstacle to a wider adoption of more diversified production systems, is perceived risk in that process, in terms of yield, (marginal) income, lack of demand, stable and sufficient pricing, and potential increase of pests.

Proposals should:

- quantify the contribution of agrobiodiversity (including soil microorganisms), mainly at parcel/farm level, considering both species abundance and composition, and its

¹⁰⁰ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

economic impact, in particular in regard to food security, such as yield stability, nutritional quality, nutrient cycling and resilience to pests and diseases;

- develop solutions and strategies to scale successful agrobiodiversity practices tailored to local, regional and national levels to strengthen farmers' financial position in adopting more diversified production systems;
- test how instruments for mobilising private finance, such as nature credits, could enhance the competitiveness of farmers, foresters and other land managers, including by opening up new opportunities of income;
- build on and develop a decision support tool analysing the risk of diversifying production systems, in terms of yield, marketability, pricing, pests and diseases, hazard assessment of adverse organisms, genes and chemicals, and more, to assist farmers, breeders and agribusinesses in farm diversification;
- provide recommendation for farmers, breeders, agricultural organizations, and agribusinesses for risk mitigation in adoption of wider varieties and marketability of non-conventional crops and local breeds produced in lower volumes;
- define and evaluate the costs of farm diversification, in terms of labor and management complexity, and explore how these may be offset via lower costs of external inputs. Identify behavioral determinants in different socio-economic and cultural contexts to adoption of biodiversity friendly practices;
- explore pathways for the valorisation of products, including tailored food processing and storage, relevant risk assessments for new methods/varieties, and strengthened collaboration with food industries.

The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food, the biodiversity strategy for 2030, the EU Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production¹⁰¹, the Nature Credits Roadmap¹⁰², and the EU Nature Restoration Regulation.

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding to assess the inclusion of quantified data in the EU Food System Monitoring Dashboard, and farm sector resilience analysis. Proposals should foresee appropriate resources to ensure close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) and its Science Service.

Proposals must adopt a multi-actor approach, engaging diverse stakeholders, particularly farmers and land managers, to integrate sector-specific knowledge and needs. This ensures impactful outcomes that address conservation and habitat requirements while aligning with agricultural contexts.

¹⁰¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0141R%2801%29>
¹⁰² [EUR-Lex - 52025DC0374 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

Proposals should build (when relevant) upon existing knowledge and solutions designed and previously developed from previous projects demonstrating positive outcomes of enhancing agrobiodiversity for sustainable agriculture, funded by EU and national programmes, in particular the European Union Framework programmes for Research and Innovation (such as Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe under their different pillars and clusters), and the LIFE programme. Proposals should plan cooperation with the Agroecology Partnership and the Mission Soil.

Due to the scope of this topic, international cooperation is strongly encouraged, including with China under the EU-China Food, Agriculture and Biosolutions (FAB) flagship initiative. Development of specific technologies above TRL 4 is out of the scope of this topic.

Restoring ecosystems for resilient society and economy

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-01-two-stage: Living labs for co-creating solutions for the restoration of ecosystems

Call: Call 01 - two stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 14.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B. The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The

	maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- stakeholders are empowered to implement viable ecosystem restoration measures.
- competent authorities in charge of implementing the EU Nature Restoration Regulation are able to propose appropriate restoration measures.
- social, economic and environmental co-benefits and trade-offs of nature restoration activities are demonstrated, including for climate action.

Scope: The EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 defines nature restoration objectives in line with target 2 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The EU Nature Restoration Regulation provides that Member States shall put in place effective and area-based restoration measures. Living labs have the potential to empower a green transition towards nature restoration and climate change mitigation and adaptation by developing solutions in a co-creative manner and involving actors in real life settings to achieve large-scale impact and foster collaboration between sectors and communities.

Proposals should:

- support the set up of three living labs, with 10 to 20 experimental sites each, as places for testing and demonstrating innovative solutions to restore ecosystems following three main principles: (a) co-creation with a large set of stakeholders, (b) carried out in real-life settings and (c) involving the end-users. Transboundary living labs are encouraged and expected to be in at least three different EU Member States and/or Associated Countries, with some of them including outermost regions, islands or remote areas. Proposals should describe the rationale for cooperation across the living labs and among the stakeholders within the living labs;
- establish a work plan of activities in a transdisciplinary way, ensuring the co-design, co-development, and co-implementation of locally adapted innovative solutions;
- establish tools for each living lab to allow for an accurate assessment of the conditions and to monitor progress towards the objectives. Where relevant, the overall objective should be to reach the favourable reference areas, the good conservation status and the satisfactory levels for indicators at national levels defined in the Habitats Directive, the Birds Directive, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the Water Framework Directive or the Nature Restoration Regulation;
- monitor and carry out an assessment of both the effectiveness of innovative practices for ecosystem restoration and for their non-deterioration;
- demonstrate how of the identified innovative solutions can be viable for end-users, by developing suitable business models and testing private or public support schemes such

as payment for ecosystems services or nature credits as proposed in the Nature Credits Roadmap¹⁰³;

- address challenges with scaling up and transferability of solutions, developing a gender-sensitive and inclusive framework on how ecosystem health could support this work;
- disseminate the newly developed solutions to facilitate their uptake by practitioners;
- demonstrate how ecosystem restoration can support EU general policy objectives, enhancing societal resilience, and reducing natural risks.

Proposals should focus on ecosystems under one or several of the following groups:

- **Transitional interfaces:** Marine-coastal-terrestrial transitional ecosystems such as salt marshes, dunes, estuaries, coastal lagoons, and deltas, as well as freshwater transitions between watershed, rivers, lakes and groundwater.
- **Urban-rural gradient:** urban ecosystems -including parks, restored brownfields, urban forests, and green and blue infrastructures-, urban nature with surrounding peri-urban and rural ecosystems.
- **Mosaic agricultural landscapes:** agricultural ecosystems with high biodiversity value such as semi-natural grasslands, agroforestry systems, hedgerows, and buffer strips.
- **Biodiversity corridors:** linear habitats that cut across multiple land uses, such as riparian vegetation, roadsides, canal banks, and hedgerows. Ecosystem connectivity across fragmented landscapes.
- **Dryland and arid ecosystems:** garrigue, maquis, and steppe landscapes facing increasing threats from drought, erosion, desertification, and fire.

Projects must adopt the multi-actor approach. The actors may include researchers, land / water managers, industry representatives (e.g., SMEs), local authorities, civil society representatives (e.g. local residents, environmental NGOs, youth organisations) and/or investors. Financial support to third parties (FSTP) to facilitate active involvement of small actors (e.g. land managers, SMEs or civil society) can be provided through calls for proposals. A maximum of 30% of the EU funding should be allocated to this purpose.

This topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines to enhance the societal impact of the related research activities.

Cooperation is expected with relevant EU-funded projects and with relevant initiatives of the partnership Biodiversa+, and appropriate resources should be foreseen to ensure close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) and its Science Service. The collaboration with the JRC would address JRC methodologies for ecosystem condition

¹⁰³ [EUR-Lex - 52025DC0374 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

assessment, aligned with the System of Environmental Economic Accounting, and data and indicators identified by JRC to perform the assessment.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-02-two-stage: Open topic: Uncovering the causes of specific species' rapid decline and exploring actionable solutions

Call: Call 01 - two stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply: Applicants submitting a proposal for a blind evaluation (see General Annex F) must not disclose their organisation names, acronyms, logos nor names of personnel in the proposal abstract and Part B of their first-stage application (see General Annex E).
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The first-stage proposals of this topic will be evaluated blindly.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁰⁴.

Expected Outcome:

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

¹⁰⁴ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- drivers behind the rapid decline of specific species are better understood;
- policymakers, land, water and sea managers, national agencies and other stakeholders are provided with fast, practical and effective measures to prevent further decline and promote the recovery of affected species populations, thus contributing to the EU objectives of nature protection and climate mitigation and adaptation.

Scope:

As a result of unsustainable human activities, the global population of wild species is estimated to have fallen by more than 70% over the last 50 years¹⁰⁵. This is notably documented for bird populations, with long-term trends demonstrating that Europe has experienced a major decline in biodiversity¹⁰⁶. Some species that were considered common in the past have recently been assessed as threatened or endangered.

Proposals should support the implementation of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, and particularly target 4: “by 2030, significant areas of degraded and carbon-rich ecosystems are restored. Habitats and species show no deterioration in conservation trends and status; and at least 30% reach favourable conservation status or at least show a positive trend”, the EU legislation on biodiversity protection and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), especially target 4: “Halt Species Extinction, Protect Genetic Diversity, and Manage Human-Wildlife Conflicts”.

Successful proposals should:

- assess and improve the understanding of the drivers of decline of common or widespread species (present in the EU or Horizon Europe Associated Countries) which current decline is not easily explained, to be identified and selected by the proposals. This topic is open to species from all types of ecosystems including marine, freshwater, and terrestrial.
- develop and test innovative approaches and actionable solutions to address the decline.
- develop plans to support future uptake and upscaling after the research project and assess how tools, methods and solutions can be adapted and applied across different regions and contexts.
- consider the need for long-term ecological monitoring of the selected species populations and associated habitats, e.g. provide recommendations and consider possible options for long-term monitoring.
- if relevant, provide policy recommendations.

¹⁰⁵ WWF (2024) [Living Planet Report 2024](#) – A System in Peril. WWF, Gland, Switzerland
¹⁰⁶ European Environment Agency 2023

Proposals should foresee appropriate resources to ensure close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) and its Science Service. Cooperation with the European partnership Biodiversa+ should also be ensured.

International cooperation is encouraged, when relevant, especially in the cases of migratory species or species with transboundary populations.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-03-two-stage: Unlocking the potential of citizen action for nature protection and restoration

Call: Call 01 - two stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 10.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply: Applicants submitting a proposal for a blind evaluation (see General Annex F) must not disclose their organisation names, acronyms, logos nor names of personnel in the proposal abstract and Part B of their first-stage application (see General Annex E).
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The first-stage proposals of this topic will be evaluated blindly.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁷ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Expected Outcome:

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- citizen engagement in nature conservation and restoration is leveraged.
- new business opportunities and markets in the area of nature conservation and restoration are created, thus supporting the EU objectives of nature restoration for climate mitigation and adaptation.

Scope: The EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 acknowledges that protecting and restoring nature will need more than regulation alone and will notably require action by citizens. This topic intends to support citizens willing to take directly part in nature protection and restoration. It is expected to contribute to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and in particular to its target 21. A wide range of ecosystem types (in terrestrial environment, in fresh and/or marine water) can be considered.

Successful proposals are expected to:

- explore innovative approaches that could apply to nature conservation and restoration activities;
- develop and test new ways to restore and conserve nature that can be directly implemented by citizens at small scale. Activities are expected to go beyond monitoring, without totally excluding monitoring activities if they are needed to support innovations;
- engage with diverse local communities and/or indigenous people and consider gender and disability-sensitive and inclusive approaches to ensure equal participation and benefits for all;
- assess the possible contribution of citizens to overall biodiversity objectives and design and test social incentives that encourage citizens to take an active role in nature conservation and restoration.

Proposals should address some of the following activities:

- Development, testing and marketing of citizen toolkits for species conservation, with the following scope:
 - o Animal species across various taxonomic groups, including pollinating and not pollinating insects;
 - o Protected species or species threatened with extinction according to the European Red List¹⁰⁸;

¹⁰⁸

[European Red Lists of species](#)

- o Species suitable for direct citizen conservation action and with feasible breeding programmes.

Where necessary, the toolkit should include material for the creation of a habitat required by targeted species, such as seed material.

- Pest control or management of invasive species by citizens, in particular to prevent possible negative impacts on habitats and/or species.
- Social innovation leading to new services or products for nature restoration by citizens.

This topic should actively engage citizens and support bottom-up and participatory approaches. It is particularly relevant for SMEs, for instance for the development of kits or digital tools.

This topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines (e.g. gender and intersectional expertise, education and behavioural sciences) and the involvement of SSH experts, institutions as well as the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise, in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities.

Proposals should foresee appropriate resources to ensure close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) and its Science Service. Moreover, synergies with activities under New European Bauhaus are encouraged.

Transformative change towards a nature positive economy

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-04-two-stage: Mainstreaming and scaling-up evidence-based Nature-Based Solutions towards a nature positive and climate-resilient economy

Call: Call 01 - two stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 18.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:

<i>Agreements</i>	Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁰⁹. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- better understanding and communication of environmental, social and economic impacts of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) ¹¹⁰ is available for stakeholders across sectors, building on and enhancing existing knowledge systems, databases, and impact assessment frameworks;
- policymakers at different levels are able to more systemically integrate NbS across policy domains - such as energy, built environment, water management and transport - enabling systemic approaches to conserve, protect, restore and sustainably use ecosystems, strengthen climate resilience and maximise cost-effectiveness;
- scientifically credible, robust and policy-aligned evidence and projections (including from EO and modelling) are provided for practitioners and decision-makers on the long-term effectiveness of implemented NbS across terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems (including urban) under diverse climate scenarios. This includes understanding how factors such as vegetation growth, health, and variety, the deterioration of engineered materials, cost-effectiveness, and maintenance requirements evolve over time, supporting the wider adoption and policy integration of NbS;
- enhanced practitioners' capacity to design, co-create and implement NbS that incorporate adaptive management to minimise unintended and unforeseen consequences in the face of economic, societal and climatic changes, compared to conventional interventions.

Scope: Proposals should thrive to equip policymakers and practitioners with robust evidence, knowledge and practice on NbS. When implemented at scale, and following a credible design

¹⁰⁹ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

¹¹⁰ Nature-based Solutions are multilaterally defined as actions aimed at protecting, conserving, restoring, and sustainably managing natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, and marine ecosystems, which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience and biodiversity benefits (UNEA 5.2).

and implementation approach thriving for ecosystem integrity and connectivity, NbS can deliver significant benefits and reduced costs.

This topic aims to contribute to the evidence base on the role of NbS in a nature positive and climate resilience society. It supports climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, that ensure long-term economic security and opportunities, respect planetary boundaries and address climate uncertainties. This calls for a systematic integration of NbS across sectors and policy levels. Proposals are encouraged to apply a multi-actor approach to engage with actors from research, policy and practice, as well as SSH disciplines, to support the above-mentioned systemic NbS integration and evidence-based decision-making, and produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities

Proposals should enable the scaling up and mainstreaming of NbS, aligning with key policies, including the European Green Deal, the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, the Climate Adaptation Strategy, the EU Climate Adaptation Plan, the EU Forest Strategy, the Preparedness Union Strategy, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) notably targets 2, 8, and 11, the EU water and marine acquis, the Water Resilience Strategy and the Ocean Pact.

Proposals should:

- co-design, develop and implement large scale pilots and/or interconnected NbS, following a land/sea-scape approach to ensure positive measurable outcomes and addressing multiple challenges, prioritising climate adaptation and mitigation, water resilience, and creating new economic opportunities, while addressing biodiversity loss. Where relevant, links should also be made to opportunities for disaster risk and air pollution reduction;
- advance methods to assess the long-term viability of NbS, ensuring that the knowledge gained is integrated into policy, infrastructure, and spatial planning while respecting socio-economic and ecological thresholds;
- facilitate effective collaboration and knowledge transfer among researchers, practitioners, policymakers, public authorities as well as SSH disciplines to support evidence-based decision-making, making use of relevant existing platforms and, where possible, expanding beyond the European context;
- develop and synthesise knowledge and tools to better assess and mitigate the potential unintended consequences and risks associated with the implementation of NbS;
- assess environmental, social and economic impacts of NbS, building on existing knowledge and frameworks, and analyse the mechanisms to scale these solutions.

Proposals should seek to address some knowledge gaps identified by the relevant IPBES assessments and if appropriate provide recommendations to policy makers. Applicants should create synergies with and build on results of other EU-funded NbS projects. To this end, proposals should include dedicated tasks and appropriate resources for coordination measures,

including the collaboration with the EU NbS Task Forces. Proposals may include financial support to third parties (FSTP) to facilitate active and supportive involvement of actors, experts and institutions.

Proposals should foresee appropriate resources to ensure close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) and its Science Service.

2027

Consolidating biodiversity knowledge for nature and society

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-01: Integrating Remote Sensing and in-situ observations of Biodiversity, towards a fully interoperable observation and data framework

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹¹¹ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- advancing robust, policy-relevant ecosystem assessment, nature protection and restoration planning activities, and biodiversity trend prediction based on fit for purpose data, thus supporting EU biodiversity and climate objectives;
- strengthened capacity of researchers, practitioners and decision-makers to improve biodiversity monitoring practices and address knowledge gaps via the integration of data and observations across sensors and platforms, ranging from omics-based data (genomic, transcriptomic, metabolomic), various in-situ to satellite-based Earth observation data;
- enhanced usability of in-situ datasets as training and validation resources for statistical, machine learning and advanced AI-based approaches, in support of applications such as habitat classification, ecosystem mapping and biodiversity trend prediction.

Scope: Achieving the goals of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and assessing progress towards their defined targets, requires coherent, integrated and long-term monitoring approaches, underpinned by FAIR data systems. Many existing in-situ data collections (i.e. genomic assessments, ground sampling, drone and airborne observations) were not designed with Satellite Remote Sensing integration in mind (i.e. for validation and calibration, integrated data products, or statistical scaling of information) and lack the structure, interface and metadata required to support advanced analytics, including AI. FAIR data on species and ecosystems will also help to ensure that biodiversity preservation is a mainstream feature of other sectors, such as agriculture, transport, energy or the bioeconomy. There is a need for systemic, harmonized or standardised biodiversity data at Earth's surface in order to support AI applications ranging from genome to space and to build up our knowledge on the status and trends of habitats, species, ecosystems, and on the drivers of decline.

To address these challenges, proposals should:

- develop and validate fit-for-purpose multisensory biodiversity data integration systems, to enable omics-based and in-situ data harmonization and integration with remote sensing data from space or sub-orbital platforms, as well as socio-ecological and climatic data for enhancing assessment of ecosystem condition and degradation, and the predictive modelling of biodiversity trends at international, regional and European scales;

¹¹¹ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- develop concrete technical capabilities able to answer to diverse use cases, across terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems in Member States and Associated Countries. To this end, proposals should identify and prioritise critical biodiversity knowledge gaps and their data needs, with a focus on predictive analytics and the use of AI, and address them by designing data integration approaches that support scientific and policy needs, including biodiversity protection, restoration, and sustainable use goals and targets, as well as other related policy objectives;
- develop demonstration and verification cases focusing on specific ecosystems under the EU ecosystem typology¹¹² and habitats, including ecotones¹¹³, identified as those under pressure or as restoration priorities. Proposals should take into account socio-economic pressures and activities impacting ecosystems, including land and sea use and emissions of pollutants (e.g. agriculture, aquaculture, urbanization, resource exploitation and management practices). Demonstration cases should be relevant to EO applications, such as AI-assisted ecosystem and habitat mapping, ensuring interoperability with European and global frameworks such as the Global Ecosystem Typology as well as EUNIS, and aligned with reporting requirements under the Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive and EU Nature Restoration Regulation.
- deliver FAIR data, harmonization workflows and processing protocols supporting data integration from genome to space and verify the use of generated datasets on identified analysis needs. Proposals should link observation data to emerging socio-economic, climate, agriculture, forestry, fisheries and environmental data and to relevant data infrastructures, including, if applicable, the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) and the European Common Data Spaces and SAGE¹¹⁴;
- contribute to consensus and implementation of joint definitions of data collection, metadata and processing protocols, data quality and harmonization of standards enabling the integration of observations “from genomes to space”.

Proposals should earmark resources for cooperation with existing initiatives such as in-situ data collection frameworks (e.g., GBIF, OBIS, LUCAS). The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may join the selected consortium in relation to effective coordination with the EC Knowledge Center for Biodiversity (KCBD) and its Science Service, as well as incorporating the in-situ data from European Commission steered biodiversity monitoring schemes such as LUCAS, specifically –LUCAS grassland, and EMBAL (European Monitoring of Biodiversity in

¹¹² The “EU ecosystem typology” is a classification of ecosystem types developed by the Commission and the European Environmental Agency, in collaboration with Member States and it is tailored to meet EU needs. Its first level is legislated and is used for the reporting under in Annex IX of Regulation (EU) 691/2011.

¹¹³ Ecotones are areas of steep transition between ecological communities, ecosystems, and/or ecological regions along an environmental or other gradient. (S. Kark, Effects of Ecotones on Biodiversity, Reference Module in Life Sciences, Elsevier, 2017, ISBN 9780128096338, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-809633-8.02290-1>)

¹¹⁴ <https://www.egi.eu/project/sage/>.

Agricultural Landscapes). Proposals may consider services offered by European research infrastructures¹¹⁵.

This topic is part of the Biodiversity cluster of the EC-ESA Earth System Science Initiative (ESSI). Proposals should foresee sufficient mean for effective coordination with projects selected under ESA's FuturEO programme.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-02: Science-policy support to the implementation of EU and global biodiversity policies and strategies

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 7.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹¹⁶. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The

¹¹⁵ The catalogue of European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) research infrastructures portfolio can be browsed from ESFRI website <https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/>

¹¹⁶ This [decision](#) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

	maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 120 000 as this support to third parties is one of the primary activities of the action and necessary to engage relevant expertise from the broader research community in order to be able to achieve its objectives.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- Effective scientific support is provided by the Science Service for Biodiversity to all levels of policymaking related to biodiversity, through the European Commission's Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD); In particular, the coordination of answering *ad hoc* policy requests related to biodiversity through the mobilisation of the EU-funded scientific community, in collaboration with the KCBD, is expected.
- Enhanced science-policy support and knowledge transfer from EU-funded R&I projects to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are ensured.
- A strengthened, multi-stakeholder knowledge and dialogue platform promotes biodiversity knowledge and the uptake and scaling of nature-based solutions (NbS) including for nature protection and restoration across the EU and beyond, through active engagement with practitioners, developers, and decision-makers from science, policy, business, and civil society—at local, national, and international levels.

Scope: The EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 includes a science-policy mechanism and greater efforts to support the implementation of biodiversity commitments at EU and global levels. The strategy also explicitly calls for the use of NbS as a central component in addressing both biodiversity loss and climate change. In line with the Commission's priority 'A global Europe', the EU is demonstrating leadership in this field, notably by enhancing its support to the multilateral processes and platforms addressing the biodiversity crisis. This topic covers essential functions of the Science Service for Biodiversity, broader science-policy support for multiple actors in relation to the global IPBES and CBD processes, as well as support to collaborations and knowledge exchange specifically on NbS. The Science Service, linked to the KCBD, plays a critical role in supporting evidence-based decision making within the EU. In addition, the KCBD acts as one of the European Technical and Scientific Support Centres (TSCs) established under the CBD, which support knowledge transfer and capacity building to help CBD Parties implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

Proposals should:

- Support the provision of a functional Science Service for Biodiversity, in close collaboration with the KCBD, acting as a one-stop-shop – a single-entry point for providing the overall support on evidence-based services (answering knowledge requests, tools, coordination, capacity building) that enable policymakers, other decision

makers and stakeholders in Europe and beyond to ensure the protection, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity. Successful proposals should:

- o provide high-quality evidence-based responses to biodiversity-related policy requests submitted to the KCBD, by involving relevant researchers, particularly those from EU-funded projects. Proposals are expected to provide financial support to third parties (FSTP) to, for instance, involve relevant experts.
- o maintain and extend active knowledge exchange networks, including through capacity building, to strengthen the bridge between policy, science and society;
- o maintain, enrich and expand a set of Science Service tools, enabling all relevant actors to use and benefit from the best available biodiversity knowledge;
- Strengthen the capacity of researchers and negotiators from the EU and Associated Countries to engage in IPBES and CBD processes. Successful proposals should:
 - o provide scientific and back-office support to negotiators involved in these processes;
 - o facilitate and support the engagement of researchers from the EU and Associated Countries in these processes. Proposals are expected to provide financial support to third parties (FSTP) to, for instance, involve relevant experts;
 - o facilitate technical and scientific cooperation, knowledge transfer and networking between researchers, stakeholders, policymakers and other decision makers to enhance awareness and application of IPBES deliverables;
 - o support the KCBD in its tasks as a European TSC mobilising and/or generating evidence and knowledge to implement the GBF.
- Enhance and expand dynamic knowledge exchange mechanisms on NbS, coupled with targeted capacity-building initiatives, to reinforce the interface between policy, scientific research, business and societal engagement. Successful proposals should also:
 - o ensure a multi-stakeholder dialogue platform on NbS serves to bridge science, policy, practice, and business, fostering the co-creation, dissemination, and uptake of research-based knowledge. This platform should play a key role in promoting policy coherence, encouraging collaborative action, and building capacity among Member States and Associated Countries, communities, and actors at all levels.

Successful proposals should support the new Commission policy priorities for 2024-2029 with a focus on “Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature”. This implies support to the implementation of the goals of the European Green Deal, the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, the GBF and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This requires interactions with IPBES, the CBD Secretariat, and the EC via the KCBD. Knowledge

generated under this topic is also expected to inform deliberations on EU biodiversity policy after 2030.

Proposals should build on existing knowledge and the results of past and on-going projects, and foresee close collaboration with, and tailored support to the KCBD and its Science Service. The possible participation of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) in the project would facilitate this collaboration and support. Proposals should also foresee cooperation with the European Biodiversity Partnership (Biodiversa+) and its funded projects. Proposal aspects addressing the platform on NbS should build upon the foundations and outcomes of the NetworkNaturePLUS project.

Proposals are strongly encouraged to provide financial support to third parties (FSTP) to, for instance, respond to biodiversity-related policy requests or engage relevant expertise in IPBES and CBD processes. A maximum of 30% of the EU funding should be allocated to this purpose. Consortia need to define a fair and transparent selection process for third parties, for which financial support may be granted. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the project will support the engagement of leading researchers from the EU and Associated Countries in IPBES and CBD processes.

The Plan for exploitation and dissemination should ensure the valorisation of available knowledge to policy makers, stakeholders and the public.

Restoring ecosystems for resilient society and economy

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-03: Technical innovation to protect ecosystems and to scale up their restoration

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 14.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:

<i>Agreements</i>	Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹¹⁷. Purchases of equipment, infrastructure or other assets specifically for the action (or developed as part of the action tasks) may be declared as full capitalised costs.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- activities of protection and restoration of ecosystems by stakeholders become easier and more effective;
- conditions to scale up the implementation of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation by stakeholders are improved, thus improving ecosystem services including for climate mitigation and adaptation.

Scope: Ecosystem restoration strategies for nature restoration and climate change mitigation require a coordinated and coherent set of human interventions and management practices (e.g. temporal protection of plants or removing invasive species, including their seeds) for which there is usually no dedicated mean like specific machinery, equipment or other technical innovations (like for example specific lures for invasive alien species). The most common practice is the use of agricultural machinery or equipment, but this is not always effective.

With target 4 of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, the EU took the following commitments: significant areas of degraded and carbon-rich ecosystems are restored; habitats and species show no deterioration in conservation trend and status, and at least 30% reach favourable conservation status or at least show a positive trend. According to the EU Nature Restoration Regulation, Member States shall put in place effective and area-based restoration measures with the aim to jointly cover, as a Union target, at least 20 % of land areas and at least 20 % of sea areas by 2030, and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050. This is reflected in target 2 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The European Climate Law requires Member States to adopt and implement national adaptation strategies and plans in which they should promote Nature-based Solutions and ecosystem-based adaptation. These policies and legislations have reached the implementation stage in the EU and worldwide.

Successful proposals are expected to:

¹¹⁷ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- design, develop and test technical innovations corresponding to identified needs for specific ecosystems protection and/or restoration activities. A wide range of possible innovations can be proposed, including new or adapted machines, low techs, digital innovations or combinations of them to be used in a wide range of ecosystem types, including terrestrial, freshwater and marine.
- pay attention to effectiveness, simplicity of use, durability and environmental sustainability and responsibility (including alertness to potential risks, trade-offs and the unintended consequences as a result of the use of technological innovations).

This topic is particularly relevant for SMEs.

Proposals should foresee appropriate resources to ensure close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) and its Science Service.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-04: Living Labs for the eradication and/or management of invasive alien species

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 24.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- the capacities and integrated governance of researchers, decision-makers, practitioners, local communities and other stakeholders to effectively collaborate to prevent, eradicate or manage invasive alien species (IAS) are enhanced.
- native ecosystems are better protected, leading to improved resilience and continuous provision of ecosystem services including for climate mitigation and adaptation.

Scope: Invasive alien species are one of the five main direct drivers of biodiversity loss. Besides inflicting major damage to nature and the economy, many invasive alien species also facilitate the outbreak and spread of infectious diseases, posing a threat to humans and native wildlife. The rate of new introductions of invasive alien species has increased in recent years. Without effective control measures, risks to our nature and health will continue to rise. Climate change and land-use changes facilitate the spread and establishment of many alien species.

Proposals are expected to support the prevention, eradication and/or management of invasive alien species by stakeholders, including adaptive management approaches. This topic is related to target 12 the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 (50% reduction in the number of Red List species threatened by invasive alien species) and to target 6 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework: reduce the introduction of Invasive Alien Species by 50% by 2030 and minimize their impact. Proposals should support the implementation of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation, the EU regulation on invasive alien species and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Proposals should seek to address some knowledge gaps identified by the IPBES assessment on invasive alien species (2023)¹¹⁸. All ecosystem types (terrestrial, fresh and/or marine waters) may be addressed.

Living labs can empower the green transition by co-creating solutions and involving actors in real life settings at territorial level to achieve large-scale impact.

Successful proposals should:

- set up at least three living labs, composed each of 10 to 20 experimental sites, following the three main principles: (a) co-creation with a large set of stakeholders, (b) carried out in real-life settings and (c) involving the end-users. Transboundary living labs are encouraged and living labs are expected to be located in at least three different EU Member States and/or Associated Countries.
- establish a detailed work plan of the activities to be undertaken in a transdisciplinary way, ensuring the co-design, co-development, and co-implementation of locally adapted innovative solutions. Where appropriate, activities should advance knowledge on invasive alien species to support the development of solutions.

¹¹⁸ IPBES (2023). Summary for Policymakers of the Thematic Assessment Report on Invasive Alien Species and their Control <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7430692>; Thematic Assessment Report on Invasive Alien Species and their Control <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7430682>

- conduct participatory and transdisciplinary research and innovation in living labs with the objectives of:
 - o building on existing methods (including ensuring the integration of existing solutions) or developing new ones for detecting and monitoring invasive alien species, such as the use of citizen science, eDNA, remote sensing and machine learning algorithms, and test them at scale. Proposals could build on pilots developed by the European partnership Biodiversa+.
 - o designing and testing innovative eradication and management strategies and methods which may include, for instance, physical removal and the use of biological control or chemical control. Innovative tools such as bio-engineering might be explored in conjunction with more traditional methods. Range shifts induced by climate change should be considered.
- monitor and carry out an assessment of the innovative strategies, methods and tools and their effectiveness. Measures to ensure the prevention of re-invasion should be considered as well, to secure the continued effectiveness of the proposed solutions.
- disseminate the newly developed solutions, to facilitate their uptake by practitioners.
- provide data and experience usable for decision-makers, to assess socio-economic impacts of invasive alien species, side-effects of the management, the cost of inaction and the benefits of eradication or effective management, with effective contribution from social sciences and humanities.
- address challenges with scaling up and transferability of solutions. A gender-sensitive and inclusive approach should be integrated, examining how invasive alien species affect individuals' livelihoods and well-being differently.

This topic requires the effective contribution of SSH discipline to enhance the societal impact of the research activities.

Concrete efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the context of the funded projects is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable), particularly for real-time data feeds, exploring workflows that can provide “FAIR-by-design” data, i.e., data that is FAIR from its generation. Possibilities offered by the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) to store and give access to research data should be considered. A citizen science approach could be appropriate for this action to produce, collect and analyse data.

Financial support to third parties (FSTP) to facilitate active involvement of small actors (e.g. land managers, SMEs or civil society) in one or more of the living labs of a project, can be provided through calls. A maximum of 30% of the EU funding should be allocated to this purpose.

Proposals should cooperate with the Joint Research Centre to use the resources of and make results available to, when relevant, the European Alien Species Information Network (EASIN).

Proposals should ensure cooperation with relevant initiatives of the European partnership Biodiversa+ and foresee appropriate resources to ensure close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) and its Science Service.

Proposals are encouraged to consider, where relevant, the data, expertise and services offered by European research infrastructures¹¹⁹ as well as related projects in the environment domain. International cooperation is encouraged.

Transformative change towards a nature positive economy

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-05: Accelerating the transition to a nature positive economy: Integrating biodiversity into the private sector

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 14.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the

¹¹⁹ The catalogue of European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) research infrastructures portfolio can be browsed from ESFRI website <https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/>

	Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹²⁰ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes, driving transformative change for biodiversity and nature positive economic practices:

- overall, the economic case for biodiversity protection, restoration, sustainable use and the delivery of ecosystem services upon which all life depends, is strengthened including through robust assessments of the cost of inaction;
- businesses are better able to mainstream biodiversity considerations in decision-making, fostering transformative business models that enhance inclusion for biodiversity, particularly for start-ups and SMEs, including nature-based enterprises¹²¹. Leveraging synergies in business action on climate to strengthen overall resilience also needs to be considered;
- policy and decision makers benefit from improved knowledge to drive transformative policy including fiscal reforms to align economic incentives with nature positive investments and scalable biodiversity finance mechanisms (including blended finance, green bonds, nature credits, ecosystem service markets, etc.);

to ensure clear evaluation frameworks for effectiveness, policy and decision makers have access to improved measurement and reporting of economic and business impacts, dependencies, and efforts on biodiversity.

Scope: Current economic systems are often driven by growth models and competitive pressures that prioritise short-term profits and speed over the long-term health of ecosystems. These systems also fail to account for environmental externalities, making nature positive solutions appear less affordable than they truly are. This has led to the exploitation of natural resources, habitat destruction, and loss of biodiversity, which in turn has significant negative impacts on both the environment and human well-being. Safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystem services is not just important, it is essential to preserving life on Earth, as they underpin the very systems that sustain all human and natural life. As these systems continue, the consequences are becoming increasingly clear: climate change, soil degradation, water scarcity, pollution and species extinction, all of which undermine the foundations of human society, business, and future prosperity. A nature positive economy, on the other hand, focuses on restoring and enhancing the natural systems that support life on Earth, ultimately benefiting and improving the resilience of our economy.

¹²⁰ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

¹²¹ For more information on nature-based enterprises please refer to page 6 and 8 of the European Commission Expert Publication (2022): The vital role of nature-based solutions in a nature positive economy: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/85aeb571-c69c-11ec-b6f4-01aa75ed71a1>

The topic should work to achieve the objectives and the implementation of the European Green Deal, the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, the ‘Roadmap towards nature Credits’, EU Sustainable Finance Policy including the EU Taxonomy for Sustainable Activities, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF, and notably targets 14, 15, 18 and 19) and the Task Force on Nature Related Financial Disclosures (TNFD).

Proposals should:

- support decision-making for a nature positive economy by addressing knowledge and practice gaps, advancing transparent and standardised biodiversity metrics, improving accessibility of assessment methods and data, integrating economic risks related to biodiversity loss into corporate strategies and reporting. Where possible lessons learned should inform and scale-up initiatives to achieve a nature positive economy also beyond the European context.
- improve the knowledge on effective biodiversity incentives including through fiscal reforms and phasing out harmful subsidies to support the development of policies and financial strategies for nature positive investments.
- pilot innovative financial mechanisms and valuation approaches in real-world business contexts, including instruments for mobilising private finance such as nature credits, to strengthen the business case for biodiversity protection, restoration and sustainable use, including through Nature-based Solutions.
- carry out demonstration actions to help integrate research into policy and practice and to demonstrate operational pathways for long term transformative change and for the acceleration of nature positive economy.
- use and build on available biodiversity data sources, including from biodiversity monitoring schemes, for the purpose of developing corporate strategies and sustainability metrics in the private sector. This includes considering the potential of AI.
- develop, analyse and/or promote ways of making sustainability reporting more accessible, efficient, and accurate for businesses of all sizes and particularly for start-ups and SMEs, with a view to promote an equitable and manageable compliance framework. Leveraging AI, digital automation and sector specific insights is encouraged.

Proposals should seek to address some knowledge gaps identified by the relevant IPBES assessments and if appropriate, provide recommendations to policy makers.

Proposals should create synergies with and build on results of other relevant EU-funded projects on biodiversity, economics and finance, and ensure cooperation with the European partnership Biodiversa+. To this end, proposals should include dedicated tasks and appropriate resources for coordination measures.

Proposals should foresee appropriate resources to ensure close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) and its Science Service. Proposals should also

foresee links with voluntary market initiatives, e.g. the TNFD or others. Proposals must follow a multi-actor approach, engaging researchers, businesses, financial institutions, public authorities, policy makers, and civil society to co-develop and apply solutions.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-06: Living labs driving transformative change via knowledge integration and inclusive governance

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 14.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: To ensure a balanced portfolio, grants will be awarded to proposals not only in order of ranking but at least also to one proposal within the area A that is the highest ranked, and one proposal highest ranked within the area B, provided that the applications attain all thresholds. Proposals shall clearly indicate the area they are applying to.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹²².

¹²² This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- society and decision-makers are provided with enhanced governance frameworks that integrate knowledge across ecosystems (terrestrial, freshwater and marine) and/or societal challenges, helping overcome institutional barriers, power asymmetries, and policy fragmentation to accelerate transformative change towards a nature positive economy and support EU climate goals;
- practitioners and public authorities co-create and have access to living labs as innovation hubs for testing, and scaling both governance and socio-economic models that integrate diverse knowledge systems, actively engage stakeholders and support bottom-up and participatory approaches.

Scope: As nature positive actions gain momentum and biodiversity is increasingly integrated into policies, it is essential to ensure governance frameworks can support large-scale, coordinated implementation. Relevant stakeholders should be actively involved in shaping new solutions adapted to different and local contexts.

Living labs have the potential to empower a green transition and a transformative change towards nature positive society and economy by developing solutions in a co-creative manner and involving actors in real life settings to achieve large-scale impact and foster collaboration between sectors and communities.

Proposals should align with key policies including the European Green Deal and the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the Paris Agreement, the European Climate Law and the One Health approach.

Proposals should:

1. establish living labs as real-world testing environments to experiment with policy solutions, stakeholder engagement, and new economic models, while strengthening collective capacities and well-being, and identifying and overcoming barriers that limit participation in living labs;
2. develop inclusive, intersectional and adaptive governance strategies that foster systemic transformative change, based on both biodiversity and socio-economic metrics and emphasising equity and sustainability.

In particular, actions are expected to:

1. conduct a comprehensive review and analysis of policies related to both direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, with the aim of identifying conflicting or competing objectives and informing more coherent, nature positive policy frameworks;

2. analyse the legal, financial and institutional barriers to inclusive governance in Europe, including the assessment of political and economic obstacles and of active strategies by actors and develop proposals to pilot and test innovative policy instruments, such as citizens' assemblies, participatory budgeting and, if and when relevant, nature credits as proposed in the Nature Credits Roadmap¹²³, to foster transformative change;
3. develop multi-level governance models and policy proposals to integrate all relevant nature positive actions (including protection and restoration of ecosystems, Nature-based Solutions, circular economy, sustainable bioeconomy, regenerative agriculture, agroecology, agroforestry, bioremediation, etc.) into all relevant EU policies and strategies in a synergetic and coherent way;
4. identify relevant existing EU funded communities of practices, such as the Nature-based Solutions hubs, the circular economy hubs and the adaptation hubs, and group them per ecosystem or societal challenge;
5. set-up living labs to co-develop enabling pathways for transformative change and test them to ensure positive impacts on the ground, drawing on best practices (including emerging nature positive actions), identifying knowledge gaps and addressing research and innovation needs in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders;
6. develop digital tools to synthesise and visualise diverse knowledge sources and create decision-support systems for inclusive governance, in view to inform all stakeholders about all existing nature positive actions per ecosystem or societal challenge and to propose the best options in terms of both biodiversity and socio-economic gains for a specific and/or local context (e.g. surface area, available budget, main challenge, specific regional area).

Proposals should address Area A: living labs per ecosystem (marine, freshwater, terrestrial (including agriculture, forestry, cities)) or Area B: living labs per societal challenge (climate change, water, food, health, pollution, spatial planning). The area (A or B) should be clearly indicated on the application.

Proposals should ensure close collaboration with the other project selected under this topic. They should also offer training for policymakers, community leaders, and researchers on co-governance and knowledge integration and develop educational materials and ensure coordination and exchanges between all living labs. Proposals should adopt interdisciplinary approaches and ensure policymakers, business leaders and stakeholders co-create, experiment, and validate new solutions in an open, user-centred way.

Solutions should be adapted to the environmental, socio-economic, and cultural contexts of each living lab, considering both cultural and natural heritage. Scaling and transferability challenges should be addressed through collaborative approaches combining scientific knowledge with local expertise. In this respect, particular attention could be paid to the

¹²³ [EUR-Lex - 52025DC0374 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

specific characteristics of the outermost regions. The gender dimension should also be integrated.

Proposals must implement the multi-actor approach, involving a range of stakeholders, including when relevant farmers, foresters and land managers, fishing and aquaculture communities, spatial planners and landscape architects, tourism actors, water governance bodies, business leaders, energy producers, local authorities, NGOs and youth organisations, to ensure that the knowledge and needs from various sectors are integrated and the results are impactful.

Proposals should seek to address knowledge gaps identified by IPBES assessments and, if relevant, provide recommendations to policymakers. They should build on existing knowledge from and ensure complementarity with other relevant EU-funded projects under Horizon Europe Work Programmes¹²⁴, including Biodiversa+ and NetworkNaturePLUS, and foresee appropriate resources to ensure close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBd) and its Science Service.

This topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines to collect and validate both technical and socio-economic data.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-07: Health of ecosystems and wild species, predictions and impacts on human health, in the face of existing and emerging stressors, from a One Health approach

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 14.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the

¹²⁴ <https://erc.europa.eu/projects-statistics/mapping-erc-frontier-research/frontier-research-transformative-change> and <https://www.biodiversa.eu/2024/06/11/2024-2025-joint-call/>

	Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹²⁵ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- transdisciplinary research communities work together to predict the health of ecosystems and wild species (including physiology, genetic diversity, population distribution and ecology) in the face of the existing and emerging stressors induced by the indirect and direct drivers of biodiversity loss (including but not restricted to climate change and pollution), through increased knowledge and monitoring;
- policymakers, public authorities, stakeholders and citizens better understand the interlinkages between wild species and ecosystems health, domestic animal and plant health and human health. The progress of public authorities and policymakers towards a comprehensive One Health governance is assessed, thanks to the development of science-based indicators.

Scope: The One Health approach recognises the inherent connection between the health of ecosystems, wildlife, humans, domestic animals and plants. This approach is key to prevent, anticipate, detect and respond to health threats across sectors. It has the potential to reduce the impact and societal and economic costs of such threats and prevent their emergence, while also reducing pressures on the environment, contributing to food security and ensuring access to clean air and water.

Proposals should support the objectives and the implementation of the EU Green Deal, the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework as well as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health¹²⁶. Proposals should seek the mainstreaming of the One Health approach, address the knowledge gaps identified by IPBES assessments, and provide policy recommendations.

Proposals should:

- describe the current health status of the ecosystems and wild species most susceptible to interact with human health (including terrestrial, freshwater and marine ones, with no geographical restrictions). Describe the impact of the stressors induced by the drivers of biodiversity loss and changes in ecosystem dynamics on their health, meaning their physiology, genetic diversity, population distribution and ecology. Taking into consideration the most updated scientific scenarios (e.g. IPBES nexus assessment), predict the future health status of these ecosystems and wild species in the short, mid and long term;

¹²⁵ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

¹²⁶ <https://www.cbd.int/health/GAP.shtml>.

- propose benchmark protocols to ensure comparability between research communities (including social sciences and humanities) and define common indicators describing the risks (e.g. loss of ecosystem services, exposure to pollutants and pathogens) and benefits (e.g. dilution effect, exposure to beneficial microorganisms, etc.) of the interlinkages of wild species and ecosystem health, domestic animal and plant health and human health. This includes the integration of ecosystem and wildlife health in the exposome approach;
- assess the impacts of the degradation of ecosystem and wildlife health on human health, including a cost-benefit analysis of nature restoration and conservation projects in terms of human health benefits and the costs of inaction. This should include disability and intersectional aspects and the groups in the most vulnerable situations in society (e.g. low-income communities, youth, older people, persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ people, people with racial or religious minority background). Based on this, provide actionable policy recommendations for policymakers and authorities in establishing a One Health policy framework.

Proposals should foresee appropriate resources to ensure close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) and its Science Service and ensure cooperation with the EU Biodiversa+ and Animal Health and Welfare partnerships¹²⁷. Proposals should also build on the relevant previous Horizon Europe projects.

This topic requires the effective contribution of SSH discipline in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities.

Biodiversity friendly practices in agriculture

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-08: Fostering common farmland birds and mammals for resilient food production systems

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following

¹²⁷ [European Partnership on Animal Health and Welfare](#)

<i>conditions</i>	exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹²⁸.

Expected Outcome:

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- land managers, farmers, conservation organizations, researchers, policymakers, and agribusinesses are equipped with the knowledge and tools to implement practices that enhance habitats for farmland birds and mammals, thereby improving pest control, supporting pollination, and strengthening agricultural resilience;
- challenges, measures, and needs of land managers, farmers and conservation organizations are known and supported via appropriate incentives to facilitate the wide adoption of bird- and mammal-friendly practices.

Scope: Maintaining and improving farmland bird populations is crucial for both conservation and the long-term sustainability of food production systems. Farmland birds and mammals provide valuable ecosystem services, such as pest control, pollination, and seed dispersal, which are essential for resilient agriculture. Focusing on birds ensures the preservation of these services, while also contributing to broader biodiversity goals. Additionally, including farmland mammals in the research helps assess potential synergies and trade-offs in pest control, providing a more holistic ecological understanding. As farmland birds and mammals can cause damage by consuming crops, it is important that research seeks the correct equilibrium between the utility of these animals and the damage they can cause. This broader perspective allows for more informed decisions on how to design farming systems that are not only beneficial to bird populations but also support the protection and restoration of healthy ecosystems. Overall, the objective is to foster sustainable agriculture that enhances both productivity and biodiversity, and offers opportunities for nature restoration.

¹²⁸ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Proposals should:

- synthesize the impact of various farming practices on both farmland bird populations and agricultural productivity, while also considering farmland mammals for a more comprehensive picture. Also, assessing the role and impact of specific bird species in pest control and soil health to better understand their contributions in agricultural landscapes and to the sustainability of farming systems;
- develop participatory research programs that encourage landscape-level collaboration among farmers, land managers, and conservationists. These programs should focus on identifying and testing locally tailored bird-friendly solutions while addressing farmers' perceptions, needs, and challenges in adopting these practices;
- improve existing incentives (also under CAP), or potentially create new targeted ones to promote the adoption of bird- and mammal-friendly solutions. These incentives should be geographically relevant and designed to address farmers' specific challenges, while fostering collaboration among farmers, land managers, and conservationists to ensure effective implementation and long-term sustainability;
- design a comprehensive farmer education program focused on bird-friendly practices and their economic benefits. This should include advisory services with ecologists, field days, and demonstration farms showcasing successful bird-focused measures in profitable farming systems. Also assess effectiveness of peer-to-peer learning networks and highlight the economic co-benefits of these practices (e.g., pest reduction and pollination);
- conduct research to assess the effectiveness of scaling proven biodiversity-friendly farming practices, such as creating and preserving semi-natural habitats of farmland or other farming practices and in consideration of at least maintaining productivity. Focus on successful models, that can be applied to different regions, and evaluate their impact on bird and selected mammal populations.

The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food, the biodiversity strategy for 2030, the EU Birds and Habitats Directives, the EU Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production¹²⁹, the EU Nature Restoration Regulation and Target 10 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Proposals must implement the multi-actor approach, involving a range of stakeholders, particularly farmers and land managers, to ensure that the knowledge and needs from various sectors are integrated and the results are impactful.

Proposals should, where relevant, build on previous EU and nationally funded projects, including Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, and LIFE, and the Agroecology Partnership; and foresee appropriate resources to ensure close cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBBD) and its Science Service.

¹²⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0141R%2801%29>

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-09: Enhancing the competitiveness of organic crop breeding: focus on intercropping adapted varieties

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹³⁰. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- the efficiency and competitiveness of the organic crop breeding sector are boosted by providing organic breeders with a comprehensive toolbox to develop varieties specifically adapted to intercropping and suitable for organic production;
- an improved understanding of key target traits for developing varieties adapted to intercropping farming systems is available to researchers and breeders, benefiting all agricultural systems;

¹³⁰ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- the foundation for the development of future crop varieties that enhance benefits derived by intercropping, such as improved pest/weed management, increased nutrient and water use efficiency, improved pollination, improved soil fertility, reduced soil erosion and nutrient leaching, and enhanced productivity, is established.

Scope: Plant breeding has focused on maximising yield in single species stands for monocropping systems, leading to highly productive yet specialised varieties. As a result, most varieties on the market may not perform well in intercropping systems, where productivity and benefits often depend on the interactions between crops. To support farming practices that promote agrobiodiversity, there is a need to develop varieties specifically adapted to intercropping. However, selecting varieties specifically for intercropping remains a practical challenge for breeding.

Proposals should:

- provide novel insights into interactions and mechanisms that influence intercrop performance by advancing understanding of plant traits affecting both inter- and intraspecific interactions and their impact on crop outcomes. The approach should consider eco-physiological processes¹³¹ and ideally encompass both aboveground crop interactions and belowground dynamics between intercropped roots and soil organisms;
- develop new organic breeding approaches that prioritise enhancing crop performance within multi-species systems, emphasising the importance of competition, complementarity and facilitation mechanisms between crops;
- identify crop combinations and superior-performing variety combinations that consistently yield well together;
- provide inputs for the development of future testing and selection criteria, as well as tools and methods for evaluating the performance of specialized genotypes in intercropping conditions, laying the groundwork for breeders and bodies entrusted to establish these frameworks.

Particular attention should be given to aspects related to the regulations for the use and development of Organic Heterogeneous Material (OHM) and/or Organic Varieties Suitable for Organic Production (OVSOP) as innovative categories of plant reproductive material.

If applicable, proposal may advance pre-existing breeding material towards the development of OHM and/or OVSOP for intercropping, making use of the knowledge and tools developed within the project.

Proposals should build on the results of relevant projects funded under Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe and ensure collaboration with relevant ongoing projects.

¹³¹ biological and physiological mechanisms that plants undergo to interact with the surrounding physical, chemical and biological environments when cultivated in an intercrop system (e.g. nutrient/water uptake, root structure, interactions with insects/pollinators, disease incidents).

Proposals are encouraged to consider, where relevant, the data, expertise and services offered by European research infrastructure¹³² in the environment, biological and food domains.

Proposals may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP) to, for instance, develop, test and demonstrate the new organic breeding approaches for intercropping.

The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food, to the EU Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production¹³³, to the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 (notably target 8) and to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (target 10).

¹³² The catalogue of European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) research infrastructures portfolio can be browsed from ESFRI website <https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/>

¹³³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0141R%2801%29>

Destination - Fair, healthy and environment-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption

This destination will support the EU Commission priority ‘Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature’.

R&I will provide new knowledge and innovation in support of the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food, built on the recommendations of the Strategic Dialogue on Agriculture, to ensure the long-term competitiveness and sustainability of our farming, fisheries, aquaculture and food sector within the boundaries of our planet. The implementation of the Green Deal actions will continue to guide R&I in this destination to foster sustainable food systems, addressing potential trade-offs between economic competitiveness and environmental sustainability.

The R&I activities under this Destination will contribute to the ambitious objectives of the current CAP concerning the competitiveness and sustainability of feed, food and non-food production as well as additional future CAP policy priorities. More specifically, actions will contribute to the specific objectives of the CAP; EU action plan for the development of organic production; food safety regulations; sustainable use of pesticides requirements under the plant protection products framework; action plan against antimicrobial resistance; animal health and welfare legislations; legislative and non-legislative initiatives to enhance cooperation of primary producers and improve their competitiveness and position in the food chain; protein strategy; contingency plan for ensuring food supply and food security and communications on food security and fertilizers, the Nature Restoration Regulation, the Zero Pollution Action Plan.

R&I will also support the announced Vision for the Fisheries Sector with a 2040 perspective and the European Ocean Pact, a framework of coherence across all policies linked to the ocean. R&I will also be relevant to the outcomes of the evaluation of the common fisheries policy (CFP) and will support its placement under this Pact, as fisheries and aquaculture are affected by other ocean related policies.

An important driving force of food systems transformation should be the integration of sectors, actors (including citizens and consumers) and policies. This will involve a better understanding of the multiple interactions between the components of current food systems, to foster solutions that maximise co-benefits with respect to the priorities of Food 2030¹³⁴.

The EU Communication on Boosting Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing in the¹³⁵ EU provides an overview of the application of biotechnologies in several sectors including food and feed. R&I activities in this destination will also contribute to achieving the objectives of the Strategy for European Life Sciences, the EU Biotech Act, and the Bioeconomy Strategy.

¹³⁴ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/document/download/47554adc-dffc-411b-8cd6-b52417514cb3_enThe four priorities of Food2030 are: 1) nutrition and health; 2) climate and environmental sustainability; 3) circularity and resource efficiency; and 4) innovation and empowering communities.

¹³⁵ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/document/download/47554adc-dffc-411b-8cd6-b52417514cb3_en COM(2022) Putting people first, securing sustainable and inclusive growth, unlocking the potential of the EU's outermost regions.

The Destination supports unlocking the unique assets for research and innovation of the EU outermost regions, in line with the EU strategy for outermost regions¹³⁶.

Expected impact: Proposals for topics under this destination should set out credible paths to “**ensuring healthy food and nutrition security by making agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and food systems sustainable, resilient, inclusive and within planetary boundaries**”. More specifically, proposed topics should contribute to one or more of the following **expected impacts**:

- agriculture and food systems contribute to ensuring a secure, safe, sustainable, nutritious, and affordable supply of healthy food in Europe and beyond by fostering its long-term competitiveness, resilience, scalability and sustainability within the boundaries of our planet with the One Health approach;
- farmers are empowered to ensure the competitiveness, resilience and sustainability of the farming sector, through increasing knowledge, tools, innovative solutions, and advice that allow efficient productivity, working for and with nature, preserving and restoring biodiversity within agricultural ecosystems and helping to decarbonise the EU economy;
- sustainable fisheries and aquaculture (in marine, brackish and freshwater) contribute to fair, healthy, resilient and environment-friendly food systems in healthy aquatic ecosystems with thriving diversity of species and habitats providing ecosystem and climate services and triggering growth and jobs’ creation in coastal and rural areas;
- tools are provided so that citizens and communities are empowered to make the sustainable food choices and move towards safe, healthy, nutritious, accessible, affordable and sustainable diets. Insights and advances in life science and digital & data technologies are valorised to deploy solutions in practice across the EU;
- food businesses, including food processing industries and SMEs, are supported to increase their resilience and competitiveness, while ensuring resource efficiency and sustainability, and human, animal and ecosystem health is preserved.

2026

Enabling sustainable farming systems

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-01: Developing innovative phytosanitary treatments for regulated plant pests to support safe international trade

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2026)

¹³⁶ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/document/download/47554adc-dffc-411b-8cd6-b52417514cb3_en COM(2022) Putting people first, securing sustainable and inclusive growth, unlocking the potential of the EU’s outermost regions.

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: To ensure a balanced portfolio, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least also to one application within the area A that is the highest ranked, and one application highest ranked within the area B, provided that the applications attain all thresholds. Applications must clearly indicate the area they are applying to.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹³⁷. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP). The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- innovative cost-effective environmental-friendly phytosanitary treatments for regulated plant pests with proven efficacy and practical applicability are developed and tested;
- science-based guidelines and standardised protocols to support the consistent and efficient application of the developed treatments are available;

¹³⁷ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- enhanced capacity for implementation, including scalability and cost-effectiveness of treatment solutions and engagement of industry and trade actors, regulatory authorities, and third parties involved in testing and application.

Scope: Effective plant health measures play a vital role in protecting agriculture and supporting global food security, safeguarding the environment, forests, and biodiversity, and enabling safe international trade. Among these measures, (post-harvest) phytosanitary treatments¹³⁸—such as vapour, heat, cold, irradiation, and controlled atmosphere—are critical tools to prevent the introduction and spread of regulated plant pests¹³⁹ through imported goods.

However, the current range of available phytosanitary treatments remains limited. In many cases, existing methods lack proven efficacy against specific pests, or scientifically sound protocols are unavailable. Moreover, practical challenges related to the implementation, scalability, potential health and environmental impact of these treatments often hinder their widespread adoption.

This action aims to stimulate innovation in phytosanitary (post-harvest) treatment solutions¹⁴⁰ to be used in trade.

Proposals should:

- develop innovative, cost-effective (post-harvest) phytosanitary treatment(s) to prevent the introduction of pests through imports, with a specific focus on EU quarantine pests¹⁴¹;
- test and validate the proposed treatment(s) considering economic, technical, human health and environmental dimensions;
- assess the cost-effectiveness, feasibility, scalability and practical applicability of the proposed treatment(s) under operational conditions;
- evaluate efficacy and specificity of the treatment(s), establishing scientifically sound and user-friendly protocols and operational guidelines to ensure consistent application, safety and regulatory compliance.

Proposals should either address Area A: treatment(s) applicable to wood and wood products or Area B: post-harvest treatment(s) for fruits and vegetables. The area (A or B) should be clearly indicated on the application.

¹³⁸ Treatment (as phytosanitary measures) is the official procedure for killing, inactivating, removing, rendering infertile or devitalizing regulated pest. IPPC Secretariat. 2024. Glossary of phytosanitary terms. International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures No. 5. Rome. FAO on behalf of the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention

¹³⁹ A pest is defined here as any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent injurious to plants or plant products (EU legislation, Regulation 2016/2031)

¹⁴⁰ See ISPM 28. 2007. Phytosanitary treatments for regulated pests. Rome, IPPC, FAO

¹⁴¹ EU legislation, Regulation 2016/2031 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/2031/oj>

Proposals may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP) to, for instance, test and demonstrate the innovative treatments solutions in diverse contexts involving SMEs.

The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the common agricultural policy, align with the Vision for Agriculture and Food, and support Regulation (EU) 2016/2031 on protective measures against pests of plants.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-02: Tackling pesticide resistance: early detection, management strategies, and foresight

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁴².

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

¹⁴² This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- a holistic and science-based approach to tackling pesticide resistance is developed, providing actionable recommendations to improve crop protection strategies and support evidence-based decision-making at all levels;
- farmers, advisors, and practitioners are empowered with knowledge, tools, and integrated strategies—including innovative environmentally friendly and sustainable alternatives that promote agrobiodiversity—supported by data-driven approaches and robust monitoring systems;
- foresight capacities are enhanced, enabling the anticipation of resistance trends and supporting long-term planning to strengthen the resilience and sustainability of agricultural systems.

Scope: Agriculture and forestry face a growing challenge from the dual threat of a shrinking portfolio of active substances and increasing pests¹⁴³ resistance to treatments. Climate change compounds this issue by enabling pests to survive milder winters, expand their ranges, and increase their exposure to pesticides—accelerating the development of resistance. Addressing this complex issue requires a comprehensive, science-based systemic approach that integrates early detection, adaptive management, and long-term foresight to reduce resistance risks and strengthen the sustainability and resilience of agriculture and forestry. It is also relevant to acknowledge that while pesticides are important short-term solutions, the long-term solutions require shifts in current agriculture or forestry practices and system-level transformations within agri-food systems that would boost the resilience of these production environments, while preserving biodiversity.

Proposals should:

- map resistance risks by assessing the current and projected emergence of pest resistance, considering the declining number of available active substances¹⁴⁴ and the authorised products for different crops;
- develop early detection methods and predictive modelling (including AI-driven approaches) to anticipate and monitor the evolution of pesticide resistance, integrating advanced measurements tools and risk assessment methodologies, notably when products are used at farm level;
- design and evaluate innovative integrated pest and weed management (IPWM) strategies that reduce resistance risks by expanding non-chemical preventive and curative options, optimising the rotation and combination of (agroecological) farming practices, and applying advanced technologies for precise and targeted pesticide use, while capitalising on the results of previous and ongoing initiatives;

¹⁴³ A pest is defined here as any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent injurious to plants or plant products (EU legislation, Regulation 2016/2031).

¹⁴⁴ https://food.ec.europa.eu/plants/pesticides/eu-pesticides-database_en

- innovate storage and handling practices to reduce resistance pressure during post-harvest stages;
- support foresight activities to anticipate, mitigate and prevent resistance impacts by exploring interactions among technological, environmental, and socio-economic drivers, assessing planned resistance-management strategies against various future scenarios, establishing long-term resistance monitoring, and integrating foresight outputs into decision-making and adaptive management through collaboration across research, farming and forestry sectors, industry, stakeholder networks, and policymakers;
- enhance capacity-building, stakeholder engagement and communication through awareness-raising, sensitisation, education, and the co-creation of solutions with end-users.

Proposals must implement the multi-actor approach including a range of actors to ensure that knowledge and needs from various sectors are brought together.

Proposals should capitalise on relevant research findings, knowledge, solutions and tools, from past and ongoing projects and collaborate with ongoing initiatives. In addition, proposals should consider the activities of international committees on pesticide resistance management.

The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the objectives of the common agricultural policy, the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive¹⁴⁵, and align with the Vision for Agriculture and Food, and support the Commission Communication on: Building the future with nature: Boosting Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing in the EU¹⁴⁶.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-03: Boosting the competitiveness of protein crops in Europe

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following

¹⁴⁵ DIRECTIVE 2009/128/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02009L0128-20091125>

¹⁴⁶ COM (2024)137 final- [EUR-Lex - 52024DC0137 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

<i>conditions</i>	exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁴⁷. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP). The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- the competitive production of protein crops is boosted across Europe, by developing and testing sustainable and cost-effective innovations tailored to different farming systems, regions and contexts;
- farmers profitability is boosted via the integration of protein crops into diversified farming systems, the development of local value chains and the valorisation of protein crops' by-products;
- plant-based proteins production in Europe is increased, contributing to greater economical and environmental sustainability (including agrobiodiversity) and strengthening the European food and feed autonomy.

Scope: Protein crops¹⁴⁸ can play a key role in advancing sustainable and resilient European agriculture offering environmental, agronomic, economic and nutritional benefits. Despite their potential, the production and use of protein crops in Europe remains limited and require targeted efforts to scale up. Several barriers continue to hinder their development, including the lack of adapted local protein crops for the different European environmental conditions,

¹⁴⁷ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

¹⁴⁸ In this topic, protein crops refer to crops that provide a high concentration of protein and are important for both human consumption and animal feed.

the limited availability of effective and safe pest management practices and tools, the inadequacy of the machinery used in their production, poor infrastructure for processing and marketing, the absence of well-established local value chains, etc. A key element for a wide adoption of protein crops by farmers is demonstrating their potential benefits (economic competitiveness, environmental impacts, social engagement, adaptability) that enhance their market value and appeal.

Proposals should:

- develop innovative solutions tailored to different conditions across the EU (agro-climatic, edaphic, socio-economic), to address key challenges hindering the inclusion of protein crops into diverse cropping systems. This should be done at farm level (addressing for instance yield, quality, resource optimization and resilience of protein crops under varying climatic and soil conditions) as well as the whole agri-food value chain (such as access to marketing outlets), increasing the competitiveness of protein crops;
- promote circular bioeconomy by valorising protein crops' by-products to develop economically viable and resilient farming models that enhance farmer profitability and reduce production risks. Explore and demonstrate innovative pathways for converting protein crops' by-products into safe feed and food sources. If relevant, build on already identified protein crop by-products and value chains to develop concrete case studies that showcase practical circular and successful business models;
- develop or adapt innovative and scalable integrated pest¹⁴⁹ and weed management strategies tailored for protein crops to enhance crop resilience, soil health, and productivity across a wide range of production systems and climate conditions, while limiting the impact on the environment and ensuring food safety;
- conduct a comprehensive cost-benefit evaluation of the proposed approaches and solutions to ensure overall feasibility across diverse farming system;
- explore, test and adapt available machinery for sowing, field management, harvesting and postharvest operations, tailored to different protein crops. Consider, if relevant, the integration of digital/AI tools. Propose viable avenues for increasing access to this specific equipment, including through cooperatives/producers' associations or collaborating with SMEs/startups;
- support farmers to transition to the incorporation of protein crops in the European production systems by widely sharing practical knowledge through existing advisory networks, digital platforms or capacity building programmes and potentially deployed at large scale. Create diverse practice-oriented dissemination materials, such as audiovisuals, brochures, presentations, that showcase innovations in a creative way, incorporating artistic elements for engaging storytelling.

¹⁴⁹ A pest is defined here as any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent injurious to plants or plant products (EU legislation, Regulation 2016/2031)

Proposals must implement the multi-actor approach including a range of actors to ensure that knowledge and needs from various sectors are brought together. An active participation of farmers, retailers, SMEs and consumers is encouraged, in local protein crops value chains, through the development of near-farm activities to drive local innovation. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP) to, for instance, engage SME's or startups to develop, test and demonstrate the proposed innovative solutions.

Proposals should address diverse farming systems/approaches, including conventional and organic farming.

Proposals should include a dedicated task, appropriate resources and a plan on how they will collaborate with other relevant projects in particular those to be funded under the topic "HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-05: Enhancing farmers profitability and resilience through innovations for diversified crops and value chains". Moreover, proposals should build on existing knowledge and the results of other relevant projects funded under previous work programmes.

The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the objectives of the common agricultural policy, the EU Action Plan on the Development of Organic Production¹⁵⁰, align with the Vision for Agriculture and Food, and support the EU's ambition to increase plant protein production and reduce reliance on imports.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-04: Accelerating the development of breeding tools for perennial crops, specifically fruits and nuts

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the

¹⁵⁰ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0141R%2801%29>

	Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁵¹. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP). The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- cutting-edge, scalable and accessible tools and methods are available to accelerate the breeding of productive, qualitative, climate-smart and environment-friendly perennial crops, enhancing the competitiveness of the sector and fostering biodiversity;
- researchers and breeders have access to user-friendly and innovative plant breeding tools that allow faster enhancement of sustainability traits, including pest and disease resistance, stable yield and quality, water use efficiency and resistance to abiotic stressors.

Scope: Despite the crucial role that woody perennial crops such as fruits and nuts play in our diets, as well as their importance for global economies, biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation, traditional breeding methods for these crops remain slow and labour-intensive due to long gestation periods (juvenile phase) and complex genetics. This hinders the timely development of perennial breeds to cope with challenges like climate change, pests and diseases, impacting among others crop productivity. Developing user-friendly tools that can be effectively transferred to breeders will boost the impact and efficiency of breeding programs for perennial crops.

Proposals should:

- develop new and/or improved tools and methods aimed at shortening generation time and overall breeding cycle in perennial crops, while enhancing sustainability traits such as pest and disease resistance, yield stability, quality and adaptation to climate changes;
- assess the scalability and accessibility of the tools and methods and ensure the provision of the required dataset and info for their effective implementation;
- implement genomic selection tools and models – taking into account interactions between genotypes and environment - into actual breeding schemes for perennial crops and study the empirical results of these models to determine their accuracy, reliability, and applicability and improve their effectiveness for commercial settings;

¹⁵¹ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- validate the tools across different species or breeding objectives to ensure reliability and replicability and develop standardized protocols and guidelines for their use in consultation with breeders to facilitate the effective adoption and utilisation of the tools/methods;
- evaluate the newly developed tools and methods for potential trade-offs, unintended outcomes and potential effects on the environment.

All breeding approaches are in the scope of this topic. Proposals should target fruit and/or nut crops¹⁵².

Proposals may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP) to, for instance, cross-test the tools developed in different species and facilitate the engagement of SMEs for testing in commercial settings.

Proposals should build on the results of relevant projects funded under Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe and ensure collaboration with relevant ongoing projects.

Proposals are encouraged to consider, where relevant, the data, expertise and services offered by European research infrastructure¹⁵³ in the environment, biological and food domains.

The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food by promoting plant breeding innovations, including new genomic techniques (NGTs), the Commission communication on: Building the future with nature: Boosting Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing in the EU¹⁵⁴ and the Life Sciences Strategy.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-05: Boosting circularity and diversification strategies of terrestrial livestock production systems

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following

¹⁵² According to the FAO Indicative Crop Classification (ICC) presented in the [World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020](#) (Annex 4 - Group 3, under the voice 'Fruit and nuts'), with the exclusion of berries.

¹⁵³ The catalogue of European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) research infrastructures portfolio can be browsed from ESFRI website <https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/>

¹⁵⁴ COM (2024)137 final

<i>conditions</i>	exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: To ensure a balanced portfolio covering systems and products, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least also to one application within the wool value chain (i.e. fiber animal production systems) that is the highest ranked, and one application highest ranked within another relevant value chain, provided that the applications attain all thresholds.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁵⁵.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- farmers, rural communities, and agrifood or animal by-product value chain operators benefit from improved practices, technologies and validated tools that promote sustainability through the implementation of diversification and circularity in livestock farming systems, contributing to agricultural biodiversity;
- public authorities, consumers and other actors of the value chain are provided with evidence-based information on the socio-economic-environmental impacts of diversification and circularity strategies in the livestock farming systems to support their choices;
- tailored collective actions are implemented to support the organization of farmers, producers, rural communities and other value chain stakeholders into cooperatives, associations or community networks to enhance collaboration, resources sharing, market access, bargaining power, and sustainable development.

¹⁵⁵ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Scope: Boosting circularity and diversification strategies of livestock production systems by integrating for example diverse animal breeds and species, multiple animal products and by-products, and sustainable land-use approaches like mixed crop-livestock systems and agroforestry can help to reduce environmental and climate impact, to increase biodiversity in agricultural landscapes, to minimize waste, and to enhance overall farming system resilience to environmental and economic shocks. Such strategies can provide alternative revenue streams (e.g., meat, dairy, wool, eggs, wood, fruit, manure, ecosystem services/carbon credits), improve farmers' income stability, reduce dependency on external inputs and on single-product markets, and create more sustainable farms and rural economies.

Farmers are increasingly interested in diverse and circular livestock farming strategies, but the efficiency, profitability, trade-offs, interactions, and co-benefits of these strategies vary by region, farm type, and economic conditions. The aim is to assess the real short- and long-term impact and scalability of these strategies in different pedo-climatic regions and in various terrestrial livestock systems, including organic farming. It is important to investigate local agricultural and agro-industrial resources, including residues, by-products and co-products that are not valorized to produce energy or bio-based chemicals for the wider bioeconomy (such as bioenergy, biopolymers/biomaterials), but instead remain within the farming system for circular uses such as animal feed, soil amendments, organic fertilizers, and other innovative uses.

Proposals should address all the following activities:

- develop and validate innovative strategies and tools, including monitoring systems, to optimize diversification and circularity in terrestrial livestock farming systems at multiple levels (e.g., animals, products, by-products, farm, land) and scales (spatial, organizational and temporal). This includes valorizing resources, by-products, residues and waste, closing the nutrient loops, and enhancing resilience, sustainability, biodiversity and profitability while considering the specific local context and needs of rural areas, and ensuring that food safety is maintained;
- foster the utilization of locally available value-added products, co-products and by-products from terrestrial livestock farming systems, taking into account the EU regulatory framework and relevant standards, while assessing synergies, trade-offs, and possible interactions between resource use, efficiency, circularity and sustainability;
- enhance exchange among the participants along the value chain of information, good practices and innovations on circularity and diversification, including logistic, governance and business models that help in sharing local resources, aggregating supply, improving the bargaining power of farmers through cooperative structures and preserving the cultural heritage related to traditional local rural production;
- analyze the social and economic viability of the diversified and circular livestock farming systems, with particular attention to market trends and value chain analysis, including traceability, and their contribution to sustainable rural development;

- provide scientific evidence and policy advice that support the assessment of the current EU regulatory framework relevant to the sector and to existing or novel products derived from animal and agricultural by-products.

Proposals should either address Area A: any terrestrial livestock production system or Area B: production system on the wool value chain (i.e. fiber animal production systems). The area (A or B) should be clearly indicated on the application.

The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the EU Green Deal's objectives for resilient and sustainable agri-food systems, the EU biodiversity strategy, the Circular Economy Action Plan, the Vision for Agriculture and Food, the EU climate policy and the EU Action Plan for the Development of Organic production¹⁵⁶.

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure adequate involvement of the main stakeholders involved in animal husbandry in Europe, including farmers, shepherds and relevant organisations notably in the livestock sectors, territorial planners, advisors, private sector/industry (e.g. processors, retailers, distributors), policy-makers, consumers, etc.

Proposals should capitalise on relevant research findings and tools, included those developed under previous research projects, where relevant.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-06: Advanced innovative solutions for improved competitiveness and sustainability in controlled environment agriculture (CEA)

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Technology</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-7 by the end of the project –

¹⁵⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0141R%2801%29>

<i>Readiness Level</i>	see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁵⁷. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP). The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- farmers are supported in their transition into innovative controlled environment farming techniques and decision support tools for sustainable growth optimisation strategies;
- the competitiveness and sustainability (including climate mitigation and adaptation) in controlled environment agriculture are improved benefiting all relevant actors.

Scope: Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) refers to any form of agriculture that controls and optimises environmental conditions such as temperature, humidity, carbon dioxide, light or nutrient concentration. Examples of CEA include greenhouses, vertical farms, grow rooms, building-integrated agriculture, hydroponics, aquaponics, aeroponics, as well as other innovative farming practices - both off land and land based - where technological advancements enable precise regulation of growing conditions farming.

By developing innovative farming techniques that integrate the latest technological advancements including artificial intelligence (AI), this research will provide a competitive and sustainable transformation in response to global food security and sustainability challenges. Furthermore, it will also empower farmers and key stakeholders in the agricultural primary sector by enabling them to adopt sustainable, efficient, profitable, circular, and low-emission farming practices. By leveraging cutting-edge technology and AI-driven solutions, the activities will contribute to the overarching goals of climate neutrality and climate resilience, reinforcing the EU's commitment to a sustainable agricultural future.

Proposals should:

¹⁵⁷ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- develop and assess advanced cost-effective innovative and sustainable solutions (including nature-based solutions) to address the key challenges (including climate change related and environmental) for crop optimisation in CEA. The assessment should address, among other, crop health and yield, energy efficiency, water use efficiency, nutrient management, environmental conditions, cost-effectiveness, automation and technology integration, sustainability and environmental impact, food safety, pest and disease management, scalability and adaptability;
- develop data-driven decision-making smart automation and precision farming techniques, as well as predictive analytics for plant growth optimisation (e.g. via AI modelling);
- explore appropriate new business and cooperation models adapted to proposed solutions, taking into account organisation and distribution concepts, and marketability of the resulting products. Consider requirements from relevant EU regulatory frameworks including where relevant needs for pre-market authorisation;
- foster knowledge sharing including by training to test and adopt the innovative solutions, and informed advice for improved competitiveness and sustainability of CEA.

Proposals should develop innovative solutions in both conventional and organic production systems. The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food, the Common Agricultural Policy, the EU Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production¹⁵⁸, the European Green Deal policies dealing with environment protection and climate change, and the Apply AI Strategy.

Activities will fall under the concept of the 'multi-actor approach' and allow for adequate involvement of relevant actors including farmers, SMEs, start-ups, scientists and developers.

To effectively transition these innovations into the market, SMEs will actively be involved in this process. Activities are expected to achieve Technological Readiness Levels (TRL) 6-7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Proposals may involve financial support to third parties, particularly for SMEs providing and/or developing testing, or validating the proposed innovative technologies/solutions. A maximum 30% of EU funding should be allocated to this purpose.

Proposals should capitalise on relevant research findings from past and ongoing research projects and especially seek synergy with the other project to be selected under this topic and with the project to be selected from the topic HORIZON-CL6-2025-02-FARM2FORK-08: Exploring the potential of controlled environment agriculture (CEA).

¹⁵⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0141R%2801%29>

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-07: Strengthening the EU plant protection ecosystem for a future-proof agriculture

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁵⁹.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- EU-wide dialogue and cooperation on plant protection challenges and solutions is improved for policymakers, researchers, innovators and other stakeholders;

¹⁵⁹ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- policymakers, researchers, innovators and other stakeholders participate in a co-creative, multi-actor environment to jointly identify and address research and innovation needs towards stronger alignment of R&I efforts, guided by shared priorities and evidence-based insights;
- coordinated transition plans and broader uptake by all actors of sustainable, scalable and biodiversity friendly plant protection solutions across the EU.

Scope: The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the EU's Vision for Agriculture and Food by strengthening the plant protection ecosystem and supporting a future-proof, resilient agricultural sector.

The EU ambition to reduce the use of harmful pesticides is important for the long-term resilience of farming, health and environmental protection. However, the introduction of alternatives in the form of biological or innovative low-risk plant protection products has not followed with the same pace as the withdrawal of active substances from the EU market. If this trend continues, it could affect the EU's ability to ensure food security and sovereignty.

To ensure a smooth transition, coordinated action is needed. Strengthening dialogue, guiding research, and supporting innovation will equip policymakers and sectors to adapt and build a resilient, nature and biodiversity-friendly crop protection system.

Proposals should:

- establish or reinforce an inclusive, multi-actor platform for an EU-wide network to facilitate dialogue, knowledge exchange, cooperation among policymakers, regulatory bodies, farmer organisations, researchers, industry actors, and other stakeholders;
- provide guidance to identify critical uses of active substances at risk of withdrawal, assess potential agronomic and economic impacts and map existing alternatives, including those that support agro-biodiversity, and research needs;
- facilitate targeted discussions to prioritise the most affected crops and regions, define pathways for the development and adoption of alternative solutions with a priority on issues where a risk of deadlock situation has been identified as a result of the withdrawal of harmful pesticides, and shape strategic research and innovation agendas;
- support agricultural sectors in co-developing actionable plans—from early-stage research to field-level deployment—that address the impacts of substance withdrawals and foster mutual learning across sectors and EU Member States.

Proposals should consider the perspectives and needs of the different 27 EU Member States to ensure a high level of representation. Proposals must implement the multi-actor approach including a range of actors to ensure that knowledge and needs from various sectors are brought together.

Proposals should capitalise on relevant research findings and tools, included those developed under previous research projects and collaborate with projects funded in HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-02: Tackling pesticide resistance: early detection, management strategies, and foresight.

Enabling sustainable fisheries and aquaculture

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-08: Advancing basic knowledge and developing tools for sustainable management of key migratory fish species

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 14.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- improved knowledge' on life history parameters of key migratory fish species, through basic and applied research on key aspects of biology, ecology, connectivity, conservation, management and exploitation;
- better knowledge of the extent of anthropogenic impacts on key migratory fish species through their entire life cycle within a context of a changing climate regime;
- enhanced capacity of national and regional authorities (and other stakeholders) to develop and implement effective and efficient tools for the protection, restoration and resource management of key migratory fish species and/or their habitats, and for the appropriate assessment of the effectiveness of measures put in place to allow necessary feedback and adaptive management.

Scope: The world's migratory species are in decline, and their global extinction risk is increasing, with a growing part of this acceleration linked to climate change and a deterioration of their migration routes. Migratory marine fish stocks - ranging across a wide size spectrum - are vital for ecosystem functioning and food security, as their long-term

persistence depends on management approaches that balance sustainability with ecological resilience in a system of global change. Furthermore, diadromous fish species play a critical role in land-sea interactions across their ranges, providing unique financial and non-financial societal goods and benefits to society and nature, such as marine-derived nutrient flows to rivers and lands, and exceptional cultural values. Ability of these species to connect and utilize a variety of habitats over long distances, makes them 'umbrella' species, meaning conservation measures for these species benefit broader ecosystems. Protecting these species and sustainably managing the bio-resources they provide across national and international waters, and often multi-national catchments require a holistic and coordinated approach, integrating local attitudes, uses, knowledge, policies and conservation measures, and adapted to local circumstances where necessary.

Proposals should:

- develop methods and methodologies, where relevant at regional scale or global scale, to assess the effectiveness of conservation and management measures that will allow for adaptive management.
- develop tools and practices to reduce anthropogenic mortality factors for these species and in all key lifetime aquatic habitats and to avoid fragmented non-coordinated management across sectors and countries.
- generate new knowledge on the interplay between climatic and non-climatic pressures, particularly related to fisheries of marine species, or in relation to infrastructure impeding connectivity (e.g. hydropower, pumping stations, flood control) and pollution for the diadromous species.
- assess the impact of emerging pressures on the migratory species of interest.
- assess the ecosystem services and the resulting societal goods and benefits provided by long-ranging migrating and/or transboundary land-sea-connecting species.
- strengthen data collection systems covering all life-history stages and successive key habitats of these migratory fish, to improve monitoring coordination across regions and countries.
- incorporate relevant stakeholders and end-users from the design phase through development and implementation, ensuring that outputs can be readily applied by them.

The scope includes migratory marine and diadromous species of commercial interest, with particular emphasis on endangered species and endangered local populations. Where applicable, considerations related to farming of migratory species should be addressed.

Proposals should involve the effective contribution of social sciences and humanities disciplines. Citizen science is encouraged at all stages of the research activities for this topic.

Projects are expected to contribute to the EU Common Fisheries Policy, the EU Ocean Pact, the Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture with a 2040 perspective, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the Habitats Directives, the Water Framework Directive, the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 and the Food 2030 policy framework, the Nature Restoration Regulation.

Transforming food systems for health, sustainability and inclusion

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-09: Sustainable and healthy diets for cardiovascular diseases prevention with the support of digital applications

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: Subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to start from TRL 5 in order to achieve TRL 7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁶⁰ .

¹⁶⁰ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- identified the effects of sustainable and healthy diets on the gut microbiome and on the cardiovascular system (as well as through possible interlinks between the two) using AI and digital tools by considering different groups of the population (children, adults and older population) as well as gender;
- increased knowledge generated through the use of AI and existing digital tools on how to help people improving their eating habits by choosing healthy diets to prevent cardiovascular disease. Development of a new tool or scaling up of an existing tool that patients/individuals can use to guide them in their day to day eating habits with a personalised approach. Identified robust economic cost-benefit analysis, together with real end-user involvement and demonstration;
- the scientific communication on the link between sustainable and healthy diet (which also includes food ingredients and processing food technology) and the prevention of cardiovascular diseases is translated into digital health solutions developed by SMEs and start-ups;
- improved understanding of the link between the decrease of specific nutritional risk factors and the increase of beneficial nutritional intake in the prevention of cardiovascular diseases, through the support of digital solutions developed by SMEs and start-ups.

Scope: The topic is relevant to the EU policies related to the ‘Healthier Together’ initiative, the Commission Communication on the European Health Union¹⁶¹ and the Council conclusions on the improvement of cardiovascular health in the European Union¹⁶², the R&I Food 2030 framework and the Strategy for European Life Sciences.

Proposals should address all the following activities:

- investigate the host-microbiota interactions, standardised biomarkers, involving inflammatory and metabolic pathways or other pathways to elucidate the relationship between changes in the diet, the gut microbiome and cardiovascular risk. Develop and test nutrition approaches based on microbiome profiles of different populations (based on gender, age, genetic background). Identify the effects of sustainable and healthy diets on the cardiovascular system using AI and digital tools by considering different groups of the population (based on gender, children, adults and older population);
- map the existing digital health solutions (including existing hubs) related to the reduction of cardiovascular diseases linked to unhealthy diets and nutrition;

¹⁶¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: The European Health Union: acting together for people’s health (COM/2024/206 final)

¹⁶² [Cardiovascular health: Council calls for more robust efforts to help prevent cardiovascular diseases](#)

- develop and provide user friendly digital solutions for authorities, national institutes, and healthcare and nutritional professionals which also consider the cost and the benefits also for the end-users. These solutions will also benefit patients in the monitoring of cardiovascular diseases and individuals identified at risk to develop the disease;
- ensure that SMEs and start-ups will facilitate the successful deployment and commercialization of digital solutions and will be actively involved in expanding data integration across various healthcare systems and in analysing health data to provide insights on the link between diet and cardiovascular health.

Proposals should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines. Experts in behavioural sciences and psychology, for instance, might help better understanding the perception and uptake of digital solutions, the diet consumption aspect and the eating habits of different demographic groups.

The multi-actor approach is encouraged. Proposals should include industry and innovative SMEs in the consortia and ensure an early engagement of authorities, national institutes, healthcare and nutritional professionals, patients as well as experts on advanced digital tools for the co-design, testing and adoption of the digital solutions and tool.

Projects are encouraged to explore complementarities and exploit potential synergies with the projects funded under the topics HORIZON-HLTH-2026-01-DISEASE-11: Understanding of gender-specific mechanisms of cardiovascular diseases: determinants, risk factors and pathways and HORIZON-HLTH-2027-01-TOOL-01: Development of predictive biomarkers of disease progression and treatment response by using AI methodologies for chronic non-communicable diseases, once information on the funded projects is available.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-10: Sustainable and healthy diets based on health status and socio-economic risk factors of ageing population

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 2.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁶³ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- improved identification of specific dietary needs (including foods, beverages, food ingredients and nutrients) for the older population (above 65 years old) with a positive impact on their health, wellbeing, and prevention of any diseases (including those related to ageing);
- better understanding of sustainable food production and processing, and of the social and economic impact of healthy diets on disease prevention among the older population;
- improved knowledge in Member States and Associated Countries on how to develop at national, regional and local level the diet provided to the older population, in particular to those living in home cares or other structures hosting them as well as to people living alone;
- improved identification of innovative easy-to-chew food products enriched with specific nutrients and bioactive natural compounds, that can be included into the diet of the older population.

Scope: The topic is relevant to the EU policies related to ageing such as the Green Paper on Ageing adopted on 27 January 2021¹⁶⁴, the Commission Communication on Demographic change in Europe: a toolbox for action¹⁶⁵, Principle 18 of the European Pillar of Social rights on long-term care and the R&I Food 2030 framework.

Proposals should address all the following activities:

- map data on the older population in Europe based on their gender, frailty, social (loneliness, disabilities, etc) and economic vulnerabilities (low income, etc);
- develop and provide to Member States and Associated Countries a healthy and affordable diet programme (e.g. guidance, recommendation, etc) for the older population (including those in care homes) affected by malnutrition or at a high risk to develop malnutrition;

¹⁶³ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

¹⁶⁴ [Green paper on ageing - Fostering solidarity and responsibility between generations - Publications Office of the EU](#)

¹⁶⁵ eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52023DC0577

- develop and provide to Member States and Associated Countries nutrient and tailored food dietary recommendations to be used in home care and other national, regional and local institutions or infrastructures responsible for the care of older people as well as for older people living alone;
- develop and provide prevention campaigns and post-recovery programmes for the older population affected by any disease due to unhealthy diets;
- develop and provide campaigns which consider the sustainability of food categories produced and processed with impact on the health of older population.

Proposals should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines. The support of experts in economic and psychological disciplines for older population is relevant for the scope of the proposals.

Proposals should consider as far as relevant the results achieved under the FP7 projects: “New dietary strategies addressing the specific needs of elderly population for a healthy ageing in Europe”¹⁶⁶ and “Optimised food products for elderly populations”¹⁶⁷.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-11: Integrating a holistic perspective in microbiome research for resilient, competitive and sustainable food systems

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 5.00 and 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 11.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part. Subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks.

¹⁶⁶ [New dietary strategies addressing the specific needs of elderly population for an healthy ageing in Europe | NU-AGE | Project | Fact sheet | FP7 | CORDIS | European Commission](#)

¹⁶⁷ [Optimised food products for elderly populations | OPTIFEL | Project | News & Multimedia | FP7 | CORDIS | European Commission](#)

<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to start from TRL 2-3 in order to achieve TRL 5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁶⁸ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- a better systems-level understanding through a One Health approach of the complex interactions and functional impacts of microbiomes across different hosts (plants, humans, animals...), environments (water, food matrices...), and interconnected ecosystems;
- solutions are identified for resilient, competitive, and sustainable food systems that cover e.g. food security, agrifood systems durability and resilience, industrial applications, nutrition, health, and relevant aspects of biodiversity, climate change and the environment;
- synergies are identified between existing European research infrastructures for sample biobanking and data-gathering/gathering/sharing to facilitate the exchange, pooling and integrated analysis of integrated microbiome (meta)-data, promoting inter and trans-disciplinary collaboration among different stakeholders under the FAIR principles.

Scope: Microbiomes hold immense potential for food systems applications, but microbiomes are often studied in siloes or one ecosystem at a time. Unlocking the functional diversity of food microbiomes to help develop innovative applications requires a systems approach¹⁶⁹. The topic is relevant to the EU policies related to the Commission communication on: Building the future with nature: Boosting Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing in the EU¹⁷⁰, the Life Science Strategy, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the Zero Pollution Action Plan, the EU strategy on research and technology infrastructure, the R&I Food 2030

¹⁶⁸ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

¹⁶⁹ Meisner, A., Wepner, B., Kostic, T., van Overbeek, L.S., Bunthof, C. J., de Souza, R. S. C., Olivares, M., Sanz, Y., Lange, L., Fischer, D., Sessitsch, A., Smidt, H. (2022). Calling for a systems approach in microbiome research and innovation. Current Opinion in Biotechnology, 73, 171–178. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copbio.2021.08.003>

¹⁷⁰ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/document/download/47554adc-dffc-411b-8cd6-b52417514cb3_en

Framework and the policies related to the digital transition (e.g. AI Act, etc) and contributes to climate action and biodiversity goals.

Proposals should address all the following activities:

- establish a holistic system approach to study the microbiome, and its interaction with its host and/or environment, its function and contribution to ecosystem(s) functions, connecting inter and trans-disciplinary fields of science (e.g. microbiology, ecology, AI and bioinformatics, biotechnology, synthetic/molecular biology, agronomy, plant sciences, etc);
- investigate existing and new supporting technologies such as multi-omics technologies, high-throughput sampling/phenotyping systems, predictive models, AI, federated learning, cultivation methods and/or *in-vitro* validated models (e.g. organoids, organ-on-a-chip, genetic and metabolic engineering) for application in integrated microbiome studies;
- establish further synergies between existing infrastructures (for instance, ELIXIR, MIRRI, BBMRI-ERIC, EOSC, etc.) to enhance their capacity to integrate and valorise integrated microbiome data (integrating samples and associated (meta)-data from diverse sources) as well as considering the integration of other environmental, agricultural, nutritional or climate datasets;
- provide references strains and/or samples (e.g. for food safety or holobiont selection), standard protocols, operating procedures and quality control measures through the existing biobanks and data-repositories to support and facilitate further microbiome studies.

Proposals must follow a multi-actor approach, engaging researchers, businesses (including SMEs and startups), public authorities and policy makers, research infrastructures and civil society to co-develop solutions.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-12: Leveraging R&I knowledge on microbiome

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 2.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁷¹.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- provides a microbiome one-stop-shop containing resources and knowledge (information on microbiome R&I landscape, databases, best practices, risk assessments and food safety, aspects related to the environment and biodiversity, policy briefs...) for stakeholders involved in microbiome R&I (researchers, policymakers and regulators);
- guidance for policymakers focusing on the integrated link between microbiome and its interconnection with human health, climate, environment, agriculture and food systems (emphasising the One Health perspective);
- enhanced integration and coordination between member states and associated countries on microbiome research and innovation within a One Health context, encompassing all kinds of microbiomes.

Scope: Microbiome research, adopting a holistic approach through a One Health perspective, has gained traction recently but research remains fragmented and there is a need for a coordination body that monitors research in this sector and steer research efforts in a strategic direction. Nevertheless, regulatory requirements remain one of the biggest challenges translating microbiome research to innovative solutions and such body would reinsure continuity of regulatory harmonisation efforts, conducted by previous and existing initiatives.

The topic is relevant to the EU policies related to the Commission communication on: Building the future with nature: Boosting Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing in the EU, the EU life science strategy, the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, the zero pollution action plan, the EU strategy on research and technology infrastructure, the R&I food 2030 framework, and the digital transition policies (e.g., AI Act, etc).

Proposals should address all the following activities:

¹⁷¹ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- establishment of a hub acting as a resource centre and a monitoring body of the microbiome R&I and regulatory landscape; fostering and strengthening synergies between existing coordination efforts and national initiatives in alignment with EU microbiome initiatives;
- mapping of all ongoing and past EU-based microbiome projects, EU research and technology infrastructures, and EU initiatives (public and private); identify overlaps, synergies, and gaps across all microbiome domains notably to inform future funding and policy directions;
- collaborating with relevant ongoing initiatives (e.g. the World Microbiome Partnership), EU-funded projects (e.g. HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-11), and build on outcomes of legacy EU microbiome projects, among others, to ensure coordinated action, avoid duplication of efforts, build on existing achievements, and foster financial synergies by identifying microbiome R&I funding gaps;
- monitoring and assessing the microbiome R&I impact on the population, the environment, biodiversity, the EU economy and competitiveness through specific indicators targeting EU and national policies priorities with an emphasis on One Health principles and across all microbiome types.

Targeted international cooperation

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-13: Boosting plant health and reducing losses on farm and during storage for sustainable growth in Africa (FNSSA)

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part. International organisations with headquarters in a Member State or

	Associated Country are exceptionally eligible for funding. The following additional eligibility criteria apply: due to the specific challenge of this topic, in addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the General Annexes, consortia must include at least three independent legal entities established in an African Union member state*. Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in all African Union member states* are exceptionally eligible for Union funding. * "African Union member states" includes countries whose membership has been temporarily suspended.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁷².

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- enhanced ability of agricultural actors in Africa to manage plant pest risks sustainably, contribute to the strengthening of food security while addressing climate and biodiversity challenges;
- agricultural actors identify and implement practices to prevent and reduce crop losses due to plant pests pre-harvest and during storage in Africa.

Scope: Plant pests affecting crops in the field and/or harvests during storage are an important burden to food security, contributing to significant food losses in Africa. These can also affect internal markets and trade. It is thus crucial to tackle the impact of plant pests in an integrated manner, while ensuring this is done through technologies and practices fostering agricultural sustainability, resilience to climate change and safeguarding biodiversity.

Proposals should:

- advance knowledge on biology, mechanism of disease, spread dynamics, and climate change impacts on key plant pests across different African agro-ecosystems, considering also climate change impacts;

¹⁷² This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- develop cost-effective, environmentally friendly methods, tools and strategies that are safe to consumers for the sustainable management of the most impactful plant pests in Africa, aiming to minimise crop losses both at pre-harvest and during storage of harvests;
- foster agroecological integrated pest management practices aiming at reducing the impact of plant pests;
- improve productivity and the quality of crop products in the African agricultural systems by reducing the impact of plant pests.

Insects, weeds, fungi, bacteria, and viruses that can damage crops fall within the scope of this topic and are considered plant pests. Applicants are expected to explain and justify the choice of pest(s) in alignment with the proposal's objectives and the topic's expected outcomes.

The actions funded under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to EU Vision for Agriculture and Food, the Global Gateway strategy, contribute to the African Union-EU High Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation and to the respective R&I partnerships on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) and on Climate Change and Sustainable Energy. Projects under this topic are relevant for the climate objectives of the African Union and the EU, and for the commitments of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Proposals should contribute to the implementation of the short-term and medium-term actions outlined in the AU-EU Innovation Agenda¹⁷³ in the priority area of Green Transition (notably action (4) among short-term actions and (1) and (3) for medium-term actions), and aim to translate R&I efforts into tangible business, products, services, development and employment opportunities in Africa and Europe.

Furthermore, when relevant proposals are encouraged to seek connections with Regional Multi-actors Research Networks on Agroecology supported by the EC in Africa¹⁷⁴.

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' to ensure the adequate involvement of the public authorities, advisory services, farmer organisations, and industry.

Proposals should adopt an inclusive approach that respects and integrates local knowledge and practices alongside technological and scientific expertise, where indigenous insights are enriched by innovative approaches and new technologies through mutual learning.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-14: Green Transition Food Processing Africa

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2026)

¹⁷³ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/new-eu-africa-innovation-agenda-enhance-cooperation-science-technology-and-innovation-2023-07-20_en

¹⁷⁴ [Regional Multi-Actor Research Network on Agroecology to Support Regional Centres of Excellence related to the Green Transition](#); [RMRN Western Africa: CORAF & Cheikh-Anta-Diop de Dakar for Western Africa](#); [RMRN Eastern Africa : Icipe and partners](#)

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 5.00 and 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 11.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B. International organisations with headquarters in a Member State or Associated Country are exceptionally eligible for funding. The following additional eligibility criteria apply: due to the specific challenge of this topic, in addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the General Annexes, consortia must include at least three independent legal entities established in an African Union member state*. The places of establishment of at least two of these legal entities must be in the same region, as defined by the African Union: see https://au.int/en/member_states/countryprofiles2. Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in all African Union member states* are exceptionally eligible for Union funding. * "African Union member states" includes countries whose membership has been temporarily suspended.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁷⁵. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP). The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- food processing facilities in Africa which target underutilized crops to deliver safe and healthy nutrition avoiding over processing, such as pulses and soy, millets, yams, cassava for some regions, fish and fisheries products, or food chains of high value for local markets or export, like the cocoa chain and fruits, both organic and conventional, have improved their operations investing in safe storage practices (avoiding mycotoxins and pesticide residues), quality assurance and control, innovative careful processing techniques and sustainable and reusable packaging, by using results from life sciences and biotechnologies, such as fermentation, in processes based on renewable energy;
- post-harvest food losses and waste are reduced, by using by-products in the process, following circular approaches in support of the EU bioeconomy strategy through new and innovative techniques and best practices and food safety ready for scale-up by complementary instruments of the EU Global Gateway Strategy such as the AU-EU Innovation Agenda and the EU International Partnerships such as DeSIRA+.

Scope: Proposals should:

- promote start-ups and other innovative SMEs by providing a space for mentoring and accelerating innovative business concepts, including social innovation and upscaling in view of African or European food business entrepreneurs with special consideration of diversity involving women, young entrepreneurs and the diaspora using cascading funding opportunities;
- lead to healthy, safe and nutritious food. New processing opportunities will increase biodiversity with increased market opportunities for underutilized crops. They should link to other projects of the AU-EU Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture Priority (FNSSA) in particular the CEA-First coordination and support action and the International Research Consortium. It should build on results of previous projects including linkages to projects funded under the AU-EU priority on “Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (CCSE)”.

Proposals must follow the multi-actor approach, by combining researchers, food processors (including the informal sector), farmers, NGOs and other food systems actors.

¹⁷⁵ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Proposals are encouraged to work together with the European Commission's Knowledge Centre on Global Food and Nutrition Security to leverage its knowledge base on relevant topics (e.g. on nutrition and the use and potentials of neglected and underutilised crops) and to expand the reach and dissemination of the project's results.

Proposals may involve financial support to third parties e.g. to academic researchers, start-ups, SMEs and other multidisciplinary actors, to, for instance, develop, test or validate approaches.

When relevant, proposals should take into account the activities of NDICI¹⁷⁶ funded Regional Centres of Excellence related to green transition.

Enabling sustainable farming systems

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-01-two-stage: Open topic: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural sector by enhancing the efficient and sustainable use of agricultural production factors

Call: Call 02 - two-stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 13.50 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply: Applicants submitting a proposal for a blind evaluation (see General Annex F) must not disclose their organisation names, acronyms, logos nor names of personnel in the proposal abstract and Part B of their first-stage application (see General Annex E).
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.

¹⁷⁶ Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument

<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 7-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The first-stage proposals of this topic will be evaluated blindly.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁷⁷ . Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP). The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- the EU strategic autonomy and the long-term sustainability of EU farming systems are safeguarded;
- farmers benefit from new knowledge, innovations and practices to make the green transition towards sustainable and biodiversity friendly agriculture.

Scope: EU farmers face numerous competitiveness challenges. According to a study by the EP¹⁷⁸, the growth of total factor productivity (TFP) in EU agriculture has been slowing down while some of our competitors, like Brazil, Canada and China, show higher TFP growth. In order to revert this trend, improving the efficiency of the production factors is a possible avenue, while at the same time considering its sustainable use. Proposals should address all the following activities:

- develop prototypes of innovations and farming practices that can improve the efficient and sustainable use of agricultural production factors ¹⁷⁹ or provide sustainable alternatives, and test them in a large-scale operational environment;

¹⁷⁷ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

¹⁷⁸ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2024/747270/IPOL_STU\(2024\)747270_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2024/747270/IPOL_STU(2024)747270_EN.pdf)

¹⁷⁹ production factors in this topic include fertilising products (according to Regulation (EU) 2019/1009), plant protection products, water, energy, machinery and equipment, buildings

- provide cost-effective and sustainable business models of these innovations or farming practices, and assess their environmental (including biodiversity restoration¹⁸⁰), social and economic impacts to facilitate the deployment and the commercialisation on the European market;
- identify possible barriers and enablers for the adoption, the upscaling or large-scale deployment of these innovations and propose solutions;
- propose a clear strategy to communicate, disseminate and exploit results, new farming practices, innovations and best practices, and to foresee training to the relevant actors.

Proposals may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP) to, for instance, test, develop or demonstrate the innovations or prototypes.

Proposals must implement the multi-actor approach including farmers, advisors, researchers, social scientists, SMEs and start-ups in order to leverage opportunities for innovations to scale up and access relevant markets.

Proposals are encouraged to build on the results of relevant projects funded under Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe and ensure collaboration with relevant ongoing projects.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines and SSH experts, especially in the field of behavioural sciences and adoption/uptake of technologies and practices.

The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the Common Agricultural Policy and align with the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-02-two-stage: Open topic: Boosting organic farming for a competitive, sustainable and resilient farming sector

Call: Call 02 - two-stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply:

¹⁸⁰ As defined in the Nature Restoration Regulation (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202401991)

	Applicants submitting a proposal for a blind evaluation (see General Annex F) must not disclose their organisation names, acronyms, logos nor names of personnel in the proposal abstract and Part B of their first-stage application (see General Annex E).
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The first-stage proposals of this topic will be evaluated blindly.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁸¹. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP). The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- farmers, advisors, agri-food chain operators, policy-makers, public funders and citizens benefit from new knowledge and knowledge exchange, viable innovations, practices and tools that boost the competitiveness, sustainability (economic, environmental, social) and resilience of the organic farming sector;
- knowledge and innovations contribute to an improved sustainability of organic farming systems and an overall improved efficiency of the sector, leading to an increased

¹⁸¹ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

attractiveness of organic farming in Europe and an improved understanding of its contribution to sustainability (economic, social, biodiversity, climate);

- the EU regulatory framework for organic farming, the Common Agricultural Policy, and the EU's biodiversity, zero pollution and climate policies are supported by science-based evidence, methodologies and standardized monitoring frameworks.

Scope: The Vision for Agriculture and Food¹⁸² recognises organic farming as an approach with potential to ensure an attractive and predictable agri-food sector where incomes enable farmers to thrive, while at the same time delivering several ecosystem services beneficial for the environment, climate and biodiversity. The Vision also recognises the importance of research and innovation (R&I) for sustainable farming approaches, such as organic farming, to thrive. At the same time, the EU Action Plan on the Development of Organic Production¹⁸³ attaches a central role to R&I for achieving the Plan's objectives. In line with this Action Plan, under Horizon Europe, the EU has funded several R&I projects addressing multiple aspects and challenges of organic production. The purpose of this topic is to fill remaining R&I needs to boost the organic farming sector in Europe.

Proposals should increase knowledge and develop safe, viable and cost-effective innovations to tackle agronomic, sustainability (social, biodiversity, climate, economic), value chain development and/or market-related challenges of organic production. Proposals should develop innovations addressing land-based organic production in a range of pedo-climatic conditions in the EU and Associated Countries. They should demonstrate the contribution of these innovations to facilitating the uptake and implementation of organic production methods by relevant stakeholders, among which farmers. This should include activities to increase networking and knowledge and best practice exchange among farmers (both among organic farmers and with farmers implementing other approaches) and with other relevant actors.

Proposals should establish sites in diverse pedo-climatic conditions to co-create, test, validate and upscale the innovations, and set-up a network connecting these sites.

Both crop and livestock production systems under organic production are in scope of this topic. Proposals should convincingly explain how they will fill existing R&I needs in line with the EU Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production¹⁸⁴ and the Vision for Agriculture and Food¹⁸⁵. The projects under this topic are also relevant to the EU policies related to the objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy, as well as the EU's biodiversity, zero pollution and climate policies.

If proposals relate to some of the activities covered by the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme (including the CORE Organic ERA-Net), to the Horizon Europe Cluster 6 Work Programmes 2021-2022, 2023-2024 or 2025, to projects funded under the EU Mission Soil¹⁸⁶,

¹⁸² https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/overview-vision-agriculture-food/vision-agriculture-and-food_en

¹⁸³ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/farming/organic-farming/organic-action-plan_en

¹⁸⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0141R%2801%29>

¹⁸⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0075>

¹⁸⁶ <https://mission-soil-platform.ec.europa.eu/>

and/or to projects funded under the Horizon Europe Partnerships ‘Agroecology’¹⁸⁷, Animal Health and Welfare¹⁸⁸ or FutureFoods¹⁸⁹, they should convincingly explain how they will build on and not duplicate them.

Proposals should include a dedicated task, appropriate resources and a plan on how they will collaborate with other projects funded under this topic, as well as with other relevant ongoing EU-funded organic farming relevant projects, and with projects funded by the Horizon Europe Partnership ‘Agroecology’ or other Horizon Europe Partnerships. Activities falling under the scope of the topics ‘HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-09: Enhancing the competitiveness of organic crop breeding: focus on intercropping adapted varieties’ and ‘HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-04: Improving understanding of the contribution of the organic farming sector to sustainability’ in this Work Programme are out of the scope of this topic.

Proposals must implement the ‘multi-actor approach’ and ensure adequate involvement of farmers and other relevant stakeholders involved in the organic farming agri-food value chain, taking into account a gender-sensitive and inclusive approach. The type and nature of stakeholders involved besides farmers should be determined in function of the specific challenge/area addressed. Sectors with high economic relevance in different pedo-climatic conditions and various biogeographical regions across Europe should be targeted in a representative way.

Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties in order to support value chain actors in co-creating, testing, validating and/or upscaling the developed innovations. Proposals should promote close cooperation among relevant research and innovation actors across the EU and Associated Countries, ultimately leading to a more efficient organic production R&I ecosystem by linking up to existing related EU-wide initiatives, in particular the Horizon Europe Partnership ‘Agroecology’.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) disciplines.

2027

Enabling sustainable farming systems

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-01: Increasing the resilience of agriculture in water and nutrient-scarce environments through digital innovations

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2027)
Specific conditions

¹⁸⁷ <https://www.agroecologypartnership.eu/funded-projects>

¹⁸⁸ <https://www.eupahw.eu/>

¹⁸⁹ <https://www.futurefoodspartnership.eu/>

<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁹⁰ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- farmers have increased access to digital tools and advice to improve their resilience to water and nutrient scarcity;
- farmers are better prepared for the Green Transition and EU’s new plan for sustainable prosperity and competitiveness;
- biodiversity benefits from decreasing water, air and soil pollution while European dependency on mineral fertilisers is reduced.

Scope: A key challenge for the agricultural sector is to provide food in a context of increasing global population, climate change and price volatility while reducing pollution and preserving natural resources and biodiversity for future generations. Farmers should be able to adopt innovative solutions to increase the resilience to water and to nutrient scarcity. Digital and

¹⁹⁰ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

data technologies offer solutions to monitor parameters (e.g. soil conditions, water and air quality, nutrients content and availability) in a cost-efficient manner while supporting decision-making on input management, adapt to climate change, contribute to cleaner air and biodiversity.

Proposals should:

- improve knowledge on the complex interactions between plant, soil, water, air and nutrients (Nitrogen, Phosphorus) in view of climate change in the EU and its impacts on crop production, farming systems (including crop protection use) and the environment, in a representative number of different pedoclimatic regions;
- develop and test monitoring devices and systems that can take into account the findings on the interactions described in the previous point, considering their easy integration into other farm management information systems (FMIS) or decision support systems (DSS), and the affordability and accessibility to farmers (such as low connectivity in certain rural areas, digital knowledge, health impairments/disability, etc.);
- develop and test AI-enabled decision support systems to better monitor and assess the effects of agricultural practices and land management measures in terms of water and nutrient use taking into account different pedoclimatic zones, local conditions and farm characteristics, their impact on pollution (water, soil) and benefits for biodiversity;
- create sets of high-quality AI training data to support the development of DSS with the objective to improve water and nutrient resilience of different farming systems, and make them publicly available, considering legal clarity, sustainable access, transparent documentation and metadata, harmonised and standardised protocols;
- identify potential barriers and enablers for translation of these R&I developments into practical and commercial digital tools and for the adoption by end-users (especially related to trust and transparency, and the needs of persons with disabilities such as accessibility of the information), as well as characterise remaining knowledge, training and/or advice gaps, and needs for policy feedback.

The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food, the EU Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production¹⁹¹, Europe fit for the Digital Age, the Climate Adaptation Strategy, the Zero Pollution Action Plan, the Clean Air, Biodiversity and Water Resilience Strategy.

Proposals must implement the ‘multi-actor approach’, with a consortium based on a balanced mix of actors with complementary knowledge, including farmers, researchers, advisors, technology providers and business partners.

This topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines and the involvement of SSH experts, institutions as well as the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise, in order to produce

¹⁹¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0141R%2801%29>

meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities.

Proposals should address various farming systems/approaches, one of which should be organic farming.

Where appropriate, proposals should use and complement capacities and infrastructures created under the Digital Europe Program (incl. European Data Spaces, EDIHs) as well as the EURO HPC and EU AI Factory infrastructures. Proposals should also comply with existing EU framework and strategies, and build upon the concepts and solutions developed in other EU initiatives aimed to facilitate data sharing, such as the Common European Agricultural Data Space (CEADS).

Proposals are encouraged to engage in international cooperation and to build on the results of relevant projects funded under Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe and ensure collaboration with relevant ongoing and forthcoming projects under the PRIMA and Agriculture of Data partnerships, the JRC and the European Soil Observatory (EUSO).

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-02: Increasing mitigation of GHG emissions and feed efficiency through feed additives

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.

<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁹².

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- farmers experience increasing benefits from the adoption of safe, efficient, practical and affordable improved or novel feed additives and related practices that reduce GHG and air pollutants emissions, minimize environmental impact and have neither adverse effects on animal productivity nor on animal welfare;
- Farmer and agricultural advisors gain improved access to knowledge, resources and distribution channels for feed additives, that favour the integration of these solutions into common practices;
- evidence-based recommendations are provided for the implementation of EU policies and strategies, including the CAP, relevant to sustainable livestock farming systems, while also serving as a resource for regulatory authorities.

Scope: The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the EU Green Deal objectives for resilient and sustainable agri-food systems, the EU climate policy, the methane strategy, the Vision for Agriculture and Food, and the EU Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production¹⁹³.

Livestock production significantly contributes to GHG emissions and resource consumption, making it essential to improve feed efficiency and reduce environmental impact. Enteric fermentation in ruminants produces substantial methane emissions, while inefficient feed conversion increases feed demand, land use, and pollution. Developing and implementing effective feed additives can lower methane production, enhance nutrient utilization, and reduce nitrogen excretion, supporting sustainable livestock farming, improved profitability for farmers, and global climate goals.

Reducing methane emissions from ruminants contributes to environmental sustainability by lowering the climate and environmental impact of livestock production, while also supporting economic sustainability for farmers through improved productivity and cost savings. Only a

¹⁹² This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

¹⁹³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0141R%2801%29>

handful of additives have demonstrated significant effectiveness in reducing methane emissions or have become commercially available. The limited availability of reliable options and the challenges posed by inconsistent efficacy and applicability across diverse production systems represent a constraint. Proposals should address various terrestrial livestock systems, from conventional to extensive systems, considering regional feeding systems. Proposals should address at least farmed large ruminants.

Proposals should address all the following activities:

- develop and test a wide range of additives that reduce emissions in operational environment (reaching TRL 7), their synergies and optimal delivery strategies for diverse terrestrial livestock systems, including extensive and grass-based systems, both under conventional and organic production. Impacts on animal health, welfare, performance, product quality, and net GHG emissions and air pollutants, and potential trade-offs among these factors should be addressed.
- identify clear endpoints for risk assessment of feed additives to demonstrate their safety and define complementarity criteria to demonstrate their effectiveness and environmental impact, all supported by scientific evidence;
- verify the practicalities, applicability, scalability and socio-economic-environmental impacts, including trade-offs with other environmental and social dimensions, of using feed additives across different production systems and in different feeding scenarios.
- promote and facilitate a standardized data collection system for quality control procedures and record-keeping practices that ensures consistency across stakeholder groups and meets the requirements for accurate reporting, keeping in mind the EU¹⁹⁴ and EFSA regulatory framework from the inception and for feed additives;
- identify strategies like improved distribution networks, farmer education programmes, and possible subsidies or incentives to make new innovative feed additives that reduce livestock emissions more affordable;
- assessing consumer perception to understand attitudes towards the use of feed additives to reduce emissions in livestock production and identify key factors influencing their decisions.

The JRC participation could involve contributing to scenario assessment with the integrated agro-economic modelling platform (iMAP), sharing information, and contributing to dissemination of results.

To respect the 'Do-No-Significant-Harm' (DNSH) principle, proposals need to properly address and exclude any potential risk of feed additives on the environment, animal or human health.

¹⁹⁴ [Regulation \(EC\) 1831/2003](#), [Regulation \(EC\) 767/2009](#)

Proposals must implement the ‘multi-actor approach’ and ensure adequate involvement of the main stakeholders involved in the livestock sectors, including farmers, advisors, private sector/industry (e.g., processors, feed manufacturers), policy-makers, consumers, etc.

Proposals should capitalise on research findings and tools, included those developed under previous and ongoing relevant research projects. Proposals should interact with relevant structures or organizations at European level and beyond such as FAO, Livestock Environmental Assessment and Performance Partnership (LEAP, FAO)¹⁹⁵, Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases¹⁹⁶.

To better address the requirements of the topic, international cooperation is encouraged.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-03: Microbiome for terrestrial livestock sustainability and health within a One Health approach

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁹⁷ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- the research community, farmers, livestock industry e.g. breeders, service providers, policymakers understand better the role of the microbiome on livestock health and

¹⁹⁵ <https://www.fao.org/partnerships/leap/en/>

¹⁹⁶ <https://globalresearchalliance.org/research/livestock/networks/>

¹⁹⁷ This [decision](#) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

production and the interaction with environment and human health within a One Health approach;

- researchers' communities and innovators in the livestock sector have access to a platform of tools for data sharing, knowledge exchange, capacity building and standardization in microbiome research and its applications through synergies with other platforms in a One Health context;
- targeted strategies and guidelines are available to farmers, service providers and livestock industry to contribute to improving livestock health, while reducing antimicrobial use and environmental impact, and securing animal welfare.

Scope: Microbiome research offers transformative potential for livestock management within the One Health (OH) framework, which emphasizes the interconnected health of animals, humans, and the environment. In livestock, microbiome innovation can address pressing issues such as antimicrobial resistance and zoonotic disease transmission. However, gaps persist in understanding the role of variability within host-microbiome interactions, in developing sustainable farming practices, and assessing these interventions in real-world farming settings. Advancing microbiome research can enhance animal health and productivity, improve ecosystems, while reducing environmental and climate impacts. By focusing on microbiome-based solutions, the objective is to support sustainable livestock systems that align with OH principles, necessitating cross-disciplinary collaboration to ensure comprehensive health benefits.

Proposals should address all of the following activities:

- investigate the microbiome of terrestrial livestock, their influence on animal health, taking into account the holobiont/hologenome perspectives, and the interactions with the environment (soil, plant, water, air) and human health;
- develop integrated data monitoring systems that track microbiome related health indicators across livestock, plant, and human health sectors, and help in risk assessment models for zoonotic disease and/or AMR emergence and transmission;
- assess how microbiome-based solutions for animal health affect, and are affected by, soil and plant health, and the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides;
- design holistic health models that incorporate microbiome research to enhance the robustness of animals as well as animal health and welfare, and overall productivity, taking into account soil and plant health, and to assess potential synergies and trade-offs between these objectives;
- design microbiome related intervention strategies to prevent outbreaks and cross-species transmission in animal populations and reduce the risk of zoonosis, thereby contributing to reduced antimicrobial usage while enhancing resilience, animal welfare, and minimizing environmental impact;

- develop, or contribute to, platforms to collaboratively assess and optimize the efficacy and implementation of microbiome-based tools, products and services in the livestock sector through synergies with other platforms within a One Health context;
- enhance collaboration among veterinarians, microbiologists, geneticists, animal and plant biologists, epidemiologists, and ecologists and other experts to work towards a One Health approach.

Projects selected under this topic should interact between themselves and build on/interact with recent or on-going EU funded projects and initiatives, including those funded under the topic HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-11: Integrating a holistic perspective in microbiome research for resilient, competitive and sustainable food systems, as well as with relevant activities of the European partnerships on animal health and welfare, on One health AMR, and on pandemic preparedness.

The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the EU Green Deal's goals for resilient and sustainable agri-food systems, the EU biodiversity strategy, the Life Sciences strategy, the Vision for Agriculture and Food, the EU One Health Action Plan against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), and the Council Recommendation on stepping up EU actions to combat antimicrobial resistance in a One Health approach.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-04: Improving understanding of the contribution of the organic farming sector to sustainability

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁹⁸ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- improved and increased data collection on the environmental, economic and social impacts of the EU organic sector, from farm to consumer levels, leading to improved understanding of the overall impact of the organic sector on sustainability (including climate change mitigation and biodiversity);
- improved capacities of organic supply chains and organic value chain actors, including farmers, to collect and provide data on organic production to fulfil reporting requirements;
- increased cooperation between public and private data providers in the organic sector across the EU.

Scope: The Vision for Agriculture and Food recognises organic farming as an approach with potential to ensure an attractive and predictable agri-food sector, while at the same time delivering several ecosystem services beneficial for the environment, climate and biodiversity. There is a dual need to, on one hand, better understand the contribution of organic farming and of the organic sector as a whole to the three dimensions of sustainability, and on the other, to improve methods for data collection in the organic sector, in a way that reduces administrative burden on farmers and on other operators. There is potential for both needs to be addressed in combination, and a role for research and innovation to support in achieving this objective.

Proposals should address all the following activities:

- undertake an exhaustive mapping of existing tools, platforms and methods at EU, national and local levels, that allow for the collection of relevant data on organic production to comply with the various reporting requirements of the sector, including under the Common Agricultural Policy and under the EU organic certification. This exercise should include a mapping of the actors involved in the collection of data, as well as an analysis of cost-effectiveness, best practices and challenges faced. It should also include an assessment of the potential of existing tools to reduce administrative burden on organic farmers and on other operators of the organic value chain, as well as to streamline data exchange with relevant actors, including certification bodies and supply chain actors.

¹⁹⁸ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- facilitate the exchange of experiences and best practices on data collection and reporting on organic production across the EU. Identify concrete opportunities for the cross-fertilisation and transfer of solutions among countries/regions;
- assess the need, feasibility and cost-effectiveness of leveraging existing data collected by organic certification bodies in a way that it can simultaneously be used to assess the contribution of organic production to the three axes of sustainability (economic, environmental, social). This should include an analysis of existing standards for the interoperability of agricultural digital systems, and identification of opportunities and challenges;
- develop recommendations, including in relation to governance, for the effective use of current tools for data collection, considering differences across the EU Member States;
- organise and implement training activities targeted to organic farmers and other operators of the organic value chains, to build their capacities to collect relevant data to comply with the reporting obligations on organic production. This should include networking activities to foster cooperation among actors in the organic agri-food supply chains with a view to increasing overall efficiency of the organic sector for data collection.

Proposals should address all EU Member States. Proposals under this topic should support the implementation of the EU Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production¹⁹⁹ and of the EU regulatory framework for organic farming, and contribute to the objectives of the Vision for Agriculture and Food²⁰⁰, the Common Agricultural Policy, and the EU's biodiversity, zero pollution and climate policies.

Both crop and livestock production systems under organic production are in scope of this topic.

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure adequate involvement of the main stakeholders involved in the organic sector, and including a range of actors to ensure that different sources of knowledge and perspectives are brought together. The needs and expertise of all relevant actors, including certification bodies, should be duly considered in the activities. Proposals should capitalise on existing knowledge and tools, such as the Farm Sustainability Data Network (FSDN)²⁰¹. Proposals should build on the results of relevant past/ongoing EU-funded R&I projects relevant for the organic farming sector, as well as of other relevant related work/studies, and on any relevant activities funded under the Digital Europe Programme. Proposals should include a dedicated task, appropriate resources and a plan on how they will collaborate with other relevant ongoing and upcoming EU-funded R&I projects and initiatives, including the Horizon Europe Partnership 'Agroecology' and the project that may follow from the topic "HORIZON-CL6-2024-GOVERNANCE-02-01: European Partnership of Agriculture of Data".

¹⁹⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0141R%2801%29>

²⁰⁰ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0075>

²⁰¹ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/data-and-analysis/farm-structures-and-economics/fsdn_en

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-05: Enhancing farmer's profitability and resilience through innovations for diversified crops and value chains

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁰². Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP). The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- farmers are able to transition to diversified, resilient and innovative cropping systems, increasing their sustainability, competitiveness and promoting biodiversity conservation as well as climate adaptation and mitigation;

²⁰² This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- profitability of farming is boosted through the adoption of diversified cropping systems and the development of local value chains as well as through the valorization of crops by-products;
- awareness and knowledge/data exchange among actors on the benefits of diversified cropping systems for farmers and for downstream value chains across Europe is increased.

Scope: Crop diversification supports farmers resilience to external shocks, be it economic, climatic, or market related. By reducing dependency on a single farmed crop, farmers can strengthen their competitiveness in an ever-changing agricultural landscape. The temporal and spatial diversification of crops through e.g. rotation and associations, are drivers for low-input, resource-efficient farming systems that can fulfil the need to produce food, feed, industrial products (e.g. bioenergy, biomaterials, biochemicals) and other ecosystems services. These diversified and low-input farming systems will emerge if clear benefits to farmers and society are demonstrated and if the downstream value chains are properly organized.

Proposals should:

- develop, test and showcase innovative solutions as well as business and cooperation models with a focus on activities addressing the challenges to support farmers in diversifying their crop production, enhancing profitability, resilience and sustainability;
- assess the viability and impact of the practical implementation of the proposed innovations on the overall sustainability of farmers activities and businesses (economic, social and environmental). The climate change mitigation and biodiversity protection and restoration potential of the proposed innovations should be analysed;
- describe an exploitation pathway tailor-made for the developed innovations through the different necessary steps (e.g. market research, regulatory approvals and licensing, IP management etc.) in order to accelerate exploitation of the results;
- provide support to farmers to transition to crop diversification, addressing the specific challenges of the sector and designing strategies to overcome them. Create diverse practice-oriented dissemination materials, such as audiovisuals, brochures, presentations, that showcase innovations in a creative way, incorporating artistic elements for engaging storytelling.

Activities must fall under the concept of the 'multi-actor approach' and allow for adequate involvement of SMEs, technology developers, farmers and consumers. The involvement of farmers SMEs is crucial and will be fostered through targeted calls and financial support to third parties, particularly for SMEs developing and testing the proposed innovative solutions. Proposals should address various farming systems/approaches, one of which should be organic farming.

Proposals should allocate adequate resources to collaborate with topic projects funded under other topics in this work programme, in particular "HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-03. Proposals should clearly explain how they will build on and not duplicate past and ongoing EU-funded R&I activities, including relevant projects and activities funded under the Horizon Europe Partnership 'Agroecology' and the EU Mission Soil.

The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food, the EU Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production²⁰³ and the Common Agricultural Policy.

Enabling sustainable fisheries and aquaculture

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-06: Unleashing the potential of sustainable small-scale aquatic food production and recreational fisheries for prosperous local communities

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁰⁴ .

²⁰³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0141R%2801%29>

²⁰⁴ This [decision](#) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Expected Outcome: In line with the EU Common Fisheries Policy and the revised EU Fisheries Control Regulation, the European Ocean Pact, the Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture with a 2040 perspective, the strategic guidelines for sustainable and competitive aquaculture, the EU algae initiative, Farm to Fork Strategy, the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the Food 2030 policy framework, project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- economic prosperity is fostered in coastal, rural and urban communities through improved business models, value chain integration and market access for small scale producers that can contribute offering attractive jobs;
- consumers benefit from the availability of locally produced, nutritious, and safe aquatic food following high environmental and social standards;
- more resilient and empowered communities at local and regional levels by fostering innovation in aquatic food value chain and addressing challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource management;
- a more competitive and sustainable aquatic food sector by advancing ecosystem-based management practices, digitalization and technological innovation based on the latest scientific research.

Scope: Small-scale aquatic food production includes small-scale fisheries, recreational fisheries and aquaculture farms that are classified as SMEs. In 2021, small-scale fisheries contributed to 49% of employment in EU fisheries. Together with other maritime activities, small-scale fisheries play a vital role in local economies, particularly in the Mediterranean, where over half of the sector is concentrated. Recreational fisheries are non-commercial fishing activities exploiting marine biological resources for recreation, tourism or sport. While the marketing or sale of catches from recreational fisheries is prohibited, if properly monitored and managed they can contribute to conservation efforts and support community development. According to the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, the aquaculture sector in the EU consists primarily of small and family-owned enterprises- especially in the case of mollusk farms. However, small-scale actors often face difficulties in developing and adopting innovative technologies.

Selected proposals should advance knowledge and develop tools, including Nature-based Solutions, for managing and further developing small-scale aquatic food production. They should include, where relevant, both aspects of natural science and technical know-how to improve small-scale aquatic food production as well as issues related to social sciences and humanities (SSH) disciplines, to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related innovation activities. In the frame of SSH, cultural elements such as local traditions related to aquatic food production and consumption could be included. The scope of the topic includes fisheries and aquaculture activities taking place in fresh, brackish and marine waters, such as small-scale fisheries, small-scale mollusk, seaweed and fish farms, recreational fisheries, urban aquaculture and aquaponics.

Selected proposals should develop innovative methodologies to assess environmental and socio-economic contributions of relevant small-scale actors to the prosperity of local communities within the broader aquatic food system, taking into account a gender sensitive approach and the specific needs of groups in vulnerable situations. This could, for example, include diverse data sources (e.g. citizen science, social media) and advance data processing, validation, and interoperability solutions using for example AI, machine learning, and big data analytics to provide actionable insights.

The effects of climate change on small-scale aquatic food production should be addressed as well as the potential contribution of small-scale aquatic food production to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Additionally, the potential for environmental services provision and of improvements of ecological footprint should be explored. Aquatic animal welfare issues should be considered, where relevant.

Selected proposals should include from their design throughout their development and implementation relevant stakeholders and end-users and produce outputs that can be readily applicable by them. Special attention should be given to knowledge transfer, training, and capacity-building activities to ensure the practical implementation of research findings and innovations by small-scale actors and policymakers.

Transforming food systems for health, sustainability and inclusion

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-07: Towards commercialization of food systems microbiome solutions

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 7.00 and 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 15.50 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Technology</i>	Activities are expected to start from TRL 5 in order to achieve TRL 7-8

Readiness Level	by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- identified barriers and opportunities for scaling up innovative products and technologies that leverage and/or support the microbiome for resilient, competitive and sustainable organic, circular and conventional food systems, contributing where relevant to biodiversity, climate and environmental sustainability;
- improved *in-situ* testing of innovative microbiome solutions related to organic and conventional food systems to promote their access on the EU market.

Scope: Microbiome solutions demonstrated high potential to support our food systems, making them more resilient, more productive and more environmental-friendly, for instance by boosting crop yields, improving food safety, supporting biodiversity and leveraging its benefits or decreasing fertilizers use or pesticide needs. However, bringing these solutions to the market face several challenges, for instance the lack of business models for widespread deployment, or consistently producing at scale effective microbiome solutions. The topic is relevant to the EU policies related to the Commission communication on: Building the future with nature: Boosting Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing in the EU, the Bioeconomy Strategy, the Life Sciences Strategy, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the Zero Pollution Action Plan, the R&I Food 2030 Framework, the Clean Industrial Deal, and the policies on digital transition (e.g. AI Act, etc).

Proposals should address all the following activities:

- promote the access to the EU market of innovative microbiome solutions (technologies or products leveraging and/or supporting microbial communities and their interaction with their host and/or environment) that are tackling challenges in sectors supporting resilient, competitive, climate-, environmental-friendly and sustainable food systems;
- develop technologies, standards and/or methodologies enabling cost-effective and reliable production and deployment at scale of microbiome solutions;
- provide business models for companies, SMEs and start-ups to facilitate the successful deployment and commercialization of microbiome solutions for the EU market.

Projects selected must follow the multi-actor approach. Actors involved may be researchers, advisors, food and bioeconomy business, startups and SMEs. Proposals should ensure an early engagement of researchers, businesses (including SMEs and startups), public authorities and policy makers, and consumers associations to co-develop, test, validate and adopt the solutions.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-08: AI-powered foodome characterization

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: Subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to start from TRL 5 in order to achieve TRL 7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- an Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool able to accelerate the analysis of complex foodomics data to speed up the identification, structural characterization, and quantification of chemicals present in food;
- improving capacity and synergies in foodomics research between academia, research infrastructures and industry.

Scope: Through food and beverages, the population is exposed to an immense variety of chemicals (as contaminants and as ingredients). The “Foodome” is the complete set of compounds present in a food sample at a given time; it includes both endogenous biomolecules (produced through a species' metabolic processes) and exogenous compounds (natural and synthetic substances from production, processing, handling, and packaging). The current knowledge is largely confined to a narrow set of approximately 150 food components catalogued by traditional databases. These components represent only a very small fraction of the total chemical complexity present in foods, while thousands (>100,000) of compounds and contaminants remain largely unquantified and underexplored. Understanding this “nutrient dark matter” would require identifying, cataloguing and quantifying the full spectrum of substances present in our food and present in an accessible, AI-ready databases. The need for such information is today a bottleneck to make the nutrition field predictive and data driven, and has the potential to make food processing more efficient in bringing new foods items on the market. Efforts to create such datasets are underway but owing to the

quantity of samples (hundreds of thousands of compounds across thousands of foods), such databases often rely on high-throughput experimental methods which do not allow a precise characterization of the molecules identified.

Proposals should address the following activities:

- develop and test validated AI algorithms capable of interpreting and annotating high-throughput foodomics data, for instance from untargeted mass-spectrometry or nuclear magnetic resonance.
- the AI algorithms should be capable to predict or infer the presence and concentration of compounds based on (incomplete) foodomics data via innovative approaches, for instance by considering phylogenetic relationships between species. Moreover, this should help identify analytical methods and potential food safety hazards based on their similarity to known compounds.
- develop a European research and innovation network between Member States and Associated Countries in food exposome research to support the development, standardization, valorization and dissemination of the AI results and considering existing initiatives such as the Centre for Excellence in the Periodic Table of Food Initiative from Wageningen University.

The multi-actor approach is encouraged. Proposals should include industry in the consortia and academia, startups, SMEs and international initiatives. Collaboration with international partners is encouraged as well as with existing private companies in the EU/Associated countries.

Targeted international cooperation

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-09: African Union – European Union Partnership on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA)

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 7.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following

<i>conditions</i>	exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B. Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in all African Union member states* are exceptionally eligible for Union funding. * "African Union member states" includes countries whose membership has been temporarily suspended. International organisations with headquarters in a Member State or Associated Country are exceptionally eligible for funding. The following additional eligibility criteria apply: due to the specific challenge of this topic, in addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the General Annexes, consortia must include at least three independent legal entities established in an African Union member state*.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁰⁵. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP). The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- the coordination of Research and Innovation Policies of AU and EU Members in the Working Group on FNSSA is improved;
- improved coordination of the portfolio of projects funded under the first priority on FNSSA of the African Union – European Union High-level Policy Dialogue across all funding instruments of the EU and the AU and its members, in particular the EU

²⁰⁵ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Research Framework Programme, Co-funding instruments, the DeSIRA programme and others.

Scope: Proposals should:

- implement the AU-EU roadmap by strengthening the strategic functioning and capacities of the FNSSA Working Group. Develop a toolkit of measures and provide robust scientific support, as well as practical administrative help, to enable a better-structured organisation;
- operationalise the International Research Consortium (IRC) as a platform to implement the roadmap on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture (FNSSA) by improving the learning environment, including communication channels, to support multi stakeholder networks and to strengthen R&I coordination and funding also by the use of Financial Support to Third Parties as well as by the use of cascading funding;
- provide a platform for funders and seed funding to further develop and/or scale-up technical and social innovations created by a previous HLPD-FNSSA²⁰⁶ projects. These projects must have been funded in support of the EU-AU FNSSA roadmap 2016-2026 and funded by one of the instruments of EU-AU R&I collaboration, they include African Union Research Grants, ERA-Nets (Leap-Agri, FOSC), Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe and DeSira;
- complement other potential scale-up instruments of the EU Global Gateway Strategy such as the AU-EU Innovation Agenda and the EU International Partnerships such as DeSIRA+;
- promote start-ups and other innovative SMEs by providing a space for mentoring and accelerating innovative business concepts, including social innovation and upscaling in view of African or European food business entrepreneurs with special consideration of women, young entrepreneurs and the diaspora using cascading funding opportunities.

Proposals may involve financial support to third parties e.g. to academic researchers, start-ups, SMEs and other multidisciplinary actors, to, for instance, develop, test or validate approaches.

Proposals are encouraged to work together with the European Commission's Knowledge Centre on Global Food and Nutrition Security to leverage its knowledge base on relevant topics and to expand the reach and dissemination of FNSSA activities.

Enabling sustainable farming systems

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

²⁰⁶ HLPD-FNSSA: EU-African Union High Level Policy Dialogue on Research and Innovation and its first priority on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-01-two-stage: Strengthening plant health: addressing emerging plant pest risks

Call: Call 02 - two-stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply: Applicants submitting a proposal for a blind evaluation (see General Annex F) must not disclose their organisation names, acronyms, logos nor names of personnel in the proposal abstract and Part B of their first-stage application (see General Annex E).
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B. The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The first-stage proposals of this topic will be evaluated blindly.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000. Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁰⁷ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- improved understanding of key drivers of plant pest emergence, including the influence of climate change, ecosystem degradation and globalisation;
- cost-effective and environmentally friendly preventive and/or curative measures for managing the targeted plant pest(s) are identified, validated, and made available to farmers and forest owners for effective pest management;
- robust scientific support is delivered to strengthen decision-making processes.

Scope: Effective plant health measures are essential for protecting agriculture and forestry, ensuring food security, preserving ecosystems and biodiversity, and enabling safe and sustainable trade. This action aims to strengthen plant health by addressing emerging plant pests²⁰⁸, whether regulated or unregulated, introduced or native, that currently pose, or are likely to pose, significant socio-economic and/or environmental threats to agriculture and forestry within the EU and Associated Countries.

Proposals should target one or more emerging plant pests²⁰⁹, taking into account the increasing risks driven by climate change, biodiversity loss, land use changes, globalisation and other contributing factors, with the exception of plant pests targeted in Horizon Europe²¹⁰.

Proposals should:

- enhance understanding of pest(s) biology, introduction pathways, mechanisms of spread, thereby reducing uncertainties and lack of data in pest risk assessments;
- develop rapid, safe, and cost-effective tools and methods for preventing introduction and spread of the pest(s); this includes early detection, surveillance, treatment, and (bio)control measures (including innovative agro-ecological or forestry management practices), in line with sustainable and integrated pest management;

²⁰⁷ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

²⁰⁸ A pest is defined here as any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent injurious to plants or plant products (EU legislation, Regulation 2016/2031).

²⁰⁹ Applicants are expected to explain and justify the choice of pest(s) in alignment with the proposal’s objectives and the topic’s expected outcomes.

²¹⁰ Pest of the topics: HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-02-02-two-stage: Emerging and future risks to plant health and HORIZON-CL6-2025-02-FARM2FORK-01-two-stage: Emerging and future risks to plant health

- assess the social, economic, and environmental impacts of plant pest(s) establishment and spread on farmers and/or forest owners and develop strategies to mitigate these impacts effectively;
- contribute to the identification of resistant and/or tolerant traits.

Proposals may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP) to, for instance, develop, test and demonstrate tools and methods for early detection, surveillance, treatment, and (bio)control measures.

Proposals must implement the ‘multi-actor approach’ including a range of actors to ensure that knowledge and needs from various sectors such as research, plant health services, farming/forestry sectors, advisory services, and industry are brought together.

International cooperation with countries affected or threatened by the same pest(s) is strongly encouraged. Results should address diverse farming systems/approaches, including conventional and organic farming. When relevant, consider a gender sensitive and inclusive approach and the specific needs of groups in vulnerable situations.

Proposals should contribute to the objectives of the common agricultural policy, the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive²¹¹, the policies related to the EU’s Vision for Agriculture and Food, the EU Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production²¹² and support Regulation 2016/2031²¹³ on protective measures against pests of plants.

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding. In particular, the JRC would consider potential collaboration related to the update of potential impacts of the selected pests using the impact indicator for priority pests and acceptability of control measures by farmers and foresters.

Targeted international cooperation

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-02-two-stage: Optimising the water-nutrient-energy nexus for sustainable and climate smart agriculture in Africa (FNSSA)

Call: Call 02 - two-stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a

²¹¹ DIRECTIVE 2009/128/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02009L0128-20091125>

²¹² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0141R%2801%29>

²¹³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/2031/oj>

<i>project</i>	proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply: Applicants submitting a proposal for a blind evaluation (see General Annex F) must not disclose their organisation names, acronyms, logos nor names of personnel in the proposal abstract and Part B of their first-stage application (see General Annex E).
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part. The following additional eligibility criteria apply: due to the specific challenge of this topic, in addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the General Annexes, consortia must include at least three independent legal entities established in an African Union member state*. International organisations with headquarters in a Member State or Associated Country are exceptionally eligible for funding. The following additional eligibility criteria apply: Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in all African Union member states* are exceptionally eligible for Union funding. * "African Union member states" includes countries whose membership has been temporarily suspended.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The first-stage proposals of this topic will be evaluated blindly.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000. Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the

	Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²¹⁴ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- agricultural actors implement sustainable practices for resource-efficient and climate-smart and biodiversity-friendly farming in diverse African agro-ecosystems;
- integrated water, nutrient and energy management systems are available to smallholder farms in Africa.

Scope: A nexus approach that identifies and develops mutually beneficial knowledge, practices and tools in agriculture can enable sustainable, biodiversity-friendly and climate-smart agriculture in African agro-ecosystems. The needs for water, energy, and nutrients in agriculture are crucial for smallholder farms to sustain predictable and stable productions and support livelihoods. Making available innovative solutions based on circular and sustainable approaches, can enable new business opportunities in African agriculture.

Proposals should:

- assess needs and opportunities (economic, environmental and social) for sustainable water, nutrient and energy management in agriculture for food and/or non-food uses;
- improve existing and develop new knowledge, practices and tools for on farm sustainable management of agricultural resources at the nexus of water, nutrient and energy inputs and outputs;
- evaluate the impact of the proposed practices and tools in terms of water, energy and nutrient balances but also their economic feasibility, environmental/climate footprint and social effects;
- enable sustainable, circular, climate-smart and biodiversity friendly practices at farm level while considering the characteristic of both local and regional levels in at least two different African agro-ecosystems.

The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU Vision for agriculture and food, the Global Gateway Strategy, contribute to the African Union-EU High Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation²¹⁵ and to the respective R&I partnerships on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) and on Climate Change and Sustainable Energy. Projects under this topic are relevant for the climate objectives of the

²¹⁴ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

²¹⁵ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/new-eu-africa-innovation-agenda-enhance-cooperation-science-technology-and-innovation-2023-07-20_en

African Union and the EU, and for the commitments of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Proposals should contribute to the implementation of the short-term and medium-term actions outlined in the AU-EU Innovation Agenda in the priority area of Green Transition, (notably action (4) and (5) among short-term actions and (1) and (3) for medium-term actions), and aim to translate R&I efforts into tangible business, products, services, development and employment opportunities in Africa and Europe.

Proposals must implement the ‘multi-actor approach’ to ensure the adequate involvement of the public authorities, advisory services and farmer organisations.

Proposals should adopt an inclusive approach that respects and integrates local knowledge and practices alongside technological and scientific expertise, where indigenous insights are enriched by innovative approaches and new technologies through mutual learning.

Proposals should propose collaboration opportunities with ongoing projects funded under Horizon Europe, in particular those establishing living-labs in Africa. Furthermore, proposals are encouraged to seek connections with Regional Multi-actors Research Networks on Agroecology supported by the EC in Africa²¹⁶.

Proposals are encouraged to work together with the European Commission’s Knowledge Centre on Global Food and Nutrition Security to leverage its knowledge base on relevant topics and to expand the reach and dissemination of the project’s results.

Proposals are encouraged to seek complementarities with the activities of the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean areas (PRIMA).

Proposals may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP) to, for instance, develop, test and demonstrate new practices and tools. A maximum of 30% of the proposed budget should be allocated to this purpose.

²¹⁶

[Regional Multi-Actor Research Network on Agroecology to Support Regional Centres of Excellence related to the Green Transition](#); [RMRN Western Africa: CORAF & Cheikh-Anta-Diop de Dakar for Western Africa](#); [RMRN Eastern Africa : Icipe and partners](#)

Destination - Circular economy and bioeconomy sectors

This destination will support the EU Commission priorities ‘Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature’ and ‘A new plan for Europe’s sustainable prosperity and competitiveness’.

The Destination supports the EU Green Deal²¹⁷ and contributes to Europe’s competitiveness and sustainable prosperity by supporting the development of a more resilient circular economy in line with the EU Competitiveness Compass²¹⁸, the announced EU Clean Industrial Deal²¹⁹ and the EU Circular Economy Act.

It aims to increase market demand for secondary materials and establish a single market for waste, whilst enhancing Europe’s efforts to develop a single market for sustainable products. It will also support the implementation of the framework conditions set by the upcoming EU start-up and scale-up strategy.

Furthermore, the Destination aims to facilitate the emergence and uptake of innovative, circular and bio-based materials, products, processes and value chains that play a key role for the defossilisation (reduction of feedstocks of fossil origin), climate neutrality and strategic autonomy of our economy, in line with the updated EU Bioeconomy Strategy and its revision planned for 2025, as well as with the New European Bauhaus.

In addition, this Destination supports several key EU policies including the industrial strategy, the European Chemicals Industry Action Plan²²⁰ and the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation²²¹ and its working plan.

It also contributes to the EU Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing Initiative, the SME strategy, the communication on safe and sustainable by design framework, the sustainable blue economy, the European Ocean Pact²²², the European Water Resilience Strategy²²³, the European Life Sciences Strategy, the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, and the Nature Restoration Regulation.

Further support extends to the CAP, the EU forest strategy for 2030, the proposal for a Regulation on a forest monitoring framework, the EU proposal for a directive on soil monitoring and resilience, and the Vision for Agriculture and Food.

The Destination supports unlocking the unique assets for research and innovation of the EU outermost regions, in line with the EU strategy for outermost regions²²⁴.

²¹⁷ [The European Green Deal - European Commission](#)

²¹⁸ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-competitiveness/competitiveness-compass_en

²¹⁹ [Clean Industrial Deal - European Commission](#)

²²⁰ [European Chemicals Industry Action Plan – European Commission](#)

²²¹ [Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation – European Commission](#)

²²² [The European Ocean Pact - European Commission](#)

²²³ [Water resilience strategy - European Commission](#)

²²⁴ COM(2022) Putting people first, securing sustainable and inclusive growth, unlocking the potential of the EU’s outermost regions.

Legal entities established in China are not eligible to participate in both Research and Innovation Actions (RIAs) and Innovation Actions (IAs) falling under this destination. For additional information please see “Restrictions on the participation of legal entities established in China” found in General Annex B of the General Annexes.

Expected impact: Proposals for topics under this destination should set out a credible pathway contributing to “**achieving healthy soils and forests, as well as clean air, fresh and marine water, whilst ensuring water resilience and the transition to a clean, competitive and circular economy and sustainable bioeconomy**”, and more specifically to one or more of the following **expected impacts**:

- Improved climate change adaptation and mitigation through the transition to a more sustainable and circular economy and bioeconomy, underpinned by biotechnologies and sustainable industrial solutions, such as carbon capture and utilisation and recovery of materials, water and energy.
- Industrial competitiveness, sustainability and strategic autonomy are improved through the development of safe, sustainable, circular and/or bio-based value chains. This is done by promoting the efficient and circular use of secondary materials and water, fostering the multi-functionality of forests, and ensuring the sustainable supply of critical resources from land and sea.
- Living conditions for individuals and communities are improved through innovative, affordable and sustainable safe and sustainable by design products and services based on circular and/or bio-based solutions while demonstrating a reduction of environmental and climate pressures.
- Advanced societal transformation based on a systemic approach, as well as people’s involvement and integration of social sciences and humanities for fair, safe, sustainable and circular value chains, sustainable consumption patterns, environmental justice, gender equality and social inclusion.

2026

Enabling a circular economy transition

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-01: Improving circularity of multilayer flexible plastic food contact packaging

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 5.00 and 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed

<i>project</i>	appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 11.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²²⁵ .

Expected Outcome:

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- environment and society at large benefit from recyclable food packaging which can be recycled and reused back into food packaging while keeping the quality, value and extending the material lifetime;
- industrial value chains including primary and secondary raw material producers, polymer suppliers, additives suppliers, converters, brand owners and retailers (SMEs and large companies), agri-food suppliers, waste managers and recyclers introduce sustainable food packaging on the market through enhanced design for recycling and solutions for effective sorting and recycling on an industrial scale, in line with the safe-and-sustainable-by-design principles²²⁶;
- consumers and civil society are sufficiently informed about appropriate ways of disposal of used food packaging to enable its circularity.

Scope: Plastic food packaging represents a significant part of all plastic packaging put on the EU market. Flexible films composed of multiple layers are commonly difficult to recycle. And to date, there is no market at scale for closing the loop and establish recycling systems from food contact back to food contact application. Despite the advancement of several solutions, there is a need to improve the efficiency of recycling solutions and reach as high as

²²⁵ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

²²⁶ [Safe and sustainable by design - European Commission](#)

possible yield of food contact compliant recycled plastic coming from post-consumer packaging films.

Proposals should:

- advance marketable solutions towards mono-material multilayer flexible plastic food contact packaging to enable its effective end-of-life collection, sorting and recycling into food contact-compliant recycled plastic suitable for food packaging;
- Improve eco-design of multilayer plastic food packaging and demonstrate at large scale digital solutions for circularity such as digital product passport;
- demonstrate individual and/or a combination of physical technologies and digital solutions (for example, AI, watermarking, or others) to further improve sorting yield of multilayer flexible packaging;
- test and demonstrate recycling technologies (separation, purification, decontamination, etc.) enabling uptake of food contact compliant recycled plastic into food contact packaging in line with the targets of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation;
- demonstrate pathways to increase the recycled content of food contact compliant recycled plastic in new food packaging products
- demonstrate solutions on an industrial scale involving the whole value chain, while ensuring compliance with relevant food contact regulations (Regulation 2022/1616 and Regulation 1935/2004).

Proposals should also evaluate the feasibility, effectiveness and impact of the demonstrated solutions using robust evaluation methods (including lifecycle assessments such as product environmental footprint, where relevant) and present data and evidence about the economic, environmental and social costs and benefits of the developed solutions.

Engagement of all relevant value chain stakeholders is expected, i.e. primary and secondary raw material producers, polymer suppliers, additives suppliers, converters, agri-food suppliers, brand owners and retailers (SMEs and large companies), waste managers and recyclers. Clustering with other relevant Horizon Europe projects is encouraged.

The topic supports the European Green Deal, the Regulation on Packaging and Packaging Waste, the Single Use Plastics Directive, the Waste Shipment Regulation, the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation and its working plan, the Regulation for recycling of plastic intended for contact with food, the Zero Pollution Action Plan, and the EU Circular Economy Act and contributes to Europe's efforts to develop a single market for sustainable products.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-02: Advancing recycling technologies for mixed post-consumer textiles waste from blended products

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 5.00 and 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 11.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²²⁷ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- European textiles manufacturers have access to novel technologies for fibre-to-fibre recycling of post-consumer textile waste;
- local authorities and consumers benefit from resource- and cost-efficient waste management of post-consumer blended textiles;
- European recyclers are equipped with properly characterised mixed post-consumer textile waste.

Scope: The topic aims at improved management of the end-of-life phase of textile products. Textiles are the fourth highest-pressure category for the use of primary raw materials and water and fifth for GHG emissions and a major source of microplastic pollution in production and use phases. They are also a key material and product stream in the circular economy action plan. Proposals are expected to demonstrate and deploy innovative solutions for increased quality, non-toxicity and durability of secondary textile materials and their processing and treatments.

²²⁷ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Proposals should:

- address textile consumer products made of fibre blends (e.g. polycotton, or other blends of multiple materials in combination such as synthetic, semi-synthetic and natural);
- demonstrate and test novel and marketable solutions for post-consumer textile waste (apparel and home textiles) enabling its effective end-of-life collection, sorting and recycling (fibre-to-fibre), possibly including biotech solutions;
- demonstrate and test innovative techniques for effectively disassembling complex products, separating multi-material layers and fibre blends and removal of non-textile components, coatings or contaminants to facilitate efficient recycling processes;
- assess the recyclability limits of textiles by determining the number of recycling cycles a fibre can undergo. When further fibre-to-fibre recycling is no longer viable, alternative applications should be explored to extend the material's value. Solutions should address recycling of products made of natural fibres (e.g., cotton) or/and semi-synthetic fibres, i.e. modified natural fibres (e.g. viscose), blended with synthetic fibres, ensuring optimal resource efficiency and minimizing waste throughout the textile lifecycle;
- characterize post-consumer textile waste in order to define appropriate management practices in particular if the technology is developed within an industrial and urban symbiosis;
- advance recycling technologies that remove persistent chemicals (e.g. PFAS) from post-consumer textile waste which may harm human health and the environment, and that minimise the release of hazardous chemicals and microplastics during the recycling process.

A lifecycle perspective using LCA and LCC should be used when validating the technical and economic feasibility of the developed, improved, demonstrated and up-scaled processes. For comparability reasons, LCAs should use well-established methods and be based on PEF wherever feasible. Proposals should fully incorporate the Safe and Sustainable by Design (SSbD) approach.

Proposals are expected to contribute to the objectives of the Textiles of the Future partnership and to build on/coordinate with EU projects funded under the partnership and previous textile-related Horizon Europe calls. Clustering with other relevant Horizon Europe projects is encouraged.

The topic supports the European Green Deal, the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation and its working plan, the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles, the Waste Framework Directive, the Zero Pollution Action Plan, the EU Circular Economy Act and contributes to Europe's efforts to develop a single market for sustainable products. It also contributes to the Start-ups and Scale-ups strategy.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-03: Advanced recovery of critical raw materials from Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²²⁸.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- improved collection, sorting and recycling technologies that enhance significantly the recovery rates of strategic and critical raw materials from waste from electrical and electronic equipment, reducing the dependence on imported secondary and primary materials, and mitigating the climate and environmental impacts associated with their extraction, including biodiversity loss, by reducing the need for primary raw material extraction and minimising waste;
- strengthened waste market creation through the development of economically viable and environmentally sound recovery and recycling practices and technologies, with a particular emphasis on secondary strategic raw materials of lower costs and sufficiently high quality and/or purity, promoting a circular economy for electrical and electronic equipment.

²²⁸ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Scope: As Europe seeks to reduce its dependence on imported critical raw materials and mitigate climate and environmental impacts from extraction, there is a pressing need for innovative and economically viable recycling processes. With the rapid increase in electronic waste, improving recycling technologies is essential to support the EU's transition to a circular economy. The topic addresses an urgent need to enhance the recovery and recycling of critical raw materials (CRMs) from Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) due to the increasing global demand for these materials, which are essential for various high-tech and green technologies.

Proposals should:

- develop new and/or improve existing scalable processes and technologies (including AI, where relevant, and exploring innovative recovery and recycling methods – possibly bio-based, bio-inspired, or other breakthrough technologies) to efficiently collect, sort, recover and recycle strategic and critical raw materials including single components from electrical and electronic equipment waste, such as rare earth elements, precious metals and other valuable materials vital for the green and digital transitions, as well as possibly for EU aerospace and defence;
- develop standards, technologies and processes, that demonstrate how to ensure the quality, cost and safety of recycled strategic and critical raw materials for the creation of an economically viable and sustainable waste market, thus reducing the environmental footprint of such processes, supporting biodiversity preservation and sustainable consumption, optimising the efficiency and effectiveness, including by improved automation and synergies of recovering multiple CRMs, bringing down costs and time while ensuring that EU's secondary raw materials can be competitive against imported primary and secondary materials.

The topic supports EU policies, particularly the European Green Deal, the EU Circular Economy Act, the Clean Industrial Deal, the Critical Raw Materials Act, the Waste from Electrical and Electronic Waste Directive, the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) and Europe's efforts to develop a single market for sustainable products. Synergies with Cluster 4, the European Partnership on Raw Materials and ongoing Cluster 6 projects are encouraged.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-04: Demonstrating and deploying innovative collection, sorting-for-reuse and repair systems for textiles at city/region level (Circular Cities and Regions Initiative topic)

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a

	proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part. The following additional eligibility criteria apply: at least nine (9) distinct regional or local authorities must be part of the consortium as beneficiaries, among which at least three (3) from different demonstration cities/regions and another six (6) from other and different replication cities/regions.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²²⁹.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- local/regional authorities and their operators adopt optimised collection and sorting systems of municipal waste that prioritise textile reuse and repair;
- social economy entities and society at large benefit from favourable conditions for reuse and repair practices which enable product lifetime prolongation and stimulate second-hand markets
- citizens have access to better information, leading to greater awareness and public acceptance, and stimulating behavioural change towards sustainable consumption;

²²⁹ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- innovative circular textile methodologies, practices and solutions are made available to enable large-scale replication and upscaling in European cities and regions;
- businesses are stimulated to advance repair strategies and circular business models while creating new jobs.

Scope: This topic supports the implementation of the European Commission's [Circular Cities and Regions Initiative](#) (CCRI). It is part of a series of CCRI-related topics funded under Horizon Europe with the aim of accelerating place-based innovation, boosting skills and capacities as well as supporting the implementation of solutions for a circular systemic transition at city/region level. The implementation of circular systemic solutions reduces environmental impacts and contribute to the preservation of biodiversity, by decreasing the extraction of primary raw materials and minimizing waste generation.

Proposals should:

- develop, test and validate innovative solutions that accelerate the adoption of textile reuse and repair practices by local/regional authorities and their operators (e.g. public collection points, retailer take-back schemes);
- involve citizens, local (e.g. upcycling) businesses and social enterprises in the development and implementation of local repair & reuse strategies and practices;
- improve data captured on local textile waste flows and ensure transparency and traceability across the supply chain;
- develop solutions for sorting, and preparing for re-use, including digital solutions (in view of the implementation of digital product passport) and AI to enable repair and affordable pricing of repaired clothes and to stimulate reuse of textiles, particularly apparels;
- incentivise manufacturers to provide spare parts to enhance reuse and reparability (e.g. linen for a coat, extra buttons, zippers, etc.) and to provide extended guarantee.
- develop actionable recommendations for replication in other European cities and regions.

Proposals must use the multi-actor approach (MAA) and take into account a gender sensitive and inclusive approach. Collaboration between retailers/manufacturers and small repair business and social enterprises is encouraged.

Proposals should seek to contribute to the goals and cooperate with the services of the European Commission's Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI) and in particular with the CCRI Coordination and Support Office. Joint activities with other CCRI-related projects and clustering with other related projects is strongly encouraged.

Proposals should also evaluate the feasibility, effectiveness and impact of the demonstrated solutions using robust evaluation methods (including lifecycle assessments such as product

environmental footprint, where relevant) and present data and evidence about the economic, environmental and social costs and benefits of the developed solutions.

The topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines and the involvement of SSH experts, institutions as well as the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise, in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities.

The topic supports the European Green Deal, the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation and its working plan, the EU Circular Economy Act and contributes to Europe's efforts to develop a single market for sustainable products. It also contributes to the Start-ups and Scale-ups strategy through deep structural transformations and place-based innovation and it is in line with the Waste Framework Directive and EPR for textiles.

Innovating for sustainable bio-based systems, biotechnology and the bioeconomy

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-05: Understanding biomass flows in Europe

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the

<i>Agreements</i>	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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²³⁰ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- enhanced understanding of the environmental, social and economic potential of the supply of different biomass types (from local to international perspectives), as well as its sustainability implications, including biodiversity and (air, water and soil) pollution, synergies and tensions;
- enhanced capacity of private and public stakeholders to increase resource efficiency in utilising primary and secondary biomass as well as biomass processing and use, including through digital tools which may involve artificial intelligence and remote sensing, and roadmaps towards sustainable biomass management; without undermining food security;
- enhanced support to businesses and administrations that optimise biomass supply, processing, and use, such that ecosystems and biodiversity are protected and restored, emissions of greenhouse gases and pollutants reduced, and human needs for biomass satisfied in sufficient and fair way.

Scope: There is a need to better understand the production and use of biomass, a limited resource, in its various types. Bioeconomy, and biomass as its essential feedstock, provides solutions on various dimensions (environmental, social and economic). However, there are biomass-related challenges to overcome: the EU forest carbon sink is below the target and declining in most countries and the need to restore ecosystems and halt biodiversity loss²³¹. This implies that biomass supply is partly unsustainable. Simultaneously, companies see themselves challenged to satisfy the growing demand for biomass in the future. There are solutions to increase the sustainable production, including to reduce pollutants, and adjust the demand: e.g. better valorise unused or under-exploited sustainable biomass and degraded land, apply new breeding techniques and increase resource efficiency through circular design, new business models, consumption, recycling or repair.

There is a need to better understand where biomass valorisation can be improved, to ensure local or regional added value increases and to drive innovative and competitive business solutions. For an optimal biomass production and effective use, matching supply and demand

²³⁰ This [decision](#) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

²³¹ EEA [The European Biomass Puzzle | European Environment Agency's home page](#) / EC [LULUCF report](#) / EC JRC [The JRC Biomass Mandate | Knowledge for policy](#)

in the local or regional context, a better and more robust understanding of actual biomass flows is a fundamental prerequisite.

Proposals should address all the following activities:

- Improve and develop innovative, administration-light biomass monitoring and modelling/assessment methods and digital tools at European level (regional, national, and continental scale) to optimise biomass flows, paying particular attention to areas with untapped (sustainable) biomass resources, in close cooperation with stakeholders.
- Provide an updated estimate of biomass supply and demand today and projected until 2050 at national and EU level, including associated countries, considering the quality of biomass, their potential use, the sustainability and risks (e.g. spread of pathogens) of supplied biomass, as well as potential non-satisfied (non-)industrial demand due to the limitation of availability of sustainable biomass. The 2050 outlook should be accompanied by scenarios on EU's future bioresources regarding supply and demand.
- Test and demonstrate, in cooperation with stakeholders, the feasibility of biomass reporting in test regions of at least 10 countries across Europe with different potential of biomass supply.

The European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding since the monitoring and assessment tools developed may contribute to the EU level assessment of biomass flows of the Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy.

Proposals are encouraged to work together with additional relevant initiatives including those of the Circular Biobased Europe Joint Undertaking, the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, the BIOEAST Initiative; build on results from projects such as BIO2REG, CONCERTO, NextGenCarbon; as well as considering the topic 'HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-08: Improving biomass flows for a sustainable and circular bioeconomy'.

Proposals are encouraged to consider, where relevant, the data, expertise and services offered by the European research infrastructure in the environment, biological and food domains.

The topic is relevant to the EU policies related to the European Commission's communication on: Building the future with nature: Boosting Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing in the EU; the Competitiveness Compass and the Clean Industrial Deal; the Vision for Agriculture and Food; the new Bioeconomy Strategy, the Life Sciences Strategy, the EU Biotech Act and the Circular Economy Act.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-06: Bioeconomy policy support hub for Member States, regions and sectors

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)
Specific conditions

<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²³².

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Most Member States and regions²³³ have established the bioeconomy as an important policy field. Effective bioeconomy policies and strategies are developed and implemented with specific impact targets in mind;
- policies and action plans and roadmaps are coordinated across parts of government (e.g. Ministries) and across the quadruple helix (government, sectors, research & innovation, society) to take into account the cross-sectoral and place-based character of the bioeconomy, and the need for a whole of government approach. Platforms are established to facilitate dialogue, experimentation, learning and coordination;
- all actors of the quadruple helix (e.g. policy makers, NGOs, economic sectors) are aware of the bioeconomy, as well as of the potential and challenges that are specific for their perspective and context. The bioeconomy concept, its principles and its solutions and

²³² This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

²³³ Including associated countries and EEA member states

innovations are mainstreamed by sectors (e.g. food, textiles, chemicals, energy, agriculture, forestry).

Scope: Proposals should:

- establish a European Bioeconomy Policy Support Hub to provide innovative approaches, hands-on support, learning and advise to Member States and regions on plans, roadmaps, policies and collaborations to deploy their bioeconomies;
- provide innovative tools to assess, on an ongoing basis, the stage of development of bioeconomy policies and strategies in Member States and regions, and to assess the quality of their implementation;
- provide relevant support, new approaches and recommendations to improve and/or take next steps. Take into account the learnings of the Report “[Deploying the bioeconomy in the EU](#)” (2021, European Commission), as well as the results of relevant Horizon Europe projects (e.g. ShapingBio, CEE2ACT, SCALE-UP).
- provide an overview of the uptake of new bioeconomy solutions based on biomass and biological resources (including ecosystems) in European value chains and sectors (including service sectors);
- provide innovative approaches, hands-on support, learning and advise to Member States and regions to deploy their bioeconomies. This can include activities that aim help to:
 - o inform and engage political leadership on the potential of the bioeconomy;
 - o establish or improve platforms facilitate policy dialogue, experimentation, learning and coordination (e.g. policy labs);
 - o map the bioeconomy’s potential across sectors and society at regional and Member State level, and increase awareness;
 - o advance skills of policy makers, and learn from best practices in bioeconomy policy and implementation;
 - o set-up or improve local bioeconomy councils, i.e. platforms for dialogue between government, sectors, academia and society (quadruple helix) on bioeconomy policies, plans, roadmaps and their implementation;
 - o put in place collaborations that facilitate the scaling-up of bioeconomy solutions in value chains and sectors that are relevant for the Member State or region;
 - o monitor the bioeconomy as well as the change process it brings;
- ensure innovative approaches, hands-on support, learning and advise that is both generic (targeting all Member States and regions; or groups of Member States and regions) and

tailormade (in response to questions from specific Member States and regions that express clear need and commitment to collaborate).

- carry out activities to maximize the geographical spread of its support and advice;
- enable structural dialogue with European Commission services, and collaborate with relevant initiatives such as the Circular Bio-based Europe (CBE) Joint Undertaking, European University Alliances, the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform or the BIOEAST initiative
- collaborate with such partners on a roadmap to ensure that key results, tools and approaches can be sustained after the end of the project;
- collaborate with relevant Horizon Europe projects (e.g. ShapingBio) and/or build on their results.

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding since results could contribute to the Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy's monitoring of bioeconomy policy developments in EU countries and regions.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-07: Advancing the European bio-based innovation enabled by biotechnology and biomanufacturing concepts

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the

	Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²³⁴ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- significant advance in the development of innovation in biotechnology, life sciences and/or biomanufacturing concepts, preparing future deployment of bio-based and bio-inspired processes, products and materials, as a basis for sustainable, fair, safe and circular value chains, contributing to decarbonisation, industrial competitiveness and the strategic autonomy of the EU and Associated Countries;
- improved environmental sustainability of the developed innovative bio-based solutions, with positive and quantifiable impact on climate and biodiversity, and circularity of the European bioeconomy via enhanced resource efficiency, including of biological feedstocks, water and energy, integrating bio-based sector to minimize and remediate waste production.

Scope: Actions funded under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the European Commission communication on ‘Building the future with nature: Boosting Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing in the EU’, the Life Sciences Strategy, the upcoming EU Biotech Act, and Circular Economy Act, the EU strategy on research and technology infrastructure, the Clean Industrial Deal and the policies related to the digital transition (e.g. AI Act, etc.). It also contributes to the Start-ups and Scale-ups Strategy.

Proposals should address the following activities:

- identify, select and develop further promising selected key technologies underpinning the bio-based innovation/industry, in particular R&D on synthetic/molecular biology, gene editing, metabolic engineering, microbiome²³⁵, and/or biofoundry approaches, covering all applications aiming at clean growth and environmental solutions. Advancing towards validation at a pilot-scale is encouraged, to enable future exploitation. The applications in health biotechnology, as well as the biofuel/bioenergy area are excluded, to avoid overlaps with Horizon Europe Clusters 1 and 5, respectively;
- ensure the integration of digital technologies (e.g. AI/Machine Learning, bioinformatics);
- advance the convergence of biotech and life sciences developed under the first point with Nature-based Solutions, e.g. for environmental applications, carbon

²³⁴ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

²³⁵ Seeking synergies with any parallel EU calls in this work programme, and beyond, e.g. HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-11: Integrating a holistic perspective in microbiome research for resilient, competitive and sustainable food systems. Microbiomes from any environment can be considered.

sequestration²³⁶, biodiversity protection/enhancement, aligned with (bio-)circular economy principles (e.g. cascading biomass use), ensuring the environmental fate and sustainability is considered quantitatively at the earliest stage and ensuring safety to human health and environment is addressed and guaranteed;

- develop recommendations for policy makers and industrial actors, taking into account the available scientifically sound assessment of risks and benefits of the developed solutions.

Proposals should involve SMEs – both as project beneficiaries and as external actors – and offer opportunities to newcomers (to Horizon Europe Cluster 6). Proposals should also engage with the civil society stakeholders such as NGOs and consumer organisations to seek stakeholder involvement and acceptance, thus advancing scale-up and facilitating future market uptake. Proposals need to ensure compliance with the ‘Do no significant harm’ (DNSH) principle.

Proposals are encouraged to consider, where relevant, the data, expertise and services offered by European research infrastructures²³⁷, such as EMSO ERIC, EU-OPENSCREEN, ELIXIR, EMBRC ERIC, IBISBA. Efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the context of this topic is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable).

Cooperation with the parallel projects funded under topic HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-10: Bio-based innovation in society: supporting the sustainable way of living is encouraged, to benefit from synergies and avoid overlaps. Similarly, activities should benefit from synergies and avoid overlaps with ongoing projects, e.g. funded under the topic HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-02-05-two-stage: Life sciences and their convergence with digital technologies for prospecting, understanding and sustainably using biological resources, topic HORIZON-CL6-2023-CIRCBIO-01: Broadening the spectrum of robust enzymes and microbial hosts in industrial biotechnology, under topics related to bioprospecting such as HORIZON-CL6-2025-01-CIRCBIO-14: Bioprospecting and optimised production of marine/aquatic natural products in the omics & artificial intelligence era and HORIZON-CL6-2025-01-CIRCBIO-08: Bioprospecting and optimized production of the terrestrial natural products: new opportunities for bio-based sectors or those to be funded under the topic HORIZON-CL6-2025-01-CIRCBIO-10: Support to the EU Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing Initiative: scoping action.

Cooperation between all projects funded under this topic should be also foreseen, as a specific task, with an allocation of resources, for synergies.

This topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines and involvement of SSH experts in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities. International cooperation is encouraged.

²³⁶ Considering synergies with the parallel topic on HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-08: Biotechnology application for CCU.

²³⁷ The catalogue of European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) research infrastructures portfolio can be browsed from ESFRI website <https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/>

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-08: Supporting pre-normative research for standardization of the bio-based products

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²³⁸.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- higher and more robust industrial European competitiveness, decarbonisation and strategic autonomy, advancing the lead market for bio-based industry;
- improved environmental sustainability, with positive impact on climate, pollution and biodiversity, via the standardization of the bio-based sector and products.

²³⁸ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Scope: Proposals should address the following activities:

- aiming at overall high sustainability and environmental benefits, and considering the economic feasibility, for high quality of final products, select a bio-based sector/industry²³⁹ to develop or improve knowledge, technology, product, process, service or solution related to Ecodesign applicable to the chosen sector;
- identify specific gaps in standardization research pipeline, for bio-based products, followed by pre-normative R&D tasks, aiming at high socio-economic and positive environmental impact, allowing the development and deployment of safe and sustainable, circular bio-based value chains/products, with reduced pressure on biological resources and ecosystems, leading to the consistent improvement of their environmental footprint;
- engage with relevant stakeholders from bio-based industry and standardisation bodies, as well as policy makers and authorities at national and European level, creating community of practice, aiming at transparency and inclusiveness, for subsequent market uptake of innovative and competitive solutions with minimised impact on the environment.

The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the European Commission communication on safe and sustainable by design framework, upcoming updated Bioeconomy Strategy and Circular Economy Act, Clean Industrial Deal and the SME Strategy, as well as the chemicals industry package and the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation and its working plan. It also contributes to the Start-ups and Scale-ups strategy.

Consider synergies with the parallel topic HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-02: Enhancing ecodesign and circularity of construction products. The JRC may contribute to the projects selected for funding with work on strategic technologies for economic security and innovative industrial ecosystems, particularly its activities on advanced materials for safe and sustainable innovation.

Cooperation between all projects funded under this topic should also be foreseen, as a specific tasks, with an allocation of resources, for synergies.

This topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines and involvement of SSH experts in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities. International cooperation is encouraged.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-09: Balancing food security, bioeconomy, climate and biodiversity objectives to unlock sustainable value chains

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)

²³⁹ including intermediate bio-based chemicals, polymers etc. Bioenergy/biofuel applications are out of scope.

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁴⁰.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- decision-makers have improved understanding of the impacts of bioeconomy and nature markets on the sustainability of the agricultural sector, food security, climate and biodiversity, as well as on land-use conflicts;
- society benefits from economic activities that align bioeconomy, climate and biodiversity objectives while safeguarding food security;
- farmers gain opportunities to diversify their production, their income and improve the environmental performance of agricultural production without compromising food supply;
- policymakers are better equipped to develop more effective, evidence-based agricultural and environmental policies.

²⁴⁰ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Scope: As the bioeconomy and nature markets gain importance, enabling diversification of value streams for farmers, policymakers must ensure that the growing use of agricultural biomass and agricultural land for non-food purposes (e.g., for the development of novel bio-based chemicals, compounds, materials, products and services, energy production, environmental services provision, carbon and biodiversity credits) does not compromise food security. For the purpose of this topic, nature markets encompass market mechanisms (e.g., nature credits as proposed in the Nature Credits Roadmap²⁴¹, carbon credits, market-based payments for environmental services) mobilising private finance to create income streams for primary producers in return for undertaking actions supporting well-functioning ecosystem services (e.g., water quality and availability, biodiversity, climate). Strategies are needed to balance market incentives, safeguard food supply and the environment, and support farmers in diversifying incomes through sustainable business models and value chains. Successful proposals should support the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food, the Common Agricultural Policy, the new EU Bioeconomy Strategy, the Carbon Removals and Carbon Farming (CRCF) Regulation and the climate and biodiversity objectives of the European Green Deal.

Proposals should:

- explore natural capital accounting methods integrating economics and nature into agricultural accounts, and their potential to support economic valuation, pricing and integration in decision-making of environmental services provided by farmers;
- analyse existing and develop new innovative business models and value chains from which farmers can derive fair value and new income beyond food and feed production. This work should include, among others, an assessment of their potential to integrate sustainable practices, enhance farm profitability and performance, and support the transition to a circular bio-based economy and the green transition, as well as an assessment of the market operators involved;
- when conducting the research/assessment, consider the potential of biomass residues and secondary biomass streams, including waste, as well as low value, unused or underutilised biomass, and land areas;
- conduct interdisciplinary research from farm to macro levels, encompassing economic, social, biodiversity and climate impacts, and provide analytical tools in particular assessing implications for:
 - o farmers' income, decision-making and farm management including of its natural capital;
 - o biomass supply and demand and threshold effects of market prices on production choices;

²⁴¹ EUR-Lex - 52025DC0374 - EN - EUR-Lex

- o land-use conflicts and food security risks (covering the availability, accessibility, utilisation and stability dimensions), considering leakage effects and other potential conflicts of use (e.g. water);
- provide recommendations for the design of policies and sustainable business models and value chains. The recommendations should anticipate trade-offs and align bioeconomy, climate and biodiversity goals while safeguarding food security and ensuring that farmers can diversify and receive fair incomes. They should also respond to evolving consumer demand.

Proposals should ensure complementarities with ongoing relevant Horizon Europe projects and capitalise on existing relevant research findings and tools. Proposals should also ensure synergies with other relevant EU-funded LIFE and knowledge innovation projects, studies, pilot projects, initiatives and processes (e.g., Economic Accounts for Agriculture framework).

Proposals should include a dedicated task, appropriate resources and a plan on how they will collaborate with other projects selected under this topic (e.g., by participating in joint activities, workshops, as well as common communication and dissemination activities).

Proposals must implement the ‘multi-actor approach’, with a consortium based on a balanced mix of actors with complementary knowledge, including farmers, researchers, farm accountants, and businesses.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) disciplines.

Proposals are encouraged to consider, where relevant, the data, expertise and services offered by European research infrastructures²⁴² in the environment, biological & food domains.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-10: Bio-based innovation in society: supporting the sustainable way of living

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

²⁴² The catalogue of European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) research infrastructures portfolio can be browsed from ESFRI website <https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/>

<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁴³ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- advanced socio-economic transformation based on scientific/technological opportunities delivered by the bio-based sectors and bioeconomy. This will result in innovative bio-based products and services, supporting the more sustainable way of living (e.g. new socio-economic models), higher circularity, affordability, resource efficiency, climate neutrality etc);
- improved public understanding and engagement in bio-based innovation underpinned by scientific advances in life sciences and biotechnology;
- better living conditions for individuals and communities, benefiting from less polluted ecosystems, via healthier, and environmentally sustainable products and services with a reduced carbon footprint and based on circular and bio-based solutions.

Scope: The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the European Commission communication on: Building the future with nature: Boosting Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing in the EU, the upcoming Life Sciences Strategy, the EU Biotech Act, Clean Industrial Deal and the policies related to the fair green transition (objective of not leaving anyone behind). It also contributes to the Start-ups and Scale-ups strategy. Synergies with activities under the Circular Bio-based Europe (CBE) Joint Undertaking and New European Bauhaus are encouraged.

Proposals should address the following activities:

- develop the innovative user-friendly bio-based products and/or services, underpinned by biotechnology and biomanufacturing approaches, to support the more sustainable applications with a clear societal benefit, such as less resource-intensive consumer

²⁴³ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

goods, to reduce environmental and climate pressures. Foresee the necessary links with the digital technologies and tools (e.g., bioinformatics, AI, etc.);

- assess the potential of new socio-economic models for circular and bio-based systems, integrating aspects of environmental justice, gender equality, diversity and social inclusion, as well as relevant international global best practice, via e.g. societal dialogue/innovation, social impact assessment, involvement and inputs from the social sciences and humanities (SSH);
- include research and innovation activities to understand and increase the level of current public perception and acceptance, including the benefits / risks, addressing the consumer perspective, market acceptance and understanding of the bio-based innovation, as well as delivering higher understanding of consumption patterns and social demands;
- foresee the cooperation and feedback loops with industry and authorities, in respect to any new market solutions proposed.

The multi-actor approach is encouraged. Proposals should involve SMEs – both as project beneficiaries or external actors - and offer opportunities to newcomers to Horizon Europe Cluster 6, as well as engage with the civil society stakeholders such as NGOs and consumer organisations to advance scale-up and facilitate future market deployment.

Cooperation with projects funded under parallel topics such as HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-07: Advancing the European bio-based innovation enabled by biotechnology and biomanufacturing concepts is encouraged to maximise synergies, while avoiding overlaps. Cooperation between all projects funded under this topic should also be foreseen, as a specific tasks, with an allocation of resources, for synergies.

Proposals should integrate the gender dimension and consider other social categories besides gender (disability, age, socio-economic status, ethnic and/or cultural origin, sexual orientation, etc.), and their intersections.

This topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines and involvement of SSH experts in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities. International cooperation is encouraged.

Innovating for blue bioeconomy and biotechnology value chains

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-11: Harnessing the unique properties of marine organisms to deliver sustainable blue bio-based products

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)
Specific conditions

<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁴⁴ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- increased support on green bioprocessing, safe and sustainable blue bio-based products;
- increased understanding of safety, effectiveness and regulatory bottlenecks of blue bio-based products.
- increased commitment to biodiversity preservation and conservation ensuring that the biodiscovery of new compounds does not lead to unsustainable harvesting from the wild and promoting sustainable use of genetic diversity.

Scope: The European industry must transition to a greener, more sustainable model to enhance its competitiveness against other business models and foster the production of novel high-value sustainable products. Achieving this requires a shift towards a bio-based system, which leverages biological processes to deliver products that contribute to climate change mitigation by reducing environmental impact and can compete with and eventually replace traditional models. For instance, the current use of hazardous chemicals in various industries, such as the textile and polymer industries, requires the development of more sustainable and environmentally friendly alternatives.

²⁴⁴ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

In this context, the vast and largely untapped diversity of marine organisms—including fungi, algae, and invertebrates—presents a valuable source of biomolecules with unique properties. These marine-derived compounds hold significant potential across a range of applications, for example from construction materials, chemical processes to bioplastics and textiles. Supporting research and innovation in blue biotechnology fosters the transition toward greener, high-performance products across multiple industries.

Proposals should address the following:

- develop safe and sustainable blue bio-based products, by exploring the use of the unique physical, chemical and biochemical properties of biomolecules from marine organisms (e.g., adhesion, structural organization, fluorescence, luminescence). Proposals in scope include novel adhesion agents or bonding products, biochemicals to replace hazardous chemicals, antifouling paintings and coatings, replacement for synthetic surfactants, biomarkers, biosensors, enzymes. Proposals aiming to develop molecules with important economic or societal impact are encouraged. The applications in health biotechnology, as well as the biofuel/bioenergy area are excluded, to avoid overlaps with Horizon Europe Clusters 1 and 5, respectively.
- incorporate the use of synthetic and engineering biology approaches and foresee the necessary links with the digital technologies and tools (AI/ML, bioinformatics);
- include the assessment of the costs and benefits compared to conventional alternatives in the market. Proposals should look into regulatory, market and value chain bottlenecks;
- assess the safety, environmental sustainability and effectiveness of the developed bio-based products derived from marine environments compared to the equivalent material on the market;
- develop recommendations for policy makers and industrial actors, considering the available scientifically sound assessment of risks and benefits of the developed solutions.

Proposals should cover the innovation chain from research, to development, and proof of concept. Legal aspects linked to securing clear access to marine resources, including related infrastructures and bio-resources banks and collections, their sustainable use as well as access and benefit sharing aspects, should be properly considered. Marine resources can be obtained sustainably from natural environments, as well as from publicly or privately accessible collections. The harvesting or utilization of sentient marine animals, including invertebrates, must be carefully evaluated to ensure that ethical and moral considerations are adequately addressed.

Proposals are encouraged to consider, where relevant, the data, expertise and services offered by European research infrastructures²⁴⁵, such as EMSO ERIC, EU-OPENSOURCE, ELIXIR, EMBRC ERIC, IBISBA. Efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the

²⁴⁵ The catalogue of European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) research infrastructures portfolio can be browsed from ESFRI website <https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/>

context of this topic is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable). Proposals should ensure adequate involvement of all relevant stakeholders to maximize the impact and use of the developed products, including but not limited to economic and financial actors. International cooperation, for example with Latin America and Caribbean countries, is encouraged.

Proposals are expected to establish synergies and links with relevant projects funded under the Horizon Europe CL6 Work Programmes 2021-2025²⁴⁶ and with actions supported by the Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU) and the Sustainable Blue Partnership (SBEP) ensuring that any potential overlaps or duplications are avoided.

Projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the Bioeconomy Strategy, the European Life Sciences Strategy, the EU Biotech Act, the EU Algae Initiative, the European Ocean Pact, the EU strategy on research and technology infrastructures, and the [new approach for a sustainable blue economy](#).

Enabling a circular economy transition

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-01-two-stage: Deploying circular systemic solutions through living labs in cities and regions (Circular Cities and Regions Initiative topic)

Call: Call 01 - two stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: at least five (5) distinct ‘living labs’ linked to regional or local authorities (and possibly together with their public and/or private ecosystem actors operating in their respective territories) must be part of the consortium as beneficiaries, among which at least two (2) living labs must be from different demonstration sites and another three (3) from other and

²⁴⁶ E.g. HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-09, HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01-07, HORIZON-CL6-2023-CircBio-01-11, HORIZON-CL6-2024-CircBio-01-10, HORIZON-CL6-2025-01-CIRCBIO-14.

	different replication sites. 1 out of the 3 replication sites must be located in Horizon Europe widening countries (including Outermost Regions). The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁴⁷.

Expected Outcome:

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- increased circularity and reduced emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollutants in the economic sectors, services and product value chains at local and/or regional scale This also includes an efficient valorisation of local resources, with positive effects on air and water quality as well as on biodiversity;
- widespread deployment and easier replication, scalability and visibility of circular systemic solutions for a multiplication of their economic, social and environmental benefits;
- enhanced collaboration and knowledge transfer between public authorities (cities and regions), companies, research and citizens in addressing environmental challenges, such as climate-change, resource depletion and biodiversity loss.

Scope: This topic supports the implementation of the European Commission’s [Circular Cities and Regions Initiative](#) (CCRI). It builds on a series of CCRI-related topics funded under Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe, and replicated every one to two programming year since 2021. The goal is to accelerate place-based innovation, boost skills and capacities and support the implementation of solutions for a circular systemic transition at city or region level. Implementing circular systemic solutions reduces environmental impacts and contribute to the

²⁴⁷ This [decision](#) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

preservation of biodiversity, by decreasing the extraction of primary raw materials and minimizing waste generation.

This topic specifically focuses on moving from demonstration to further deployment and upscaling through the setup of well-functioning real-life innovation ecosystem, such as living labs. This topic targets public local and regional authorities (or their groupings) in EU Member States and Associated Countries. Proposed living labs should enable systematic participation of all ecosystem stakeholder in targeted cities and regions to co-create solutions that are practical, relevant, and readily applicable. These stakeholders include citizens, policymakers, research bodies, academia, industries, start-ups and SMEs, social economy entities and financial intermediaries. In line with the nature of living labs, projects must adopt the multi-actor approach to involve end-users. The actors involved in each living lab may vary, based on its unique characteristics. Proposals should set up engaging and effective governance structures, facilitate collaboration and coordination, and ensure continuous feedback and monitoring to enable an iterative and flexible process. Proposals should integrate systemic socio-ecological approaches and involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines (e.g., economics, politics, sociology, psychology, gender studies).

Proposals should support the validation, testing and optimisation of innovative, circular systemic solutions in selected cities/regions (the ‘demonstrators’), along with relevant governance models and business plans. This CCRI-related topic does not target specific technologies or industrial sectors but supports a place-based approach. This means that proposals should select their targeted sector(s) and/or value chain(s), based on a detailed analysis of the local/regional contexts and specific circular potentials.

Proposals should facilitate knowledge and experience transfer for further outreach and large scale replication across Europe. Proposals should turn their insights into actionable recommendations, identifying the lessons learned, specifying the enabling framework, main barriers and enablers, business case, and other relevant factors for successful replication and upscaling in other cities and/or regions (the ‘replicators’).

At least two different demonstration and three replication ‘living labs’ (incl. cities/regions – possibly together with their public and/or private ecosystem partners in their territory) must be part of the consortium. One out of the three replication labs must be located in [Horizon Europe widening countries](#) (including Outermost Regions).

Proposals should clearly specify how they will ensure synergies and complementarities with other relevant circular economy projects and initiatives, including those recognised as CCRI Projects²⁴⁸ and CCRI Associated Partners²⁴⁹. In that sense, proposals should include a dedicated task, appropriate resources and a plan on how they will collaborate with the CCRI office, projects and partners (e.g. thematic discussion groups, joint events, joint R&I gap

²⁴⁸ List of CCRI Projects from Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe: <https://circular-cities-and-regions.ec.europa.eu/ccri-projects>. New CCRI-related projects under the 2026-2027 work programme include: HORIZON-MISS-2027-04-CIT-CCRI-04 and HORIZON-MISS-2026-06-01-CIT-NEB-B4P-CCRI.

²⁴⁹ List of CCRI Associated Partners: <https://circular-cities-and-regions.ec.europa.eu/associated-partners>

analysis and policy briefs). Clustering and dissemination activities will be facilitated and supported by the CCRI Coordination and Support Office to ease knowledge exchange, foster solution replication and uptake, and maximise impact.

This topic contributes to the objectives of the European Green Deal and the Clean Industrial Deal, in particular the 2020 circular economy action plan (CEAP), as well as the EU bioeconomy strategy. It also supports the Start-ups and Scale-ups strategy by fostering place-based (social, technological and non-technological) innovation to make European cities and regions more circular, resilient and competitive.

Linkages with relevant initiatives such as the Regional Innovation Valleys, the New European Bauhaus and the Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission and the Adaptation to Climate Change Mission should be explored – whenever relevant.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-02-two-stage: Open topic: Using the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative to strengthen urban manufacturing in support of the Clean Industrial Deal

Call: Call 01 - two stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 18.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome:

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- urban manufacturers significantly increase their resource efficiency through increased circular material use or reduced overall material use per output;
- urban manufacturers contribute significantly to EU climate, zero pollution, circularity and biodiversity goals by engaging in clean, sustainable and circular business practices;
- improved knowledge sharing and proliferation of digital tools and methods that facilitate the adoption of circular business practices and enable large-scale diffusion.

Scope:

The Clean Industrial Deal confirms Europe's dedication to its decarbonisation goals by offering clear business incentives. It will help create lead markets to boost supply and demand

in clean tech and energy-intensive industries (such as chemicals, cement, steel and metals), enabling the decarbonisation and industrial competitiveness of Europe at the same time. An integral focus is to support the acceleration of the roll-out of clean energy and manufacturing, to develop sectoral transition pathways and to reinforce a circular economy.

The Clean Industrial Deal Communication states that “Research and Innovation (R&I) is a key enabler for promoting the next generation of clean tech, clean energy and decarbonised manufacturing in the EU. A flagship Horizon Europe call of ca. EUR 600 million under the 2026-2027 work programme supports fit-for-deployment projects. This will aim at fostering synergies between the Framework Programme for R&I and the Innovation Fund, creating a pipeline of projects from R&I to deployment.” The topics of this flagship call focus exclusively on clean tech and energy-intensive industries as described above. Therefore, this topic complements the CID flagship call and aims to support the clean transition in a specific area outside the CID flagship call where the existing CCRI network can provide capacity and expertise.

Proposals should:

- Implement and demonstrate circular systemic solutions that help urban manufacturers overcome key barriers and challenges in their clean and circular transition and in adapting to new requirements aiming to mitigate environmental degradation, climate change and biodiversity loss.

Urban manufacturing is the production of goods in urban areas, designed considering local culture and characteristics and intended to be distributed to the same local communities. Urban manufacturing is characterised by the use of local resources.

In view of the multiple crises since the financial crisis of 2008, it has become obvious that the reindustrialisation of Europe is necessary. As urban centres absorb a large percentage of the world’s population and resources, they are also increasingly exposed to pollution problems, social inequality and non-diversified economic activity and will need to become more resilient, self-sufficient and resourceful. That makes the return of local production, together with its jobs and innovation, not only desirable but essential.²⁵⁰

The integration of urban manufacturing within a city necessitates the consideration of the relationship to the existing urban environment. Projects should therefore involve economic operators, local authorities, and civil society organisations.

The topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines and involvement of SSH experts in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related activities.

Proposals should seek to contribute to the goals and cooperate with the services of the European Commission’s Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI) and in particular with the CCRI Coordination and Support Office. Joint activities with other CCRI projects are

²⁵⁰

<https://citiesofmaking.com/project/what-is-urban-manufacturing/>

strongly encouraged. Linkages with relevant initiatives such as the Regional Innovation Valleys, the New European Bauhaus and the Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission should be explored whenever relevant.

Proposals are expected to contribute to Europe's competitiveness and sustainable prosperity by supporting the development of a more resilient circular economy in line with the EU Competitiveness Compass, the EU Clean Industrial Deal and the EU Circular Economy Act. In line with the CID flagship call, this is an open topic, allowing applicants to propose solutions that maximise competitiveness and sustainability through increased circularity, and that are fit for deployment in terms of technological and economic feasibility.

2027

Enabling a circular economy transition

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-01: Enhancing ecodesign and circularity of consumer electronics

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁵¹.

²⁵¹ This [decision](#) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link:

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- material and product manufacturers apply relevant ecodesign, including design for circularity and design for recycling principles in developing and manufacturing products that contribute significantly to EU climate and through reduction of emissions and resource extraction to biodiversity goals, zero pollution, water resilience, circular economy, as well as open strategic autonomy;
- consumers benefit from more sustainable and circular products, i.e. durable, reliable, reusable, repairable, upgradable, recyclable products including increased recycled content.

Scope: Electrical and electronic equipment continues to be one of the fastest growing waste streams in the EU, with current annual growth rates of 2%. It is estimated that less than 40% of electronic waste is collected in the EU.²⁵² Value is lost when fully or partially functional products are discarded because they are not repairable, the battery cannot be replaced, the software is no longer supported, or materials incorporated in devices are not recovered.

Increasing recovery of critical raw materials from waste electrical and electronic equipment is a strategic priority to mitigate supply risks. Today, CRM recovery rates are generally low, with increases requiring new recovery processes and interface optimisation with pre-processing to ensure appropriate material flows for efficient recovery are generated.²⁵³

Proposals should:

- develop, test and demonstrate new or improved ecodesign of consumer electronics, including design for durability, reusability, reparability, disassembly, separability, recyclability, uptake of recycled content. This may include design solutions for the reuse of components and for easier dismantling leading to increased reparability, remanufacturing or recycling with use of solutions and technologies such as active disassembly/debonding materials and adhesives, and design solutions targeting critical and strategic raw materials;
- assess and provide recommendations for mechanisms and incentives to address the trade-offs with costs and innovation limitations and to reward design for circularity and product durability – such as extended guarantees, “second” VAT reduction, or others –, and test and demonstrate new business models such as leasing and product-service-systems, to the extent that they reinforce positive design changes.

Proposed solutions need to be aligned with chemical safety principles (SSbD) and in compliance with relevant legislation such as RoHS. The environmental performance of the

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

²⁵² <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/f4c7be39-efa9-4beb-88e0-4c5fdd37de7b?lang=en>

²⁵³ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S092134492030241X>

proposed solutions in comparison to existing products should be evaluated from a lifecycle perspective using product environmental footprint methodology wherever applicable. Participation of partners from (associated) countries with actual electronics production is encouraged. Participation of SMEs is encouraged. Consumer benefits are at the centre of this topic, and it is vital that the consumer perspective is duly reflected in all activities. The topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines and involvement of SSH experts in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related activities.

This topic supports the implementation of the European Green Deal, the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation and its working plan, in particular with a view to the reparability of small household appliances, the WEEE Directive, contribute to waste prevention, higher circularity and uptake of recycle, and Europe's efforts to develop a single market for sustainable products.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-02: Enhancing ecodesign and circularity of construction products

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁵⁴ .

²⁵⁴ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- material and product manufacturers apply ecodesign principles in developing and manufacturing products that are safe and contribute significantly to EU climate, zero pollution, circular economy, and biodiversity goals, e.g., through biodiversity-enhancing circular design;
- consumers and professionals benefit from more sustainable and circular products, i.e. durable, safe, reliable, reusable, repairable, upgradable, recyclable products including increased recycled content.

Scope: Construction is one of the most resource-intensive sectors of the economy. The construction sector is responsible for almost 39% of the EU's total waste generation.²⁵⁵ Greenhouse gas emissions from material extraction, manufacturing of construction products, construction and renovation of buildings are estimated at 5-12% of total national GHG emissions.²⁵⁶ Greater material efficiency could save 80% of those emissions.²⁵⁷ Cement, steel, aluminium and plastics are the materials contributing by 15% to EU carbon emissions.

Proposals should:

- develop, test and demonstrate new and improved ecodesign of construction materials and products, including design for durability, reusability, reparability, separability, recyclability, and uptake of recycled content. Solutions promoting assembly and disassembly of products should be considered, and solutions for the reuse of recovered materials;
- assess and provide recommendations for mechanisms and incentives to reward design for circularity, disassembly, and product durability – such as extended guarantees, VAT reduction, and others –, and analyse potential trade-offs and propose solutions to overcome them.

The environmental performance of the proposed solutions in comparison to existing products should be evaluated from a lifecycle perspective using product environmental footprint methodology wherever applicable. The possible presence of contaminants in construction products and waste and its impact on circularity must be taken into account. Reuse and recycling options should involve quality control and assessment.

Proposals should seek to contribute to the goals of the New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative. Joint activities with NEB projects are encouraged. Proposals should also seek to build synergies with construction-focused projects funded under Clusters 6 and 4, and are

²⁵⁵ Eurostat data for 2022, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/f0673b56-1bf2-490f-86e2-56bec77e009?lang=en>

²⁵⁶ <https://www.boverket.se/sv/byggande/hallbart-byggande-och-forvaltning/miljoindikatorer---aktuellt-status/vaxthusgaser/>

²⁵⁷ Hertwich, E., Lifset, R., Pauliuk, S., Heeren, N., IRP, (2020), Resource Efficiency and Climate Change: Material Efficiency Strategies for a Low-Carbon Future.

strongly encouraged to organise joint activities, ensure synergies and undertake clustering activities with those. Participation of partners from (associated) countries with growing construction sectors is encouraged.

Proposals should seek to involve SMEs and regional ecosystems.

The topic supports the European Green Deal, the Construction Products Regulation, the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation and its working plan, and Europe's efforts to develop a single market for sustainable products.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-03: Developing novel recycling technologies for complex plastic materials applying biotech solutions

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁵⁸ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- environment and society at large benefit from recyclable plastic products which can be recycled back into high value applications;

²⁵⁸ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- industrial value chains introduce circular plastic products on the market through enhanced design for recycling and solutions for effective sorting and recycling on a large scale;
- industrial value chains are equipped with improved characterisation of waste from complex plastic materials to enable its recycling.

Scope: The topic supports the European Green Deal, the Regulation on Packaging and Packaging Waste, the Waste Shipment Regulation, the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation and its working plan, the EU Circular Economy Act and contributes to Europe's efforts to develop a single market for sustainable products. It also contributes to the Bioeconomy Strategy, the Life Sciences Strategy and the EU Biotech Act and is relevant to the European Commission's communication: 'Building the future with nature: Boosting Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing in the EU'.

Proposals should:

- advance novel biotech solutions for recycling of complex plastic materials and products (multi-material/multi-layer/composites), namely in the sectors of packaging, construction, renewable energy infrastructure and transport;
- propose recommendations towards fit-for-purpose regulatory risk assessments for novel materials and recycling technologies (i.e. hazard identification, methodological updates) and take into account the Safe-and-Sustainable-by-Design framework.
- consider the latest solutions in material innovation while developing novel recycling solutions e.g. by application of microbes and enzymes for enhanced degradation of plastics;
- demonstrate the solutions on a pilot scale involving the whole value chain.

Successful proposals are expected to evaluate the feasibility, effectiveness and impact of the demonstrated solutions using robust evaluation methods (including lifecycle assessments such as product environmental footprint, where relevant) and present data and evidence about the economic, environmental and social costs and benefits of the developed solutions.

Industrial value chains are expected to take part in the proposed consortia to enable a demonstration of the proposed solution and involve all relevant stakeholders.

Clustering with other relevant Horizon Europe projects is encouraged.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-04: Capacity building for extending product lifecycles through repair and refurbishment

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)
Specific conditions

<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 4.00 and 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁵⁹.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- professionals, consumers and educators adopt innovative repair and refurbishment practices in specific product value chains (electronics, furniture, textiles and footwear), enabling significant reductions in waste, environmental impacts and biodiversity loss, while driving cost savings and job creation in the repair and refurbishment sector;
- professionals, consumers, local partners, social economy actors and educators have access to high-quality training programs that provide them with technical, business and social skills to repair and refurbish products, thus promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns, climate change adaptation and mitigation, reduction of waste and emissions and enhancing resilience of product value chains.

Scope: As the EU strives to reduce waste and promote sustainable consumption, as outlined in the European Green Deal, the Clean Industrial Deal and the upcoming Circular Economy Act, extending product lifecycles through repair and refurbishment practices has become a key approach for achieving a circular economy and extending products' lifecycles. To support this transition, there is a growing need for innovative capacity-building initiatives that equip professionals, consumers, local authorities and educators with the skills and knowledge required to repair and refurbish products. These practices can contribute to the extension of product lifecycles, thus reducing environmental and climate impacts and contributing for the development of a single market for sustainable products.

²⁵⁹ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Proposals should:

- develop and test innovative, modular and scalable training programs for professionals, consumers, local partners, social economy actors and educators, focusing on the repair and refurbishment of one or more of the following product categories: electronics (including household appliances), furniture, textiles and footwear. These training programs should create engaging, accessible and effective learning experiences that support the development of repair and refurbishment skills;
- develop and test new services for repair and refurbishment, as well as strategies for their uptake, considering the potential to reduce biodiversity impacts, support climate change adaptation and mitigation, and promote sustainable consumption patterns. The focus should be on making them accessible and affordable to all consumers, including those with disabilities or with limited access, financial resources or technical expertise. To achieve this, the strategies should investigate various approaches: such as affordable, accessible and convenient repair services, community-based repair initiatives, and knowledge and expertise sharing mechanisms and digital platforms;
- evaluate the feasibility, effectiveness and impact of these new services and strategies using robust evaluation methods (including lifecycle assessments such as Product Environmental Footprint, where relevant) and present data and evidence about the economic, environmental and social costs and benefits of the developed strategies.

The topic supports EU policies, particularly the European Green Deal, the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation, the EU Circular Economy Act and Europe's efforts to develop a single market for sustainable products.

This topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines and the involvement of SSH experts, institutions as well as the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise, in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-05: Innovative circular solutions for end-of-life footwear through collection, sorting and recycling

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 4.00 and 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁶⁰.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- all relevant stakeholders, including consumers, economic and social economy operators and waste managers, have an improved understanding of the technical, environmental, economic and social challenges and benefits to circularity in the footwear industry;
- economic operators and waste managers are provided with evidence-based, innovative, cost-effective, and scalable solutions that improve the management of end-of-life footwear products, valorise post-consumer footwear waste materials and increase the circularity of the value chain;
- consumers have access to user-friendly solutions to correctly dispose of end-of-life footwear, thus reducing landfill, improving sustainability practices, supporting them in making more conscious choices, and contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation by reducing waste and promoting circular economy practices.

Scope: The transition to a circular economy requires innovative solutions to manage end-of-life products, including footwear, which can have significant environmental and climate impacts if landfilled and not properly collected, sorted, and recycled. In line with the EU's ambitious circular economy targets and policies, such as the Waste Framework Directive and the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation, this topic aims at improving the circularity of the footwear value chain and reducing the environmental footprint of end-of-life post-consumer footwear, whilst promoting a more regenerative and restorative approach to the footwear value chain and the stakeholders involved.

Proposals should:

²⁶⁰ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- assess the technical, environmental, economic and social challenges and benefits linked to the transition of the footwear industry towards circularity, particularly in the collection, sorting and recycling of post-consumer footwear waste;
- develop and test new methods and technologies that facilitate the collection, sorting, preparation for reuse and recycling of post-consumer footwear products, integrating digital tools (including AI) and the use of the Digital Product Passport to enable reuse and recycling, and minimise the release of hazardous chemicals and microplastics during the recycling process;
- explore and develop innovative business models that enable the transition towards a circular and sustainable footwear value chain, promote the uptake of design for preparing for reuse and recycling, enable the development of take-back solutions and stimulate informed consumer choices and sustainable consumption patterns;
- develop and test innovative solutions that facilitate the collaboration between the relevant stakeholders, including footwear manufacturers, retailers, consumers and waste managers, to ensure the effectiveness and uptake of the proposed solutions, including strategies for managing hazardous chemicals and microplastics in footwear waste.

Successful proposals should bring together all relevant stakeholders active in the footwear value chain, namely industry representatives, SMEs, brand owners, producers, retailers, local authorities, waste managers, economic operators, consumer organisations, researchers, and NGOs.

The topic supports EU policies, particularly the European Green Deal, the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation and its working plan, as well as the zero pollution action plan. The proposed solutions should also be consistent with the Waste Framework Directive, the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for textiles, the Clean Industrial Deal and the EU Circular Economy Act, supporting Europe's efforts to develop a single market for sustainable products.

This topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines and the involvement of SSH experts, institutions as well as the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise, in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities.

Innovating for sustainable bio-based systems, biotechnology and the bioeconomy

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-06: Towards a Europe of Bioeconomy Places

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)
Specific conditions

<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁶¹.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Improved attractiveness of places through a systemic transition to “Bioeconomy Places”²⁶², leading to increased investment in the bio-based sectors, job creation and overall well-being of the population, while reducing environmental and climate impacts and promoting sustainable development;
- Sustainable and qualified Bioeconomy Places based on environmental, social and economic indicators, including awareness and skills development, capacity building, food systems sustainability, and contribution to climate action and biodiversity goals, are

²⁶¹ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

²⁶² For the purposes of this topic, Bioeconomy Places are understood as geographically-defined areas (such as regions, their sub-entities, groups of municipalities, rural or urban, including cross-border) where bioeconomy solutions are used for sustainable prosperity and community well-being considering the specific needs, strengths and potential of each place.

developed, allowing for comparison (in terms of the elements outlined in this paragraph) and knowledge-sharing between different bioeconomy places.

Scope: The local character of biomass and other biological resources and the high number of micro-companies and SMEs involved in sectors that deal with biological resources explain why research and innovations are best developed in line with the local and regional context. “Places” (geographical defined areas as defined in the previous footnote) play an important role in the transition to a sustainable and circular EU bioeconomy and have proven to act as a good platform for matching EU top-level policies and best practices with bottom-up entrepreneurship and innovation that is mobilised to meet an ambition and vision for the bioeconomy. Bioeconomy places are expected to lead the transition to a sustainable and circular bioeconomy by building their capacity to develop and deploy innovative bioeconomy solutions within a clearly defined local/regional governance framework and vision that is aligned to EU priorities and policies.

Proposals should:

- develop definitions of and benchmarks that can allow to qualify a “Place” as “Bioeconomy Place” (i.e. a label to be awarded to “Places” that meet the definitions and benchmarks developed as part of the project), linked to and built upon the groundwork laid by the [Regional Innovation Valleys \(RIVs\) for Bioeconomy and Food Systems](#), the [Circular Cities and Regions Initiative](#) (CCRI)²⁶³ and other relevant projects. They should relate to the ability of the place to fulfil environmental (including biodiversity), social and economic sustainability criteria using bioeconomy solutions (e.g. including Nature-based Solutions), with particular attention to the sustainability of sourced biomass, climate mitigation, biodiversity protection circularity, food systems, social fairness and competitiveness.
- set up at least three “Bioeconomy Place” pilot sites, which are expected to be located in at least three different EU Member States/Associated Countries. At least one of the pilot sites should be located fully or partially in Ukraine. In these sites, proposals should:
 - o carry out an analysis on needs, strengths and opportunities that should include but is not limited to infrastructure (analysing physical and digital conditions for bioeconomy industrial clusters to be established), value chains (e.g. biomass sourcing mapping and industrial capacity mapping, with particular attention to SMEs and start-ups), consumer and civil society needs and awareness, skill readiness and

²⁶³ Both the RIV and CCRI initiatives have already tested place-based circular bioeconomy solutions, fostering local innovation ecosystems and stakeholder collaboration. “Bioeconomy places” can leverage these established networks and lessons learned to scale up successful models, tailor solutions to regional strengths, and ensure coherence across EU territories in delivering a resilient and sustainable bioeconomy.

- o devise, for each pilot site, a plan with commitments to transform the “Place” into a “Bioeconomy Place”, based on the analysis and benchmarks developed. These plans should:
 - foster multi-stakeholder partnerships with local actors, taking into account a gender-sensitive and inclusive approach and the specific needs of groups in vulnerable situations;
 - establish synergies between urban, rural (where relevant, coastal) areas to optimise resource flows and promote the creation of new business models, value chains and jobs;
 - develop training programmes that enhance technical and entrepreneurial skills, including biotechnology and digital skills relevant to the bioeconomy;
 - provide capacity-building for bioeconomy stakeholders on access to funding and capital and on how to prepare bankable projects and attract private capital; and
 - provide policy recommendations on how to progress in the deployment of bioeconomy solutions ensuring circularity.

Proposals must implement the multi-actor approach (MAA), involving educational and employment institutions, industrial actors, unions and local and regional authorities in order to co-create the knowledge and adapted solutions to foster the establishment of Bioeconomy Places across Europe. Collaboration among all the pilot sites set up under the projects of this topic should be fostered. Proposals are encouraged to incorporate and advance the knowledge and findings from previously funded EU projects²⁶⁴ and work with projects from topics under this WP. All projects under this topic need to closely collaborate.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-07: Improving biomass flows for a sustainable and circular bioeconomy

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 14.00 million.

²⁶⁴ For example, projects funded under H2020-RUR-09-2018, HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-08, HORIZON-CL6-2023-CIRCBIO-01-7, HORIZON-CL6-2023-CIRCBIO-01-10 and H2020_RUR-09-2018.

<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁶⁵ .

Expected Outcome:

Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- enhanced capacity of private and public stakeholders to increase resource efficiency in collecting, processing and using primary and secondary biomass, ensuring that ecosystems and biodiversity are protected and restored, emissions of greenhouse gases and pollutants reduced, and human needs for biomass satisfied in sufficient and fair way, including food security;
- increased environmental, social and economic value added from the various uses of biomass, including bio-waste, e.g. food losses and food waste;
- reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and (air, water and soil) pollution, due to avoiding landfilling and incineration of bio-waste;
- demonstrated environmental, social and economic and social benefits for the municipalities involved in the collection and provision of bio-waste.

Scope: Successful proposals will contribute to the implementation of the EU Bioeconomy Strategy and its Action Plan; and the Waste Framework Directive and the Landfill Directive, e.g. on bio-waste management. Project outcomes will contribute to the objectives of the recent initiatives on Circular Economy, Biotechnology, Competitiveness, the Clean Industrial Deal, the Vision for Agriculture and Food and Life Sciences.

Bioeconomy provides solutions to various challenges. However, companies see themselves challenged to satisfy the growing demand for biomass in the future. There are solutions to increase the sustainable production, including to reduce pollutants, and adjust the demand, e.g. better valorise unused/under-exploited sustainable biomass resources (including unavoidable

²⁶⁵ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

food waste and industrial residues), and degraded land, apply new breeding techniques and increase resource efficiency through circular design and circular business and consumption models.

Bio-waste represents a vast underutilised biomass resource with substantial potential for valorisation. Private and public actors that aggregate biomass waste streams, pretreat them and standardise them for further valorisation are well placed to foster its improved use. In addition, they play an essential role to increase the transparency of biomass waste supply flows and to provide platforms to match supply and demand. By supporting these types of actors, Europe can increase its capacity to transform more bio-waste into valuable commodities and contribute to sustainable and circular bioeconomy objectives and solutions based on biological resources (including ecosystems).

Proposals should address all the following activities:

- study and optimise business models for the aggregation, pre-treatment, standardisation and primary valorisation of under-utilised biomass resources, including bio-waste from food losses and food waste and/or primary production/industrial biogenic residues. Engage with local governments to create compelling business cases and to showcase best practices that highlight the environmental, social and economic, benefits of bio-waste valorisation. In this context, the successful proposals will collaborate with local communities and stakeholders to ensure that biomass valorisation practices are socially acceptable and beneficial to communities, the environment and the economy.
- support local, regional, and national bioeconomy actors, and develop new or strengthen existing platforms (at least 5) by connecting biomass suppliers, and users, both in urban and rural settings; provide guidance and links to local, regional, or national biomass plans; and facilitate business decisions, especially for SMEs. Additionally, map and study various types of platforms, potentially also digital marketplaces, that match biomass supply and demand within local, regional, and EU contexts.
- identify barriers to and best available practices for the development of biomass platforms (e.g. end-of-waste criteria), and provide recommendations to address them, in national, regional and EU context.
- develop tools and innovative approaches to optimize bio-waste collection, processing and logistics, enhancing resource efficiency and ecosystem health, as well as reducing costs. Exploit the potential of digital solutions to improve the traceability and management of bio-waste streams. Advance innovative and competitive business solutions, developing and testing technological innovations for biomass aggregation, pretreatment, and standardisation, including from under-utilised biomass resources, and processing towards added-value products.

Proposals should pay particular attention to areas where biomass is neither fully valorised nor utilised to its full potential, such as Central and Eastern Europe, Ukraine and other EU candidate countries.

Proposals are encouraged to work together with relevant initiatives including those of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy, Bioeconomy Monitoring System, the EU Food Systems Monitoring Dashboard), the Circular Biobased Europe Joint Undertaking, the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, the New European Bauhaus and BIOEAST Initiative; as well as considering the topic 'HORIZON-CL6-2026-CIRCBIO-10: Understanding biomass flows in Europe'. When addressing the collection, pre-treatment and valorisation of food losses and waste, proposals should explore potential links with the work of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste.

The multi-actor approach should be followed, involving concerned actors such as primary producers, industry representatives, regional/local authorities, research institutions.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-08: Biotechnology application for CCU

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁶⁶ .

Expected Outcome: Successful proposals under this topic will contribute to the objectives of the EU Carbon Removals and Carbon Farming Certification (CRCF) Regulation and the Clean Industrial Deal, allowing industrial operators to use a sustainable carbon source as

²⁶⁶ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

feedstock. They will facilitate innovators to scale up promising solutions in scope of the upcoming Life Sciences Strategy and the Biotech Act, also supporting the implementation of the Start-ups and Scale-ups strategy as well as the EU strategy on research and technology infrastructure.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- innovative and improved purification and conversion of gaseous carbon is developed and scaled up to provide feedstock for industrial processes promoting circularity and climate neutrality.
- advanced industries – applying life sciences technologies and biotechnology - contribute to the climate-neutrality objective.

Scope: Increasing industrial productivity and competitiveness should not entail unsustainable exploitation of resources. This makes the sustainable sourcing of non-virgin-fossil carbon (i.e., carbon from sustainable sourced biomass, gaseous carbon, waste) essential for European industries, especially considering the production of chemicals and materials.

Proposals should address the following activities:

- review the up-to-date progress of R&I in the use of life sciences-based technologies for Carbon Capture and Use (CCU) phases taking into account the capture of gaseous carbon - from any industrial emission and the atmosphere – and its purification and conversion into products. Provide an assessment of their technological readiness, strengths and weaknesses and their potential of carbon storage in products;
- develop and test innovative and effective life sciences-based technologies, either synthetic biology and/or living microorganisms, to concentrate, purify and convert gaseous carbon efficiently into suitable feedstock to produce products. Products in scope exclude food/feed and biofuels/syngas;
- perform a preliminary assessment of the environmental impacts, the social and economic viability and business case of the developed technologies, including their scalability and the identification of markets for their output bio-based products;
- demonstrate one or more technology(ies) among those developed and tested, with the highest environmental, economic and social sustainability;
- evaluate and disseminate the replication potential of the demonstrated solution(s), including technical and economic/financial recommendations for SMEs and industrial operators in general;
- assess the feasibility of establishing a spin-off to implement the results from the best technology(ies) demonstration.

In the review of up-to-date progress of R&I as in the first bullet point, international cooperation is encouraged, as well as in the development of innovative technologies and

evaluation of their replication potential. Synergies with activities under Cluster 5 and the Circular Bio-based Europe (CBE) Joint Undertaking are encouraged.

Projects funded under this topic should collaborate, for example within the activities concerning the exploitation of the IP of the developed technologies and at least within the dissemination activities.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-09: Increasing the circularity of bio-based sector: upcycling and recycling for higher value and environmental benefits

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁶⁷.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- European industry's competitiveness, decarbonisation, and strategic autonomy are enhanced through the development and deployment of safe, sustainable, circular and bio-based value chains;

²⁶⁷ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- improved climate change adaptation and mitigation and overall environmental sustainability, as well as higher resource efficiency, through application of biotechnologies and industrial symbiosis, and recovery of biological materials, water and energy.

Scope: The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the Commission communication on: Building the future with nature: Boosting Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing in the EU, the Life Sciences Strategy, the EU Biotech Act, Clean Industrial Deal and the SME Strategy. It also contributes to the Start-ups and Scale-ups strategy. Synergies with activities under the Circular Bio-based Europe (CBE) Joint Undertaking²⁶⁸ and New European Bauhaus are strongly encouraged, while taking care to avoid overlaps.

Proposals should address the following activities:

- develop and deploy/scale-up safe and sustainable, circular and bio-based materials, products, processes and value chains, e.g. including but not limited to the construction, packaging, pulp and paper, textile sectors, or other bio-based consumer products, using upcycled and recycled resources incorporating secondary raw materials with minimal quality loss, aiming at best environmental performance, while increasing the uptake of recycled materials and preventing waste through repair, refurbishment, and reuse, and paying attention to environmental and health risks and trade-offs due to treated or impregnated bio-based materials, where relevant. Bioenergy/biofuels sector is not in scope, but synergies with this sector can be considered while respecting the cascading biomass valorisation principle and aiming at the industrial symbiosis;
- develop innovative new, or upgraded existing, circular solutions to tackle complex bio-waste streams and create markets for bio-waste materials by transforming them into valuable secondary resources, while fostering urban/rural/coastal industrial symbiosis, providing data and digital tools and promoting a more efficient use of bio-based resources;
- develop a ‘digital marketplace’, ensuring convergence with the digital technology, tools and applications, to enhance accessibility and traceability of bio-based resources, promoting efficient and sustainable resource management.
- provide recommendations for the development of bio-based product value chains, based on the identified and analysed needs of stakeholders in terms of national and European regulations and standards, financial incentives, professional trainings, etc.

While the main focus of this topic is not the gaseous carbon conversion (see parallel topic HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-08: Biotechnology application for CCU), this technology can be considered as part of the whole value chain approach to increase environmental and economic impact, e.g. as part of the cascading biomass conversion, taking

²⁶⁸ Such as the topics HORIZON-JU-CBE-2025-IAFlag-03: Circular-by-design fibre-based packaging with improved properties, HORIZON-JU-CBE-2025-IAFlag-01: Urban-industrial symbiosis for bio-waste valorisation, etc.

care to avoid overlaps and seek synergies. Synergy and cooperation with the parallel topics HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-02: Enhancing ecodesign and circularity of construction products and HORIZON-MISS-2027-03-OCEAN-02: Circularity of seafood supply chain are strongly encouraged.

Proposals are encouraged to build on the knowledge and results of completed and ongoing EU-funded projects. Cooperation between all proposals funded under this topic should also be foreseen, as a specific task, with an allocation of resources, for synergies.

This topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines and involvement of SSH experts in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities. This can cover the educational aspect, to facilitate knowledge promotion within different target groups (e.g. students, industry, society). International cooperation is encouraged.

Safeguarding and sustainably innovating the multiple functions of EU forests

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-10: Strengthening forest research for the support of Ukraine

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the participation of at least one research institution or relevant public authority from Ukraine in the consortium is mandatory.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the

	Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁶⁹ .

Expected Outcome: Successful proposals will support the recovery, resilience, and EU integration of Ukraine's forest sector, addressing the compounded impacts of climate change and Russia's war of aggression.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Ukrainian decision-makers and policymakers gain access to robust scientific data, tools, and methodologies for developing and implementing evidence-based policies that are aligned with EU forest-related policies;
- recovery, restoration, sustainable management and development of Ukraine's war-affected forests through improved governance, enhanced institutional capacity, and the implementation of sustainable forest management practices that address the impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and Russian invasion;
- strengthened Ukrainian forest research and education systems, providing a solid evidence basis for forestry policy development, supporting students and educators, and promoting innovation in forest science;
- expanded national and international cooperation and the development of a national forest monitoring system, enabling knowledge exchange and global cooperation in sustainable forestry;
- accelerated alignment of Ukraine's forest governance, legislation, and technical standards with EU *acquis communautaire*, reinforcing its path toward EU accession and long-term convergence with European environmental (including biodiversity) and climate goals.

Scope: To address the pressing challenges posed by climate change, biodiversity loss and Russia's war against Ukraine, significant advancements in forest science, education, and international collaboration are essential. The war has caused severe damage to Ukraine's forests, exacerbated institutional and capacity issues in forestry governance and research and innovation, and highlighted the need for capacity building and knowledge exchange. Another key priority for the coming years will be the full digitalisation of Ukraine's forest cadastre to establish a reliable, transparent, and accessible system for forest governance and scientific research.

Proposals should develop innovative research, policy, and capacity-building actions that contribute to the post-war recovery and sustainable transformation of Ukraine's forest sector. Proposals should explore diverse approaches and methods but should clearly address

²⁶⁹ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Ukraine's unique context. Anticipated Ukrainian stakeholders to be involved include local and regional authorities, national ministries and public agencies, academic and research institutions, forest owners and managers, local communities, civil society organizations, NGOs, forest industry representatives, and educational institutions. The action under this topic is relevant to EU policies related to the recovery and sustainable management of forests, including the EU Forest Strategy for 2030, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the European Green Deal, the EU Climate Adaptation Strategy, and the Nature Restoration Regulation.

Proposals should:

- strengthen Ukrainian forest research systems and their integration into policy by expanding data collection, enhancing stakeholder engagement, and providing scientific support to equip decision-makers with evidence for policy development and implementation;
- enhance international collaboration and forest science diplomacy in the context of Ukraine's recovery, by building partnerships for sustainable forest management, support the digitalisation of Ukraine's forest cadastre to enable transparent, accurate, and accessible forest data and establish a comprehensive, continuous forest monitoring system, aligned with EU and global policies;
- strengthen Ukrainian institutional and governance capacity by improving frameworks and research institutions to ensure the long-term resilience and effectiveness of sustainable forest management practices;
- promote innovation in Ukrainian forest education and training by modernizing curricula, supporting student mobility and international research collaboration, and developing lifelong learning programmes for forestry professionals;
- contribute to the alignment of Ukrainian forestry-related legislation, inspection systems, and standards with EU legislation as a core component of the EU accession and integration process.

Enabling a circular economy transition

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-01-two-stage: Deploying circular systemic solutions through living labs in cities and regions (Circular Cities and Regions Initiative topic)

Call: Call 01 - two stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.

<i>project</i>	Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: at least five (5) distinct ‘living labs’ linked to regional or local authorities (and possibly together with their public and/or private ecosystem actors operating in their respective territories) must be part of the consortium as beneficiaries, among which at least two (2) living labs must be from different demonstration sites and another three (3) from other and different replication sites. 1 out of the 3 replication sites must be located in Horizon Europe widening countries (including Outermost Regions). The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁷⁰.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- increased circularity and reduced emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollutants in the economic sectors, services and product value chains at local and/or regional scale. This also includes an efficient valorisation of local resources, with positive effects on air and water quality as well as on biodiversity;

²⁷⁰ This [decision](#) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- widespread deployment and easier replication, scalability and visibility of circular systemic solutions for a multiplication of their economic, social and environmental benefits;
- enhanced collaboration and knowledge transfer between public authorities (cities and regions), companies, research and citizens in addressing environmental challenges, such as climate-change, resource depletion and biodiversity loss.

Scope:

This topic supports the implementation of the European Commission's [Circular Cities and Regions Initiative](#) (CCRI). It builds on a series of CCRI-related topics funded under Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe, and replicated every one to two programming year since 2021. The goal is to accelerate place-based innovation, boost skills and capacities and support the implementation of solutions for a circular systemic transition at city or region level. Implementing circular systemic solutions reduces environmental impacts and contribute to the preservation of biodiversity, by decreasing the extraction of primary raw materials and minimizing waste generation.

This topic specifically focuses on moving from demonstration to further deployment and upscaling through the setup of well-functioning real-life innovation ecosystem, such as living labs. This topic targets public local and regional authorities (or their groupings) in EU Member States and Associated Countries. Proposed living labs should enable systematic participation of all ecosystem stakeholder in targeted cities and regions to co-create solutions that are practical, relevant, and readily applicable. These stakeholders include citizens, policymakers, research bodies, academia, industries, start-ups and SMEs, social economy entities and financial intermediaries. In line with the nature of living labs, projects must adopt the multi-actor approach to involve end-users. The actors involved in each living lab may vary, based on its unique characteristics. Proposals should set up engaging and effective governance structures, facilitate collaboration and coordination, and ensure continuous feedback and monitoring to enable an iterative and flexible process. Proposals should integrate systemic socio-ecological approaches and involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines (e.g., economics, politics, sociology, psychology, gender studies).

Proposals should support the validation, testing and optimisation of innovative, circular systemic solutions in selected cities/regions (the 'demonstrators'), along with relevant governance models and business plans. This CCRI-related topic does not target specific technologies or industrial sectors but supports a place-based approach. This means that proposals should select their targeted sector(s) and/or value chain(s), based on a detailed analysis of the local/regional contexts and specific circular potentials.

Proposals should facilitate knowledge and experience transfer for further outreach and large scale replication across Europe. Proposals should turn their insights into actionable recommendations, identifying the lessons learned, specifying the enabling framework, main barriers and enablers, business case, and other relevant factors for successful replication and upscaling in other cities and/or regions (the 'replicators').

At least two different demonstration and three replication ‘living labs’ (incl. cities/regions – possibly together with their public and/or private ecosystem partners in their territory) must be part of the consortium. One out of the three replication labs must be located in [Horizon Europe widening countries](#) (including Outermost Regions).

Proposals should clearly specify how they will ensure synergies and complementarities with other relevant circular economy projects and initiatives, including those recognised as CCRI Projects²⁷¹ and CCRI Associated Partners²⁷². In that sense, proposals should include a dedicated task, appropriate resources and a plan on how they will collaborate with the CCRI office, projects and partners (e.g. thematic discussion groups, joint events, joint R&I gap analysis and policy briefs). Clustering and dissemination activities will be facilitated and supported by the CCRI Coordination and Support Office to ease knowledge exchange, foster solution replication and uptake, and maximise impact.

This topic contributes to the objectives of the European Green Deal and the Clean Industrial Deal, in particular the 2020 circular economy action plan (CEAP), as well as the EU bioeconomy strategy. It also supports the Start-ups and Scale-ups strategy by fostering placed-based (social, technological and non-technological) innovation to make European cities and regions more circular, resilient and competitive.

Linkages with relevant initiatives such as the Regional Innovation Valleys, the New European Bauhaus and the Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission and the Adaptation to Climate Change Mission should be explored – whenever relevant.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-CIRCBIO-02-two-stage: Open topic: Using the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative to strengthen urban manufacturing in support of the Clean Industrial Deal

Call: Call 01 - two stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 18.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project –

²⁷¹ List of CCRI Projects from Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe: <https://circular-cities-and-regions.ec.europa.eu/ccri-projects>. New CCRI-related projects under the 2026-2027 work programme include: HORIZON-MISS-2027-04-CIT-CCRI-04 and HORIZON-MISS-2026-06-01-CIT-NEB-B4P-CCRI.

²⁷² List of CCRI Associated Partners: <https://circular-cities-and-regions.ec.europa.eu/associated-partners>

<i>Readiness Level</i>	see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- urban manufacturers significantly increase their resource efficiency through increased circular material use or reduced overall material use per output;
- urban manufacturers contribute significantly to EU climate, zero pollution, circularity and biodiversity goals by engaging in clean, sustainable and circular business practices;
- improved knowledge sharing and proliferation of digital tools and methods that facilitate the adoption of circular business practices and enable large-scale diffusion.

Scope: The Clean Industrial Deal confirms Europe's dedication to its decarbonisation goals by offering clear business incentives. It will help create lead markets to boost supply and demand in clean tech and energy-intensive industries (such as chemicals, cement, steel and metals), enabling the decarbonisation and industrial competitiveness of Europe at the same time. An integral focus is to support the acceleration of the roll-out of clean energy and manufacturing, to develop sectoral transition pathways and to reinforce a circular economy.

The Clean Industrial Deal Communication states that “Research and Innovation (R&I) is a key enabler for promoting the next generation of clean tech, clean energy and decarbonised manufacturing in the EU. A flagship Horizon Europe call of ca. EUR 600 million under the 2026-2027 work programme supports fit-for-deployment projects. This will aim at fostering synergies between the Framework Programme for R&I and the Innovation Fund, creating a pipeline of projects from R&I to deployment.” The topics of this flagship call focus exclusively on clean tech and energy-intensive industries as described above. Therefore, this topic complements the CID flagship call and aims to support the clean transition in a specific area outside the CID flagship call where the existing CCRI network can provide capacity and expertise.

Proposals should:

- Implement and demonstrate circular systemic solutions that help urban manufacturers overcome key barriers and challenges in their clean and circular transition and in adapting to new requirements aiming to mitigate environmental degradation, climate change and biodiversity loss.

Urban manufacturing is the production of goods in urban areas, designed considering local culture and characteristics and intended to be distributed to the same local communities. Urban manufacturing is characterised by the use of local resources.

In view of the multiple crises since the financial crisis of 2008, it has become obvious that the reindustrialisation of Europe is necessary. As urban centres absorb a large percentage of the world's population and resources, they are also increasingly exposed to pollution problems, social inequality and non-diversified economic activity and will need to become more

resilient, self-sufficient and resourceful. That makes the return of local production, together with its jobs and innovation, not only desirable but essential.²⁷³

The integration of urban manufacturing within a city necessitates the consideration of the relationship to the existing urban environment. Projects should therefore involve economic operators, local authorities, and civil society organisations.

The topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines and involvement of SSH experts in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related activities.

Proposals should seek to contribute to the goals and cooperate with the services of the European Commission's Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI) and in particular with the CCRI Coordination and Support Office. Joint activities with other CCRI projects are strongly encouraged. Linkages with relevant initiatives such as the Regional Innovation Valleys, the New European Bauhaus and the Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission should be explored whenever relevant.

Proposals are expected to contribute to Europe's competitiveness and sustainable prosperity by supporting the development of a more resilient circular economy in line with the EU Competitiveness Compass, the EU Clean Industrial Deal and the EU Circular Economy Act. In line with the CID flagship call, this is an open topic, allowing applicants to propose solutions that maximise competitiveness and sustainability through increased circularity, and that are fit for deployment in terms of technological and economic feasibility.

²⁷³

<https://citiesofmaking.com/project/what-is-urban-manufacturing/>

Destination - Clean environment and zero pollution

This destination will support the EU Commission priorities ‘Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature’ and ‘A new plan for Europe’s sustainable prosperity and competitiveness’.

The implementation of the European Green Deal will continue to guide R&I in this destination. R&I actions under this destination will take forward the zero-pollution ambition, contributing to reach the 2030 targets for pollution reduction in air, water and soil, as stipulated in the zero-pollution action plan. The activities will help establishing a clean industry, contributing to the EU Clean Industrial Deal²⁷⁴, and will aim to address, among others, pollutants of concern, including of emerging concern, also in view of the environmental objectives of the European Chemicals Industry Action Plan²⁷⁵. Destination ‘Clean environment and zero pollution’ will help substituting hazardous chemicals and bringing innovation on safe and sustainable by design chemicals to ensure protection of human health and the environment. It will also continue the work on PFAS, the “forever chemicals”, started in the same destination in WP2025. It will also support the implementation of the revised Ambient Air Quality Directive²⁷⁶ and the Industrial and Livestock Rearing Emissions Directive²⁷⁷.

This destination will support the zero-pollution ambition in the industrial bio-based and bioeconomy sectors. The principles of the (upcoming) revised bioeconomy strategy, underpinned by the principles of the circular economy, will allow for the replication value chains with improved resource efficiency and environmental performances, also enabled by innovative approaches designed in the upcoming Life Sciences Strategy, the EU Start-ups and Scale ups Strategy and the upcoming Biotech Act.

Furthermore, R&I activities under this destination will underpin EU water legislation and the European Water Resilience Strategy²⁷⁸ by addressing water quantity and quality issues in specific sectors as well as across broader water systems, supporting EU policies and international conventions. The destination will also support the Marine Strategy Framework Directive²⁷⁹, particularly in its efforts to assess and mitigate the impacts of human activities on marine ecosystems such as contamination and underwater noise.

R&I actions under this destination will aim to underpin the conclusions from the Strategic Dialogue on EU Agriculture and the Vision for EU Agriculture and Food²⁸⁰, and support the next reform of the CAP with scientific evidence.

R&I actions under this Destination will encourage international cooperation, in line with the global approach on R&I. The Destination supports unlocking the unique assets for research

²⁷⁴ [Clean Industrial Deal - European Commission](#)

²⁷⁵ [European Chemicals Industry Action Plan – European Commission](#)

²⁷⁶ [Directive - 2008/50 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

²⁷⁷ [Industrial and Livestock Rearing Emissions Directive \(IED 2.0\) - European Commission](#)

²⁷⁸ [Water resilience strategy - European Commission](#)

²⁷⁹ [EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive - European Commission](#)

²⁸⁰ [Vision for Agriculture and Food - European Commission](#)

and innovation of the EU outermost regions, in line with the EU strategy for outermost regions²⁸¹.

Expected impact: Proposals for topics under this destination should set out a credible pathway to **achieve a clean environment, ensure water resilience, and enable the transformative change necessary to reduce air, water and soil pollution to levels no longer considered harmful to health and natural ecosystems, while respecting planetary boundaries**. More specifically, they should contribute to one or several of the following **expected impacts**:

- Advancing scientific understanding and innovative solutions for identifying, preventing and mitigating pollution aim to effectively protect human health and safeguard the environment, preserving cleaner water and seas, healthier air and soil, and resilient forests.
- Innovative circular bio-based systems and biotechnologies are developed and made available to all stakeholders to progress towards the clean environment and zero-pollution ambition.
- Farmers and other actors in the food chain are empowered to make informed decisions and to apply novel strategies to prevent, reduce and remediate pollution from agriculture and the food system, contributing to the zero-pollution ambition.
- Effective solutions to remediate and decontaminate aquatic pollution are developed, made available and implemented contributing to reducing pollution to levels no longer considered harmful to the environment.

2026

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-ZEROPOLLUTION-01: Toward a comprehensive assessment of the disturbance of marine ecosystems by anthropogenic underwater noise

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 10.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

²⁸¹ COM(2022) Putting people first, securing sustainable and inclusive growth, unlocking the potential of the EU's outermost regions.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Impacts of continuous and impulsive underwater noise levels on marine organisms and ecosystems, and the related ecosystem services they provide, including cumulative impacts with other pressures, are well understood, taking into account regional differences.
- environmental authorities have access to advanced methods, tools and indicators enabling them to comprehensively monitor and assess the impacts of underwater noise pollution on marine species and ecosystems and to devise strategies for protecting the ecosystems services they provide.

Scope: Proposals should:

- develop new, or improve upon existing, scientific methods and tools for comprehensively monitoring the impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise pollution on marine ecosystems and species populations at different trophic levels and taking into account regional differences;
- develop new, or improve upon existing, indicators for the assessment of the effects of noise exposure as well as their cumulative effects on marine organisms and ecosystems, and the services they provide, in line with methods (including threshold values) already agreed at EU level for the assessment of good environmental status for underwater noise and taking into account regional developments;
- investigate options for mitigation measures for safeguarding relevant ecosystem services, including carbon sequestration, and develop or improve tools to measure their impacts and efficiency.

Proposals should support the objective and implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) by providing new evidence and data on the impacts of noise on marine ecosystems and related ecosystem services, in line with the MSFD guidelines for impulsive and continuous noise monitoring, and by providing evidence-based methods for the assessment of good environmental status for underwater noise at national, regional and EU level.

The European Commission signed on behalf of the European Union a Declaration for a High-Ambition Coalition for a Quiet Ocean at UNOC 3 which includes actions to address underwater noise and mitigate its impact on marine life and biodiversity. With a view of supporting the implementation of this Declaration, proposals are expected to contribute to restore a quieter ocean.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-ZEROPOLLUTION-02: Bioremediation of Ukraine's ecosystems contaminated by conflicts

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 5.00 and 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 11.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: In line with the “<i>restriction on control in innovation actions in critical technology areas</i>” delineated in General Annex B of the General Annexes, entities established in an eligible country but which are directly or indirectly controlled by China or by a legal entity established in China are not eligible to participate in the action. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁸².

Expected Outcome: The actions funded under this topic should support communities, land managers, local administrators, policy makers, and researchers to deploy solutions

²⁸² This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

contributing to the goals of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation and the new EU bioeconomy strategy, through techniques aligned to the upcoming EU Life Sciences Strategy and the EU Biotech Act.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Innovative biotechnology and Nature-based Solutions (NbS²⁸³) are developed and made available to communities, land managers, local administrators and policy makers in Ukraine to progress towards the targets of biodiversity protection and the clean environment and zero-pollution ambition.
- contribution to the reconstruction, recovery, circularity and upgrading of economy and environment of Ukraine is provided through the remediation of severe ecosystems pollution - due to conflicts - and restoration of ecosystem services.

Scope: The recent wars are causing severe environmental degradation across ecosystems – besides the disruption of human lives and dignity - with concentrations of contaminants affecting the quality of air, water, soil, that may be beyond the known levels. There is the urgent need to advance in the knowledge of such extreme conditions, and to develop or adapt bioremediation techniques suitable to restore the degradation of the affected environments.

Proposals should:

- assess the level of contamination of soils in Ukraine due to past and ongoing conflicts and select the areas to be remediated within the actions funded. Include improving/adapting testing techniques, applying Earth observations and advanced tools (e.g., AI and autonomous systems) when applicable, aiming at the prioritisation and monitoring of the areas in the scope of remediation activities;
- develop and test innovative cost-effective biotechnology and Nature-based Solutions - including phytoremediation - for decontamination and bioremediation of soil pollution on the land and at source (including air and/or water bodies) in the conditions of contamination due to conflicts;
- demonstrate the developed techniques in Ukraine in the areas selected at the first point and monitor the effectiveness of the activities in scope, including increased resilience of the remediated ecosystems to climate change;
- evaluate potential (positive and negative) impacts on the population, especially on groups in vulnerable situations, and ensure transparent engagement with and information to stakeholders and civil society on solutions proposed;

²⁸³ Nature-based Solutions are multilaterally defined as actions aimed at protecting, conserving, restoring, and sustainably managing natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, and marine ecosystems, which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience and biodiversity benefits (UNEA 5.2).

- collect and provide recommendations to policymakers and EU and international relief organisations, to develop any replication actions, including in the context of the possible EU accession process, if relevant;
- deliver on EU international commitments and outreach, including actions directed at future EU enlargement and EU international partnerships contributing to the EU global commitments on biodiversity and climate change.

Proposals should involve consortia formed in the spirit of the multi-actor approach, including land managers and administrators from Ukraine as well as researchers from local academia and research institutions. The participation of SMEs in consortia is encouraged.

Proposals should make use of social sciences and humanities (SSH) to assess the impacts on the population.

Proposals should collaborate with Mission Soil projects dealing with soil pollution²⁸⁴ and with the project funded under the topic HORIZON-MISS-2026-05-SOIL-03: Enabling user-centred and open innovation initiatives to enhance soil health in Ukraine, as well as with the Mission Soil knowledge repository [SoilWise](#) and with the [EU Soil Observatory](#) (EUSO).

Efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the context of this topic are FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable) and compatible with the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC).

International cooperation is strongly encouraged.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-ZEROPOLLUTION-03: Developing managed aquifer recharge techniques (MAR) in a rural context

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor

²⁸⁴ E.g., [ARAGORN](#), [ISLANDR](#), [EDAPHOS](#), [SOILPROM](#), [PHISHES](#).

	approach in this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁸⁵ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- farmers have access to water supply from managed aquifer recharge systems and to appropriate business models to cope with longer and more intense periods of water scarcity due to climate change, while preserving the good status of ground water bodies.
- water ecosystems are healthier and more resilient to climate change, and water related ecosystem services are protected and strengthened, while water resilience of farming systems is increased.
- policy makers are provided with improved insights on mechanisms and instruments to improve the water resilience of the agricultural sector to cope with climate change effects.

Scope: Droughts in the EU are increasing in frequency, magnitude and impact, and the affected area is expanding. Water storage systems can limit abstractions from surface waters and groundwater reducing the environmental footprint of agriculture and food systems, and bring the demand and supply of water better in balance, strengthening the resilience of EU agriculture.

Proposals should:

- extend, improve and customize managed aquifer recharge (MAR) techniques at farm, basin and catchment level, covering most representative EU agricultural contexts in view of climate change;

²⁸⁵ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- develop a methodology to help assessing the most suitable location or situations to implement these MAR techniques and validate with a representative sample of case-study regions, taking into account for the differential impact of climate change;
- develop a user-friendly monitoring, reporting and verification system (MRV) to follow the impact on ground water quality and quantity, as well as associated water ecosystems and dependent terrestrial ecosystems;
- evaluate the potential impact and sustainability of managed aquifer recharge techniques in rural areas, including on the groundwater ecosystems, associated water ecosystems and dependent terrestrial ecosystems, and drinking water from a multi-objective approach, and its integration with evidence-based engineered and Nature-based Solutions to reduce runoff, soil erosion and improve landscape climatic resilience;
- calculate the cost-benefits of MAR techniques and propose different business models for the compensation or remuneration of individual farmers or land managers (payments schemes, nature, carbon or water credits, ...) for hosting MAR initiatives;
- demonstrate the feasibility of these business models at local level (catchment, river basin, ...) by at least 2 case studies in different pedoclimatic zones and evaluate the possible barriers for adoption by farmers or land managers;
- provide a framework of governance models that could fit the different local socio-economic, regulatory and pedo-climatic conditions.

The actions funded under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food, as well as to the Water Resilience Strategy and the EU Climate Adaptation Strategy.

Proposals must implement the ‘multi-actor approach’ and ensure adequate involvement of relevant stakeholders, including farmers, land managers, water governance bodies and local authorities.

Proposals are encouraged to build on the results of relevant projects funded under Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe and ensure collaboration with relevant ongoing and forthcoming projects from the Mission Soil and the Mission Ocean & Waters.

Proposals should follow the Guidance document on managed aquifer recharge techniques of the CIS Working Group on Groundwater ²⁸⁶.

²⁸⁶ Common implementation strategy for the water framework directive and the floods directive: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e827bbe4-fe33-11ef-b7db-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-two-stage: Decontaminate and bioremediate aquatic pollution

Call: Call 01 - two stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 7.00 and 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 23.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply: Applicants submitting a proposal for a blind evaluation (see General Annex F) must not disclose their organisation names, acronyms, logos nor names of personnel in the proposal abstract and Part B of their first-stage application (see General Annex E).
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The first-stage proposals of this topic will be evaluated blindly.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- competent authorities and the water sector have access to effective solutions – particularly based on life sciences and biotechnology – to bioremediate and decontaminate aquatic (marine and freshwater, including groundwater) pollution and improve the resilience of aquatic ecosystems to climate change and biodiversity decline.

- local authorities have improved monitoring and management tools for the protection of marine, surface and groundwater ecosystems, against contaminants of emerging concern (CEC), especially PFAS, antimicrobial substances and microplastics.
- the impact of CEC, especially PFAS, antimicrobial substances and microplastics on marine, freshwater and groundwater ecosystems are better understood including the interlinkages of these systems.

Scope: Chemical pollution of aquatic environments from contaminants and pollutants poses risks for human and environmental health. As recent assessments of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and of the Water Framework Directive have shown, large parts of Europe's groundwater bodies, rivers, lakes, coastal, transitional and marine waters have not reached good status and often exceed regulatory threshold levels set to avoid potential risk to human health and the environment. Continued inflow of pollutants into the aquatic environment, coupled with their ubiquity and persistent nature is increasing the risk of accumulation and long-term exposure of organisms and human beings. While pollution prevention is the most effective measure to tackle aquatic pollution, more effective action and novel solutions are needed to bioremediate and decontaminate European waters from particularly harmful and persistent substances.

Aquatic microorganisms and their communities have developed various molecular mechanisms to adapt to changing environmental conditions enabling them to degrade a wide range of pollutants. The kinetics of community evolution and their molecular mechanisms must be considered. However, the complexity of contaminated marine and freshwater environments including groundwater, where multiple pollutants often coexist as mixtures, metabolites and transformation products are created with changing properties and toxicity levels and interactions with the soil or seabed properties makes risk assessment and remediation a significant challenge. Therefore, a better knowledge of CEC interaction with the surrounding environment (mechanisms, parameters of influence, soil constituents involved) is needed to develop optimised treatment. Recent advancements in nanotechnology have created new opportunities for environmental cleaning, particularly when combined with microbial remediation. As a result, aquatic pollutant-degrading microbes enhanced by nanoparticles are becoming increasingly valuable for developing biotechnological tools that can effectively clean up contaminated environments.

Proposals should:

- develop and demonstrate novel approaches, locally adaptable and site-specific solutions for the bioremediation and decontamination of aquatic pollution at source, in rivers, lakes, coastal and groundwaters and at sea, including removal processes, management of degradation processes, ensuring the approaches do not harm the environment.
- develop and demonstrate new, effective and affordable technologies, considering particularly solutions based on life sciences and biotechnology, including microorganisms and/or microbial communities and/or nanoparticles biosynthesized by microbial activity, for the removal of pollutants, such as persistent organic pollutants,

degrading pollutants (e.g. plastics, oil, hydrocarbons), marine mucilage, contaminants of emerging concern and targeted micropollutants (PFAS, pharmaceuticals, antimicrobials, pesticides and micro-and nano-plastics) from marine waters, wastewater and drinking waters and the environment including groundwater and sediments. Recovery of the biosynthesized nanoparticles will be an asset in proposals but not required.

- integrate environmental monitoring methods (including effect-based methods), building on existing methodologies, and high-resolution methods for robust risk assessment of the impact of CECs on aquatic ecosystems, as well as assessment of the improved resilience of bioremediated aquatic ecosystems to climate change.
- demonstrate pathways and interlinkages of the pollutants in aquatic ecosystems, and to develop understanding where management actions are most beneficial and needed.
- ensure transparent engagement with stakeholders and society on solutions proposed.

Proposals should bring together a wide range of relevant stakeholders, i.e., researchers, technology providers, policy makers and local competent authorities to maximise impact. Case-studies representing the regional specificities in term of climate conditions are welcomed but not required.

Proposals should ensure complementarities and avoid overlaps with relevant projects funded under Horizon Europe, including the ones funded under the Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters” and under the Partnership for the Assessment of Risks from Chemicals (PARC). Projects should engage with and help build an emerging community on decontamination and bioremediation.

The participation of SMEs and Start-ups in the consortia is encouraged. The JRC may contribute with its expertise related to nanotechnology/nanoparticles and environmental biotechnology particularly in metagenomics and to the effect-based methods for the chemical pollutants' detection in water.

Projects under this topic are relevant to the European Ocean Pact, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Water Framework Directive, Groundwater Directive, Environmental Quality Standards Directive, EU Water Resilience Strategy, EU zero pollution action plan, Nature Restoration Regulation, Commission communication on Building the future with nature: Boosting Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing in the EU, and upcoming initiatives such as the Life Sciences Strategy and the EU Biotech Act.

2027

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-ZEROPOLLUTION-01: Replacing hazardous substances in biocidal products

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)
Specific conditions

<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁸⁷. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute driving the innovation of public authorities and industrial operators confronted with the Biocidal products regulation (EC) No 528/2012, within the 'safe and sustainable by design' framework. The outcomes will support the goals of the Commission communication on: Building the future with nature: Boosting Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing in the EU, and of the Start-ups and Scale-ups strategy and the upcoming Life Sciences Strategy and the upcoming EU bioeconomy strategy.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- innovation in bio-based and natural substances brings safer alternatives to hazardous substances contained in biocidal products, with decreased risk on human health and biodiversity, including pollinators.
- safe, sustainable and effective solutions are developed and tested for the control of harmful organisms affecting human or animal health or the environment.

Scope: Despite being needed for the control of pests or harmful organisms, some of the biocidal active substances currently approved are problematic for human or animal health or

²⁸⁷ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

the environment. More innovation to bring safer alternatives into the market is therefore essential, allowing for further restriction or ban to the use of the most hazardous biocidal active substances.

Proposals should:

- develop innovative and Safe and Sustainable by Design (SSbD²⁸⁸) bio-based substances to effectively replace hazardous active substances used in biocidal products covered by Biocidal products regulation²⁸⁹ and, specifically, at least in one of the following applications as listed below:
 - o hazardous active substances used in wood preservatives biocidal products. Developed solutions/substances should aim to limit the development of resistance or cross-resistance to harmful organisms, such as *Aspergillus species*, and in particular *Aspergillus fumigatus*;
 - o hazardous active substances used in insecticides biocidal products to control mosquitos. Developed solutions/substances should be sufficiently effective to control larvae or adults of mosquitoes responsible for diseases transmitted to humans or animals;
 - o the developed substances can include active substances derived from plants, microbes and other natural sources, and bio-based substances;
- include a review at international level of the hazardous active substances in the scope (wood preservatives and insecticides to control mosquitos);
- test the solutions/substances developed and assess their safety for human health, terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity, including pollinators;
- validate their contribution to biodiversity enhancement, when applicable;
- demonstrate their effectiveness in replacing the hazardous substances through scientific validated indicators, including their integration into final products, also in terms of cost-effectiveness.

Projects should include social sciences and humanities (SSH) in testing the safety of the developed substances on humans, especially including the analysis of groups in vulnerable situations, and the diversity in terms of sex, disability, age, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, etc.

International cooperation is encouraged, for the review of substances in scope.

²⁸⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022H2510>. The SSbD framework is to be used to guide the innovation process towards safer and more sustainable chemicals and advanced materials. The application of the SSbD framework should be evidenced/visible through the decisions and changes made throughout the innovation process, demonstrating how safety and sustainability considerations influenced choices from design to final outcomes.

²⁸⁹ [EUR-Lex - 02012R0528-20240611 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

Participation of SMEs in the consortium is encouraged.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-ZEROPOLLUTION-02: Developing effective air quality planning strategies through innovative multi-scale modelling

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: Due to the scope of this topic, relevant international organisations with headquarters in a Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country are exceptionally eligible for funding. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to start from TRL 2 and achieve TRL 5 by the end of the project.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁹⁰.

²⁹⁰ This [decision](#) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link:

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- public authorities obtain access to enhanced and innovative modelling capabilities to support air quality planning at various policy levels in a coherent way.
- society benefits from improved governance processes and effective air quality planning strategies, aiming at mitigating air pollution and reducing population exposure, as well as from far more targeted air pollution alerts.
- public authorities, including EU policy-makers and the EEA, receive faster, more comprehensive scientific evidence and tools, enabling more effective EU air quality policy implementation and providing citizens with reliable, detailed information and peak pollution warnings to reduce health impacts.

Scope: The air we breathe is often polluted, which can lead to serious health problems and even premature death. To address this public health issue, it is essential to understand how pollutants move and interact in the air at different scales, from regional to street level and at different time periods during the day or in different seasons. However, current models used to predict air quality have limitations, particularly in terms of their grid resolution levels and their limited ability to accurately capture the complex interactions between different scales. This can lead to uncertainties and inaccuracies in assessing and predicting air quality, making it challenging to develop and take effective measures to improve air quality.

This topic aims to improve these capabilities by developing a chain of innovative integrated models, relatively easy to use and interpret, that can simulate the air quality situation in different scales and types of areas, including at ‘micro-scale’, and by integrating a temporal-scale dimension, also taking into account emissions into the ambient atmosphere from indoor environments. This should support the development of effective air quality planning strategies at various levels, ultimately helping to reduce air pollution and protect public health. Moreover, it should support the requirements in the revised Ambient Air Quality Directive as regards the development of Air Quality Roadmaps and Air Quality Plans, and for the design and planning of the network of monitoring stations.

More specifically, proposals should:

- develop comprehensive multi-scale modelling chains possibly with two-way nesting capabilities (TRL 5), addressing air quality assessment, including spatial and temporal representativeness, and atmospheric processes of air pollution. Incorporate and improve urban canopy parameterization to better account for complex interactions between urban structures and air pollutants, including the role of urban vegetation in mitigating and/or fostering the formation and/or accumulation of specific air pollutants, with an emphasis on air pollutants with the highest health impacts.

- analyse the current limitations associated with the integration of different models and multiple spatial/ temporal scales in a single modelling system and develop methods to improve and integrate the existing air quality models and required input datasets (TRL 5).
- develop, configure and validate innovative micro-scale modelling systems at very high resolution with the aim of modelling and evaluating the impact of air quality measures to minimize, mitigate, and prevent exceedances at hotspot locations (TRL 5).
- provide guidelines for air quality modelling to support decision making to improve air quality at all scales, including by harmonizing different types of models within an integrated system, as well as promoting the use and development of multi-scale online modelling systems.

Population groups in vulnerable situations are disproportionately affected by air pollution. Proposals should consider the vulnerability dimension (e.g. for children, older people, women, people with lower socio-economic status, people with underlying health conditions) when approaching different scale analyses and provide recommendations on whether and how links could be made with data on social and spatial inequalities related to air pollution exposure and benefits of mitigation measures in developing inclusive air quality plans and in urban planning.

Where relevant, activities should build and expand on the results of past and ongoing research projects and initiatives with a relevant air quality monitoring and/or modelling component to share experiences, reach synergies and avoid duplication. These could include projects funded under H2020 and Horizon Europe as well as under LIFE strategic integrated projects for clean air, such as LIFE PREPAIR and LIFE Malopolska.

Proposals are encouraged to consider, where relevant, the data, expertise and services offered by European research infrastructures²⁹¹ in the environment domain, such as ACTRIS²⁹². Concrete efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable).

Proposals should, where possible, build on results of and cooperate with AQUILA and FAIRMODE communities and pave the way for the possible transition of the project outcomes into the Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service. This topic is part of the EC-ESA Earth System Science Initiative, and projects should collaborate with related projects funded by ESA's FuturEO programme and should towards this end include sufficient means and resources for effective coordination.

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as a member of the consortium selected for funding. In particular, the JRC could, as relevant, promote and support the harmonised use of scientifically sound air quality modelling approaches and help identify best practices in the

²⁹¹ The catalogue of European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) research infrastructures portfolio can be browsed from ESFRI website: <https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/>

²⁹² Aerosol, Clouds and Trace Gases Research Infrastructure: <https://www.actris.eu>

area. In this regard, JRC would also usefully facilitate interaction with the JRC-chaired Forum for Air quality Modelling (FAIRMODE).

International cooperation is encouraged.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-ZEROPOLLUTION-03: Improve the capacity to monitor and reduce air pollution from agriculture

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: Due to the scope of this topic, relevant international organisations with headquarters in a Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country are exceptionally eligible for funding. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used). The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the

	Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁹³ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) of air pollutants at farm level is improved.
- human health and environment (including biodiversity) benefit from reduced impacts of air pollution from agriculture.
- EU policies preventing and reducing air pollution are supported with more comprehensive, harmonised and accurate scientific evidence, tools and methods to estimate the emissions.
- farmers, advisors and other stakeholders acquire new and better knowledge, technologies and practices to reduce certain air pollutants from agriculture.

Scope: EU agriculture contributes substantially to air pollution through various emissions. Additional efforts are needed in the sector to help reducing the impact on human health and the environment, including biodiversity. To promote the uptake of measures at farm level, better data on their impact and effectiveness are needed. There is also a need for new practical solutions to help farmers monitor and reduce air pollution.

Proposals should:

- assess and improve the accuracy, cost, efficiency and user-friendliness of MRV methodologies and tools (including AI, IoT, etc.) for air pollutants (other than greenhouse gases) in agriculture at farm level through analysis, field experiments, and demonstration activities, reducing uncertainties and enabling use of higher tiers for the estimation of emissions and for reporting;
- consolidate, extend and improve knowledge on emission factors and mitigation potential of practices and activities at farm level, contributing to the further development of the EMEP/EEA air pollutant emission inventory guidebook 2023²⁹⁴;
- develop farming practices and technologies in manure management and application, livestock feeding and grazing, use of fertilisers and pesticides in all relevant types of farming systems, including cattle, poultry and pigs, to reduce air pollutants other than

²⁹³ This [decision](#) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

²⁹⁴ [EMEP/EEA air pollutant emission inventory guidebook 2023 | European Environment Agency's home page](#)

GHG and evaluate their reduction potential in line with relevant UNECE Guidance documents²⁹⁵;

- through dedicated training and outreach activities, build capacity among farmers, advisors and other relevant actors for widespread utilisation of improved MRV tools and air pollution reduction measures addressing, among other impacts, biodiversity loss.

Proposals must implement the ‘multi-actor approach’, with a consortium based on a balanced mix of actors with complementary knowledge, including farmers, researchers, advisors and businesses.

Concrete efforts should be made to ensure that the data and methodologies produced in the context of the funded projects follow the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable).

Proposals should include a dedicated task and resources for cooperation with the other project(s) funded under this topic and with other relevant ongoing and forthcoming Horizon Europe project(s), including topic HORIZON-CL6-2025-02-CLIMATE-04: Monitoring, reporting, verification and mitigation of non-CO₂ greenhouse gas emissions and related air pollutants from agriculture, especially to understand the combined effects of air pollutants.

The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the Zero Pollution Action Plan, the Industrial and Livestock Rearing Emissions Directive, the National Emissions Reduction Commitments Directive, the Ambient Air Quality Directive, the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, and the transition to a more sustainable EU agriculture in alignment with the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food and the Common Agricultural Policy.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-ZEROPOLLUTION-04: Europe-wide environmental benchmarking system of the industrial bioeconomy sectors

Call: Call 01 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Legal and financial</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions

²⁹⁵ https://unece.org/DAM/env/documents/2012/EB/ECE_EB.AIR_120_ENG.pdf,
https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/ECE_EB.AIR_149-2104922E.pdf,
https://unece.org/DAM/env/documents/2015/AIR/EB/ECE_EB.AIR_129_ENG.pdf

<i>set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ²⁹⁶.

Expected Outcome: The successful proposal funded under this topic will provide guidelines to industrial operators as well as administrators for contributing to the objectives of the Industrial and Livestock Rearing Emissions Directive, the Clean Industrial Deal and the Zero-pollution Action Plan, addressing technical goals in the scope of the Communication on boosting biotechnology and biomanufacturing in the EU and in the upcoming EU bioeconomy strategy.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- innovative circular industrial bio-based systems – including biotechnologies and biomanufacturing – within the EU bioeconomy are deployed to decrease the environmental footprint of industries, not harm biodiversity and address climate neutrality.

Scope: Industrial bio-based systems – made by the supply chain of bio-based feedstock and the industrial value chains - are key elements for the establishment of a fossil-free economy in the EU and Associated Countries (AC). Innovative industrial bio-based systems - also enabled by biotechnology applications - have the capacity to deliver products and services with improved environmental performances. To support the deployment of the best among such systems, it is necessary to create a framework which facilitate the benchmarking. The European Innovation Centre for Industrial Transformation and Emissions (INCITE) - based on the recently revised Industrial and Livestock Rearing Emission Directive (IED 2.0) - collects information on innovative techniques, including emerging ²⁹⁷ and transformative techniques, and assesses their level of development and their environmental performance, including their cost-effectiveness and their trade-offs.

Proposals should:

- establish a forum of experts and stakeholders in the bioeconomy and in industrial bio-based systems, including representatives from academia, industry, and government.

²⁹⁶ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

²⁹⁷ ‘Emerging technique’ means a novel technique for an industrial activity that, if commercially developed, could provide either a higher general level of protection of human health and the environment or at least the same level of protection of human health and the environment and higher cost savings than existing best available techniques, Art 3 IED 2.0.

Members of the forum should be part of the project consortium and should cover, at least, the specific sectors as described in the bullet point below;

- animate the work of the forum to:
 - o select and collect data on emerging techniques (as defined in Art. 3.14 of the IED 2.0) along the whole supply and value chain of industrial bio-based systems, on a worldwide basis, but especially those being tested or used in the EU and ACs. Assess their level of development and environmental performance, including their cost-effectiveness and trade-offs. Industrial bio-based systems in scope of this topic do not include food/feed, biofuels/bioenergy and health and medical devices;
 - o align the selection, the collection of relevant data and the assessment of such techniques with the approach of the European Innovation Centre for Industrial Transformation and Emissions (INCITE) and with the EU Bioeconomy Monitoring (Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy);
 - o give emphasis on relevant emerging techniques including, but not limited to, specific sectors: i) pulp & paper and bio-based chemicals, including the treatments and further conversion of industrial residues and waste from these sectors, ii) mechanical and chemical recycling of bio-based plastic, iii) bioremediation applications - also enabled by biotechnology - to remediate and regenerate polluted ecosystems. The scope of bioremediation applications should include landfills and mining;
 - o include data on climate change mitigation/adaptation and on the capacity for biodiversity protection and enhancement of the selected techniques, where relevant;
 - o align the collection of life cycle assessment (LCA) information, according to the Environmental Footprint recommendation, and the methodological guidance of the voluntary Safe and Sustainable by Design (SSbD) Framework²⁹⁸, where applicable;
- integrate the collected information and data into the Sevilla process through INCITE and into the EU Bioeconomy Monitoring (Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy).

International cooperation is encouraged, for example in the collection of data on emerging techniques.

Synergies with projects funded under the topics on bioeconomy in the current and past Cluster 6 work programmes, and with projects assessing the best practices in the biofuels/bioenergy sectors under Cluster 5 work programmes are encouraged.

²⁹⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022H2510>

Destination - Land, ocean and water for climate action

This destination will support the EU Commission priority ‘Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature’.

This destination is expected to foster mitigation and adaptation to climate change on land, in the ocean and water, and therefore contribute to Cluster 6 in support of the ambition for Europe to become the first climate-neutral and climate-resilient continent by 2050.

The Destination supports the evidence-base for the implementation of the European Green Deal and its climate and biodiversity objectives included in the European Climate Law, the Nature Restoration Regulation, the European Ocean Pact, the Arctic policy, the amended Regulation on land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF), the Regulation on Carbon Farming and Carbon Removals.

The Destination also fosters the development and deployment of innovative solutions and approaches to strengthen Europe’s water security to deliver on the Water Resilience Strategy, support the implementation of EU water legislation and contribute to the European Climate Adaptation Plan. The Destination has complementarities with Cluster 5, climate science and the European Missions on Adaptation to Climate Change and Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030.

R&I actions under this destination will encourage international cooperation and help achieve international commitments concerning land, water, and ocean for climate action under the Paris Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the Treaty on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) and the Antarctic Treaty. Strengthening the ocean-climate-biodiversity-cryosphere nexus is a priority for the EU, as well as safeguarding the integrity and resilience of the ocean and polar regions as vulnerable parts of the Earth System. R&I will support and close key knowledge gaps through research that contributes substantially to the implementation of key international treaties and the work of various international bodies, assessments, and other initiatives.

The Destination supports unlocking the unique assets for research and innovation of the EU outermost regions, in line with the EU strategy for outermost regions ²⁹⁹.

Expected Impact: Proposals for topics under this destination should set out a credible pathway contributing to “**Fostering mitigation of and adaptation to climate change in areas and sectors covered by Cluster 6**”, and more specifically to one or more of the following **expected impacts**:

- Strengthened knowledge and understanding and reduced uncertainty about the future of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean in the short, medium, and long term, and its impacts on the Global Ocean and the Earth System are available and used, alongside identified commensurate management responses to prevent the Southern Ocean and the Antarctic

²⁹⁹ COM(2022) Putting people first, securing sustainable and inclusive growth, unlocking the potential of the EU’s outermost regions.

cryosphere from reaching a point of no return, including enabling protecting, restoring and sustainably managing marine and coastal ecosystems and preventing pollution.

- Effective policy mixes and multi-level governance capable of anticipating a changing Arctic and enabling a just and sustainable transition for all, engaging society at large and balancing economic, social and environmental goals, thanks to improved evidence-based knowledge, tools and science-society-policy interfaces.
- Carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions from land and water activities (inland, marine and coastal) – including primary production – and infrastructures are minimised in rural, urban, and coastal areas while the monitoring, reporting and verification of the emissions is improved.
- Medium- and long-term adaptation and resilience of water infrastructure, agriculture and forestry to challenges related to climate change is further addressed with regard to scientific knowledge, public policy and economic practices.

2026

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-CLIMATE-01: Towards more effective, fair and coherent policies for climate change mitigation and adaptation in agriculture and forestry

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the

	Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³⁰⁰ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- decision-makers and stakeholders in the EU and in Associated Countries have access to comprehensive information and analyses on policy tools applied in the EU, in Associated Countries or in other jurisdictions whose experience can enrich the analysis, and which are targeting or otherwise affecting climate-change mitigation and adaptation outcomes in agriculture and in forestry;
- decision-makers and stakeholders in the EU and in Associated Countries have access to evidence on the trade-offs and synergies between the application of policy tools regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation and their impact on economic, social and environmental outcomes, including those that do not harm or benefit biodiversity;
- mutual learning takes place within and across science, policy and society on the characteristics and outcomes of different climate policy strategies affecting agriculture and forestry, the conditions of their effectiveness, and about synergies and trade-offs with other relevant sectoral and horizontal policies.

Scope: Agriculture and forestry are among the sectors most directly impacted by climate change, while also playing important roles in its mitigation, through greenhouse gas emissions, their reduction and carbon removals from the atmosphere. These roles are addressed in horizontal EU climate policies such as the Regulations on Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) ³⁰¹ and on Effort-sharing ³⁰² or the forthcoming Climate Adaptation Plan, as well as in sectoral policies, most notably the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) with a host of relevant rules and voluntary measures. The climate performance in agriculture and forestry is indirectly also affected by many other policies and measures, be they sectoral (e.g., on market organisation or on income support) or horizontal (e.g., on competitiveness). Depending on their design and application, climate policies in turn also have impacts beyond their immediate objectives, e.g. on competitiveness, income distribution, and biodiversity and nature protection. Apart from policies applicable in the EU and its Member States and in Associated Countries, the outcomes in each of these jurisdictions are also impacted by rules and standards applied in other parts of the world, through international markets and other transboundary effects.

While efforts are made in some contexts to expand the scope of regular policy evaluations, so that they also include “external factors” and unintended consequences, this poses significant

³⁰⁰ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

³⁰¹ [EUR-Lex - 02018R0841-20230511 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

³⁰² [Regulation - 2023/857 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

challenges methodologically and in terms of data and thus often remains an afterthought in analyses focused on individual policies or sectors. There is a need for more aggregate consideration of the full spectrum of levers impacting on climate outcomes, in a comparative and systemic perspective, with a view to improving the overall effectiveness, fairness and coherence of public policies.

Proposals should:

- making use *inter alia* of advanced technological potentials for accelerated evidence synthesis, take stock of existing analyses and evidence on the performance of sectoral and horizontal instruments affecting climate-change mitigation and adaptation in the agricultural and forestry sectors, also in terms of the distribution of costs and benefits within and across sectors and societies;
- design and carry out research to fill gaps in the understanding of the above questions, covering a broad range of policy instruments across relevant outcomes and include compound effects on other policy objectives as well as spill-overs from climate-relevant policies with a different (primary) objective, including biodiversity and nature protection;
- for the agricultural and forestry sectors address adaptation as well as mitigation-related policies and outcomes and assess how (and with how much success) their interconnections have been reflected in relevant policies and institutions, identifying relevant enabling conditions;
- develop frameworks for assessing overall policy outcomes across potentially conflicting objectives and identify specific leverage points for realistically improving aggregate outcomes, taking into account any existing review processes or mechanisms.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) disciplines. Proposals are encouraged to consider, where relevant, the data, expertise and services offered by European research infrastructures in the environmental, biological and food domains.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-CLIMATE-02: Towards the water infrastructures of the future

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.

<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: Subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³⁰³.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- water infrastructures are flexible enough to face changes in hydraulic flow and pollution load from emerging or yet unknown contaminants to ensure that access to water and sanitation is protected on a long-term, recovery of safe secondary resources is secured and greenhouse gas emissions are reduced and ecosystems are protected;
- water infrastructures have integrated digital solutions (e.g. smart sensors, IoT, digital twins and artificial intelligence) as well as citizen science to optimally operate in changing conditions from climate or pollution pressures, facilitate appropriate water pricing based on reliable monitoring of water consumption, favour recovery of material and limit greenhouse gas emissions;
- water infrastructures have incorporated the necessary tools and protection to avoid cyber and/or terrorist attacks to ensure their resilience against malicious behaviour;

³⁰³ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- new or renewed water infrastructures are designed following ‘good practices’ to maximize system resilience, build redundancy, and ensure ecological and social sustainability;
- water infrastructures are better designed thanks to improved predictions, robust assessment of impacts and implementation of appropriate mitigation measures due to advances on the understanding of how, when and where floods and droughts occur.

Scope: Water infrastructures both for drinking water supply and wastewater collection and treatment suffer from a lack of sufficient and continuous investment across Europe. Their conditions are evolving differently depending on the investment capacity of local authorities and/or water companies, as well as the climate and pollution conditions they are exposed to. They are often not flexible enough to adapt to a changing and increasingly unpredictable environment and lack of appropriate monitoring to properly understand their functioning in various operating conditions. On the treatment side, the technological processes are not always coping with pollution load variation or new contaminants threatening human health and downstream ecosystems. They are also more and more exposed to the risk of malicious attacks, being of human or cyber nature.

With the effect of climate change as well as the emergence of new threats from chemical, biological, human and cyber origins, it is necessary to develop and test a set of tools to ensure that water and sanitation provision is resilient now and for the future, building on the solutions that emerged in the sector or adapted from other sectors.

To achieve the expected outcomes, proposals should address some or all the elements below:

- develop and integrate modular processes and tools to improve the adaptability of drinking water and wastewater infrastructures to emerging pollutions and effects of climate change;
- integrate Nature-based Solutions infrastructures to reduce the carbon footprint of water infrastructure, better manage water flows and pollutants entering sewers, and support biodiversity;
- enhance the use of digital solutions, new monitoring techniques, Earth observation tools, digital twin technology and artificial intelligence, including for predictive analytics, within drinking water and wastewater infrastructures to optimise their operation, anticipate infrastructure challenges and pollution and improve their efficiency and resilience, addressing leakages, infiltration, energy consumption, recovery of materials and carbon footprint;
- develop robust data sharing framework to promote secure collaboration among stakeholders and identify interdependencies with other critical infrastructures in a resilience-based approach;
- develop tools, approaches and procedures to protect both the physical and digital water infrastructures against malicious attacks.

Proposals are encouraged to explore the use of blockchain or other distributed ledger technologies to ensure data integrity, enable smart-contract-based service automation, and support novel financing or certification schemes for future water infrastructures. Given the high degree of integration of the topic with existing infrastructures, proposals should target a large variety of stakeholders ranging from universities, SMEs, water utilities, energy utilities, etc.

Proposals should also seek to contribute to the further development of existing observing platforms and initiatives, including to the evolution of Copernicus services and the future EU Digital Twin on freshwater and Destination Earth. It should also contribute to define the bases for a FAIR sharing of data in the water sector in collaboration with the initiative conducted by the co-funded partnership Water Security for the Planet (Water4All).

All in-situ data collected through actions funded from this call should follow INSPIRE principles and be available through open access repositories (e.g. Copernicus), supported by the European Commission.

Proposals should also build on the results of previous projects funded under previous framework programmes, especially the projects related to the cluster ICT4Water. They should also foster complementarities and avoid overlapping with projects funded under the Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030 and the EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change. Finally, it should also look for collaboration with projects from Horizon Europe Cluster 3 in relation to security, where appropriate. The JRC may contribute with technical analysis and research on digital technologies for water management and monitoring, including real-world test cases.

International cooperation is strongly encouraged.

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HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-CLIMATE-01: Governance, sustainable development and international politics of a future ice-free Arctic

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 16.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following

<i>conditions</i>	exceptions apply: All international organisations are exceptionally eligible for funding. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Improved knowledge of the processes, feedbacks and impacts of an ice-free Arctic, both locally/regionally and globally, including advanced research on newly emerging aspects of the future regime change in the Arctic.
- Enhanced observations and monitoring capabilities of Arctic changes including ocean, land, sea-ice and atmosphere processes and biodiversity in the Arctic, informing the key components covered by the topic, i.e. governance, sustainable development and international politics of an ice-free Arctic.
- Knowledge-based recommendations for sustainable development (of ocean-based and blue economy activities), environmental conservation, climate change adaptation and resilience, better-informed planning of resources (with a focus on coastal communities and activities) and enabled evidence-based regional, European, and global decision-making on Arctic Ocean Governance; sustained European leadership in ocean-climate-biodiversity-cryosphere science; significant contributions made to global scientific assessments, such as the IPCC, IPBES, SWIPA and WOA, as well as to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021 – 2030) and Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences (2025-2034), Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement (CAOFA), the International Polar Year 2032-2033, UN SDGs 13 and 14, and the European polar science coordination efforts.

Scope: Proposals should:

- Better understand, project and reduce uncertainties linked to the impacts, timing and consequences of an ice-free Arctic. This includes the underlying systems (such as ocean, atmosphere, cryosphere, and biosphere) and processes, strengthening research on key or main drivers of internal variability and their interconnectedness to the climate system, under multi and cumulative and cascading impacts of anthropogenic activities (resource extraction, climate change, shipping and industrial activities, pollution, introduction of NIS, etc.), abrupt, irreversible change/tipping elements and thresholds, including their

reversibility. In particular, understanding the nuances of the impacts of occasional daily ice-free conditions, versus frequent monthly ice-free conditions, versus ice-free conditions that occur for several months a year, is needed to assess the true impact of a new seasonal Arctic sea ice regime in a warming world, in particular in and for Europe.

- Enhance regional models representing integrated key physical, biogeochemical, and biological processes, especially to capture processes in the changing sea-ice regimes (ecological and political) and the impacts of extremes, building on and further developing the existing IPCC class climate models and making use of new technologies for sustained monitoring of key climate indicators / shared Arctic variables and machine learning techniques for the advanced interpretation of these data.
- Identify transformative pathways and key leverage points for sustainable mitigation and anticipatory adaptation approaches. This could include and are not limited to looking into aspects of: community resilience and health, particularly Indigenous populations, in adapting to cultural, political, economic and environmental changes, including addressing food security, health impacts, and preserving cultural practices; explore novel economic opportunities and challenges, evaluating the potential for shorter and new shipping routes and other economic opportunities, explore sustainable energy solutions for Arctic communities, including wind, solar, and geothermal energy potential, resource exploration, and sustainable economic development while ensuring environmental protection; explore elements of risk management and hazard mitigation preparing for increased coastal erosion, increased extreme weather events, and the impacts of thawing permafrost on infrastructures, greenhouse emissions, and increased risks of natural and anthropogenic hazards; develop strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance carbon sequestration in Arctic ecosystems (bearing in mind the precautionary principle/approach, and the efficiency and effectiveness of Nature-based Solutions); improve projections for Arctic's "Last Ice Area" (LIA) — a vital habitat for ice-dependent species — and critical for Arctic habitats, and inform conservation policies and measures; explore the power of enhancing cooperation among Arctic nations and global partners to share data, resources, and expertise and identify issues of geopolitical and strategic nature and assess the implications of a navigable Arctic for shipping and other blue economy or coastal-linked activities, resource extraction, and international relations, strongly considering sustainability and the precautionary principle/approach.

Actions should conduct trans- and multi-disciplinary research, include aspects of gender, SSH, equality and inclusion, and intergenerational concerns, and strengthen the inclusion of different knowledge systems (Indigenous Knowledge, Local Knowledge and Science) in broadening our understanding the multifaceted governance, sustainable development and international politics of an ice-free Arctic. International cooperation is strongly encouraged, especially with the All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance (AAORIA) partner countries³⁰⁴. A strong linkage should be ensured with the ongoing activities under Polhavet 2050 – Arctic Ocean 2050. The actions should build on existing observing platforms and

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[Home - All Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance](#)

initiatives, and/or contribute to the evolution of the EU Digital Twin of the Ocean and Destination Earth. All in-situ data collected through actions funded from this call should follow INSPIRE principles and be available through open access repositories supported by the European Commission (Copernicus and EMODnet). Concrete efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the context of the funded projects is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable).

This topic is part of a coordination initiative between ESA and the European Commission on Earth System Science and should towards this end include sufficient means and resources for effective coordination, with relevant ESA Polar Science Cluster projects, including utilising novel satellite Earth Observation datasets and joint research actions. Furthermore, this topic is supporting the European polar science coordination efforts, including synergies with the objectives of the European Polar Coordination Office (EPCO) and through contributing to the implementation of its work plan. Proposals are encouraged to consider, where relevant, the data, expertise and services offered by European research infrastructures³⁰⁵, as well as related projects in the environment domain.

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding. The JRC may contribute with its expertise related to developing new methods to forecast air pollution and to estimate methane emissions from thawing permafrost.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-CLIMATE-02: Strengthening evidence-based policies for the resilience of European agriculture and forestry and related supply chains against crises and systemic risks

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B.

³⁰⁵ The catalogue of European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) research infrastructures portfolio can be browsed from ESFRI website <https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/>

<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: In order to ensure a balanced portfolio, and to achieve the expected outcomes of this topic, grants will be awarded to proposals not only in order of ranking but also to one proposal within the area A that is the highest ranked, and one proposal highest ranked within the area B, provided that the proposals attain all thresholds. Proposals shall clearly indicate the area they are applying to.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³⁰⁶.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- societal and political actors have a better understanding of how European agriculture and forestry, as well as agri-food and forest-based supply chains, are exposed to and impacted by a combination of complex systemic risks and crises;
- EU, national, regional and local decision-makers have access to improved analytical capacity and recommendations on policy instruments and strategies for assessing, preventing and managing systemic risks and crises;
- the compounding, cascading and amplifying roles of climate change for different kinds of risk and crises and in constraining options for crisis response are better understood, facilitating their systematic integration into decision-making;
- the compounding, amplifying and/or mitigating role of trade for different kinds of risk and crises involving supply chain effects is better understood.

Scope: The 2020 and 2025 Strategic Foresight Reports³⁰⁷ put forward resilience as a compass for EU policies. Resilience is defined as the ability not only to withstand and cope with challenges but also to undergo transitions, in a sustainable, fair, and democratic manner. Adopting a transformative, proactive and forward-looking approach to resilience is needed for

³⁰⁶ This [decision](#) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

³⁰⁷ [2020 Strategic Foresight Report - European Commission](#)
[2025 Strategic Foresight Report - European Commission](#)

the EU to thrive in turbulent times, anticipate new challenges and create a safe space for citizens and businesses. Against this background, proposals should target several systemic risks and crises (e.g., sanitary, environmental, economic, geopolitical, biodiversity, demographic, technological) that are causing, or likely to cause, significant socio-economic impacts directly or indirectly affecting European agriculture or forestry, and agri-food or forest-based supply chains, considering potential compound, cascading and amplifier effects under climate change.

The actions under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food, the EU Forest Strategy, the Common Agricultural Policy, and the forthcoming European Climate Adaptation Plan.

Proposals should:

- improve analytical capacity on:
 - o the exposure of the agricultural or forestry sectors and of agri-food or forest-based supply chains and their agents, including consumers, to (interacting) systemic risks and crises, including compound, cascading and amplifier effects related to climate change and trade disruptions;
 - o the assessment and measurement of the propagation of shocks and short-, medium- and long-term impacts (social, economic, environmental including biodiversity) of those (interacting) systemic risks and crises on the agricultural or forestry sectors and on agri-food or forest-based supply chains and their agents, at different scales (local to global) and considering the vulnerability of different groups (e.g. age, gender or other social factors). Proposals should take into account the specificities of different types of supply chains, e.g., in terms of length, organisation, critical dependencies, considering also the role of ecosystem services and, where relevant, intergenerational time scales.
- explore a range of effective socio-economic and technological (e.g., advanced digital technologies) options and identify leverage points to further develop integrated prevention, preparedness, management, adaptation and transformation strategies and pathways that encompass different temporal (short to long term) and spatial (global to local) scales to improve the resilience at each critical stage of the agri-food or forest-based supply chains;
- analyse those options with regard to societal and institutional preconditions, the costs and benefits, at different levels, of action versus non-action, as well as coherence, synergies and trade-offs with competitiveness, health and sustainability objectives.

Proposals should either address Area A: Agriculture and agri-food supply chains, or Area B: Forestry and forest-based supply chains. The area (A or B) should be clearly indicated in the application.

Proposals should capitalise on existing relevant research findings and tools. They should also ensure complementarities with other relevant EU-funded projects, including from the EU Missions on Adaptation to Climate Change and on Soil, and ensure synergies with other relevant EU initiatives and processes (e.g., Resilience Dashboards³⁰⁸).

Proposals should include a dedicated task, appropriate resources and a plan on how they will collaborate with other projects selected under this topic (e.g., by participating in joint activities, workshops, as well as common communication and dissemination activities, etc.). Proposals selected in Area A are also expected to collaborate with the projects selected under the topic HORIZON-CL6-2027-03-GOVERNANCE-01: Strengthening the resilience of European farmers through improved capacity in coping with risks and crises.

Proposals should support collaborative and interdisciplinary work, involving the effective contribution of social sciences and humanities (SSH) disciplines in combination with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

Proposals are encouraged to consider, where relevant, the data, expertise and services offered by European research infrastructures³⁰⁹ in the environmental, biological and food domains.

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding. The role of the JRC would be to contribute with knowledge and expertise on concurrent and recurrent climate hazards (especially drought and heatwaves) and their amplifying effects in terms of impacts in the agricultural and forestry sectors, and to support exploration of high-impact low-probability events, including those linked to crossing tipping points.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-CLIMATE-03: Carbon farming innovation and scale-up

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must

³⁰⁸ [Resilience Dashboards - European Commission](#)

³⁰⁹ The catalogue of European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) research infrastructures portfolio can be browsed from ESFRI website <https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/>

	apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³¹⁰.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- models, methods and data needed for the quantification of carbon farming activities and results are available for integration in a single monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) system, so that the costs and burden associated to carbon farming MRV are reduced to a minimum;
- use of carbon-removal and emission-reduction certification is facilitated at scale, and the EU Carbon Removals and Carbon Farming (CRCF) Regulation³¹¹ becomes the basis for cost-effective certification of carbon farming in different contexts;
- carbon farming actors involved in CRCF implementation in different roles – including land managers and other market participants as well as certification and governance bodies – have access to relevant scientific knowledge and tailored technical support for the implementation of CRCF rules.

Scope: The CRCF Regulation creates the first EU-wide voluntary framework for certifying carbon removals, carbon farming and carbon storage in products across Europe. By establishing EU quality criteria and laying down monitoring and reporting processes, the CRCF Regulation will facilitate investment in innovative carbon removal technologies, as

³¹⁰ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

³¹¹ https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/carbon-removals-and-carbon-farming_en#eu-carbon-removals-and-carbon-farming-certification-crcf-regulation

well as sustainable carbon farming solutions, while addressing greenwashing. By 2026, the Commission will have adopted the first EU certification methodologies for different carbon farming activities through delegated acts, will have issued implementing acts with certification rules, and will have started the process of recognising certification schemes entitled to apply CRCF rules. With implementation of CRCF expected to start in 2027, this topic should serve to develop innovations and knowledge facilitating and enhancing its implementation on the ground.

Proposals should:

- develop innovations to facilitate carbon farming certification, particularly by integrating advanced technologies (e.g. machine learning, artificial intelligence, blockchain, Earth observation, IoT) and by enhancing cooperation among holders of relevant knowledge and data (e.g. networks of benchmark sites, ring tests among soil laboratories, interoperability of relevant datasets), in order to harmonise data collection and verification and to minimise administrative burden for operators;
- maintain open-access lists of models, sampling protocols, datasets of emission factors and other relevant data to harmonise sustainability benchmarks for carbon farming activities, enhance the robustness of company-level and national greenhouse gas inventories for the land sector and the agricultural sector, and ensure the comparability and interoperability of all CRCF uses;
- based on experience with the implementation of the CRCF Regulation and its implementing rules during the first years after entry into force, and building on previous knowledge and tools developed by other relevant (EU-funded) projects, enhance capacity among the relevant stakeholders and facilitate the broad application of new or improved technologies, processes or services supporting the successful participation of land managers, certification schemes, and certification bodies;
- create awareness about CRCF among all potential users, buyers, or financiers of carbon farming (e.g. companies in the bioeconomy, national and regional agriculture and environmental authorities, financial institutions), collect information about their data needs, and facilitate access to those data within the context of CRCF certification and registry;
- systematically collect and analyse feedback and lessons learned by carbon farming actors involved in CRCF implementation, particularly regarding obstacles to implementing and scaling-up of CRCF certification;
- identify and address – through technological, economic or social innovations – remaining obstacles for effective large-scale participation in CRCF certification, and propose potential improvements to enabling conditions, certification methodologies, verification rules, and incentive structures.

Proposals must implement the ‘multi-actor approach’ and ensure adequate involvement of relevant stakeholders, including potential carbon-farming practitioners (farmers, foresters and other land managers), other market participants, certification bodies and relevant public authorities.

Proposals should include a dedicated task, appropriate resources and a plan on how they will collaborate with the other project(s) selected under this topic and with projects under other relevant topics in Horizon Europe Work Programmes, including the Mission “A Soil Deal for Europe” and the EU Soil Observatory (EUSO).

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-CLIMATE-04: Unlocking a safe operating space for Antarctica and the Southern Ocean

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 11.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 22.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: All international organisations are exceptionally eligible for funding. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Improved multidisciplinary scientific understanding of the functioning of the Southern Ocean and the Antarctic cryosphere and associated ecosystem dynamics, in the near term (~2030), mid-term (2050–2060) and long-term (after ~2060), including their mutual interaction with, impact on and vulnerability to, current and future changes in the other components of the regional and global climate systems.

- Important contributions made to key ocean, cryosphere, climate and biodiversity monitoring indicators that support international, regional and global assessments. Fostered development of a regional approach to polar ocean, climate and biodiversity observations, monitoring and reporting.
- Informed policies for environmental conservation and climate resilience and enabled evidence-based regional, European, and global decision-making on polar ocean governance; sustained European leadership in ocean-climate-biodiversity-cryosphere science; significant contributions made to global scientific assessments (e.g. IPCC, IPBES and WOA), as well as to the UN Decades of Action of Ocean (2021-2030) and Cryospheric (2025-2034) Sciences, the Antarctica InSync programme (2027 and 2030), the International Polar Year (2032-2033), UN SDGs 13 and 14, and the European polar science coordination efforts.

Scope: Proposals should:

- Resolve uncertainties, improve projections and quantifications of the future of the region, looking at changes in the near-, mid- and long-term (irreversible, abrupt and committed changes), their likelihood, timing, rate, amplitude, and impacts on the Earth's System (decadal to millennial climate projections, global sea level, ocean circulation, global carbon budget).
- Advance understanding of the complex interactions and feedbacks between the ocean, the atmosphere, sea ice, ice shelves, and land ice dynamics, considering multiple scales and processes simultaneously, with focus on the Antarctic continental shelves where conditions are or will change rapidly and on regions for bottom water formation.
- Advance the knowledge of Southern Ocean dynamics and sea ice dynamics in the near-, mid- and long-term. Better understand the distribution, underlying mechanisms and impacts of changes in the Southern Ocean and sea ice to reduce uncertainties in projected future changes of large-scale ocean circulation and transport, including abrupt, irreversible change/tipping elements and thresholds, collapse of the overturning circulations, regional and global climate and weather systems. This should include extreme events and mid-latitude weather; fluxes between the ice sheet and the ocean; the future dynamics of oceanic carbon pools.
- Explore the vulnerability of Southern Ocean ecosystems, including the impacts of climate change, pollution and other anthropogenic activities on marine biodiversity and ecosystem dynamics changes in the near (~2030), mid (2050–2060) and long-term (after ~2060). This includes improved control variables for the diversity of all life forms incorporating also the microbiome and functions (functional diversity), as well as the biocomplexity suitable for measuring biosphere integrity in different facets. Proposals should also contribute to the development or strengthening of long-term, continuous monitoring systems for Southern Ocean biodiversity and ecosystem functioning, in synergy with existing observation infrastructures.

- Develop mechanisms to distinguish human-induced environmental changes from natural ones and develop strategies to protect the fragile environment of the Southern Ocean from human activities and climate change, as well as comprehensively establish the efficacy of Southern Ocean conservation measures for preserving evolutionary potential and those properties that best anticipate change.
- Further improve key ocean, cryosphere, climate and biodiversity monitoring indicators that support international, regional and global assessments and foster the development of a regional approach to polar ocean and climate observations, monitoring and reporting, and further the representation of multi-scale interactions in Earth System Models (ESMs) and regional coupled atmosphere–ocean–sea ice–land models representing key physical, biogeochemical, and biological processes in the polar ocean regions.
- Advance capabilities to provide evidence, tractable proposals and recommendations for commensurate policy and protection, restoration and long-term sustainable management responses to prevent the Southern Ocean and its ecosystems and cryosphere from reaching a point of no return.

The actions should contribute to the evolution of the EU Digital Twin of the Ocean and Destination Earth, and interface with the Southern Ocean Observing System (SOOS). All in-situ data collected through actions funded from this topic should follow INSPIRE principles and be available through open access repositories supported by the European Commission (Copernicus, and EMODnet). Concrete efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the context of the funded projects is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable). Proposals are encouraged to consider, where relevant, the data, expertise and services offered by European research infrastructures³¹², as well as related projects in the environment domain, such as POLARIN³¹³. International cooperation is strongly encouraged, especially with All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance (AAORIA) partner countries³¹⁴. This topic is part of a coordination initiative between ESA and the European Commission on Earth System Science and should towards this end include sufficient means and resources for effective coordination, with relevant ESA Polar Science Cluster projects, including utilising novel satellite Earth Observation datasets and joint research actions. Furthermore, this topic is supporting the European polar science coordination efforts, including synergies with and support to the objectives and work plan of the European Polar Coordination Office (EPCO).

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-CLIMATE-01-two-stage: Open topic: Innovative solutions for the Water Resilience Strategy

Call: Call 02 - two-stage (2027)

³¹² The catalogue of European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) research infrastructures portfolio can be browsed from ESFRI website <https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/>

³¹³ [POLARIN – Polar Research Infrastructure Network](#).

³¹⁴ [Home - All Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance](#)

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 11.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply: Applicants submitting a proposal for a blind evaluation (see General Annex F) must not disclose their organisation names, acronyms, logos nor names of personnel in the proposal abstract and Part B of their first-stage application (see General Annex E).
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used). The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B. The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The first-stage proposals of this topic will be evaluated blindly.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the

	Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³¹⁵ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to one or more of the following expected outcomes corresponding to the Water Resilience Strategy objectives:

- the water cycle is restored;
- the economy is following a water-smart path and the EU water industry is competitive;
- water is clean and affordable for all.

Scope: The European Commission adopted the European Water Resilience Strategy³¹⁶, which proposes actions to address the expected outcomes described in this Open Topic. With a view of contributing with breakthrough innovation to this strategy, proposals are expected to address creative or disruptive solutions to develop a set of means for its implementation. Adapted to the nature, scope and type of proposed activities, proposals should convincingly explain how they will plan and/or carry out demonstration, testing or validation of developed tools and solutions. Proposals must implement the ‘multi-actor approach’ and ensure adequate involvement of appropriate stakeholders, including where relevant farmers, water intensive industries, energy producers, land managers, water governance bodies and local authorities. Proposals should also delineate the plans to develop possible future uptake and upscaling at local, national and EU level for possible next steps after the project. In this topic the integration of the gender and intersectional dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content should be addressed only if relevant in relation to the objectives of the research effort. Proposals should consider and possibly expand on previous research of related past national or EU-funded projects, avoiding duplication.

Proposals should address one or more of the following actions:

Restore the Water Cycle

- uptake of innovative solutions to help retain water in natural ecosystems at regional level, including groundwater, to restore free flowing and renaturalising river shapes, to promote water-efficient practices and optimised soil-water interactions, to implement the source-to-sea approach and supporting biodiversity;
- increase preparedness against water scarcity, droughts and floods, and integrate global change adaptation strategies, including climate-resilient water infrastructure, early warning systems, and risk assessments to enhance the resilience of water systems to future climate impacts;

³¹⁵ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

³¹⁶ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/environment/water-resilience-strategy_en

- improve hydrological and ecological monitoring to better assess the impacts of various water resources management actions and interventions, while facilitating cross-border collaboration and open access to data.

Water smart economies

- In line with the water efficiency first principle, identify techniques or methodologies and their advantages and develop indicators for water efficiency in various water consuming sectors, e.g. agriculture;
- develop and propose water pricing systems and certification systems that rewards sustainable land management practices and that promote the efficient provision of water services and the efficient use of water;
- propose a set of innovative technological and digital solutions for the water (services) sector and water user sectors, to promote a water-smart economy and to implement the water efficiency first principle;
- develop and upscale innovative water reuse and recycling solutions, including potable applications where appropriate, contributing to circular water use.

Ensuring clean and affordable water for all

- analyse the barriers that prevent public participation and engagement and developing actions to increase public awareness and engagement in drinking water resource protection and river basin management plans;
- develop cost effective measures to ensure equitable access to affordable water and sanitation for groups in vulnerable situations such as women, children, elder people, low-income communities, indigenous peoples, or persons with disabilities LGBTIQ people, people with a racial or religious minority background;
- develop methodologies to improve the influence of water footprint over consumption processes/patterns.

Proposals covering more than one action are not required to make links between the different actions if there is not. However, they should convincingly explain how their proposed actions are expected to contribute to the achievement of the expected outcomes they address.

Proposals should leverage relevant Copernicus elements and foster complementarities, avoiding overlaps with projects funded under previous Framework Programmes, the Partnership Water Security for the Planet (Water4All), the EU Missions “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030” “Adaptation to Climate Change” and “a Soil Deal for Europe”. Proposals should include a task to ensure collaboration with the other projects funded under this topic. It should reinforce the complementarities of approaches and methodologies developed and maximise the outcome of the topic for the different actions foreseen.

JRC can support the awarded consortium with its expertise and work on current, emerging, and future risks associated with water-related extremes such as droughts and floods, and with its efforts to enhance the drought and flood components of the Copernicus Emergency Management Service.

DRAFT

Destination - Resilient, inclusive, healthy and green rural, coastal and urban communities

The Destination supports the European Green Deal and contributes to Europe's competitiveness and sustainable prosperity by supporting the sustainable development and the just and fair transition of rural, coastal and urban communities.

This destination will support the EU Commission priorities 'Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature' and 'Supporting people, strengthening our societies and our social model'.

R&I will support knowledge needs stemming from the EU vision for agriculture and food, the Commission strategy for generational renewal in agriculture, and continue to support the implementation of common agricultural policy and the long-term vision for EU's rural areas.

R&I activities in this destination will also contribute to achieving the objectives of the strategy for European life sciences, the EU start-up and scaleup strategy, the bioeconomy strategy and the food 2030 initiative.

R&I will complement the new European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative by transformation of spaces and integrating the core NEB values.

Overall, R&I activities under this destination will contribute to supporting people and communities while strengthening our societies and our social model.

R&I will also support communities to work and prosper with nature, preserving biodiversity and ecosystem, and scaling-up the use of Nature-based Solutions, in line with the objectives of the EU climate adaptation strategy and the EU Nature Restoration Regulation.

R&I actions under this Destination will encourage international cooperation, in line with the global approach on R&I. The Destination supports unlocking the unique assets for research and innovation of the EU outermost regions, in line with the EU strategy for outermost regions³¹⁷.

Expected Impact: Proposals for topics under this destination should set out credible paths to '**sustainably developing rural, urban and coastal areas**'. More specifically, proposed topics should contribute to one or more of the following **expected impacts**:

- Communities are empowered to act for a transformative change to increase their sustainability and resilience, through better access to knowledge and tools (including digital ones), and are better prepared to adapt to climate change and to achieve climate neutrality as well as to address environmental issues, including biodiversity loss.
- Rural communities are prepared to anticipate and respond to social, economic and environmental shocks and are attractive for young innovators.

³¹⁷ COM(2022) Putting people first, securing sustainable and inclusive growth, unlocking the potential of the EU's outermost regions.

- Urban and peri-urban communities can access affordable, healthier, nutritious and environmental-friendly food, benefitting from empowered local food entrepreneurship and socially innovative approaches, increasing resilience and inclusiveness.

2026

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-COMMUNITIES-01: Boosting sustainable competitiveness in rural areas through innovation

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³¹⁸. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP). The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- a better understanding of sustainable competitiveness in rural areas is achieved;
- rural communities have better access to services and sustainable business opportunities;

³¹⁸ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- entrepreneurship, innovation, and skills are promoted in rural communities, particularly among young people, to foster sustainability, competitiveness and digital literacy across various sectors of the rural economy.

Scope: The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the long-term vision for EU's rural areas, the vision for agriculture and food and its objective to foster fair living and working conditions in vibrant rural areas, climate objectives, as well as the competitiveness compass which, among its three core areas for action, aims at closing the innovation gap for the EU to boost its competitiveness.

Regaining competitiveness is essential to ensuring long-term prosperity in the EU. However, not all territories have equal access to resources and opportunities. Efforts to enhance competitiveness must therefore also prioritize environmental and social sustainability ensuring that neither nature nor people are left behind in the pursuit of economic growth.

Although rural areas often possess natural resources and are essential to support the provision of ecosystem services, they frequently face societal (e.g., declining and ageing populations, social exclusion and inequality) and market failures (e.g., under-provision of essential services, limited access to finance and infrastructure, digital divide, labour market mismatches) that hinder sustainable development, social inclusion, and competitiveness.

Proposals should:

- improve the understanding of the drivers and obstacles of sustainable competitiveness in the contexts of societal and market failures in rural areas, and propose indicators to measure competitiveness that incorporate social and environmental performance;
- support startups and/or businesses led by young³¹⁹ rural entrepreneurs to design, prototype and test sustainable digital, technological, nature-based and/or social solutions to improve access to services and/or create business opportunities in diverse rural settings; in addition, propose mechanisms to share these solutions among rural areas through translocal networks;
- improve access to digital and hybrid education and training for rural communities to acquire new skills and support entrepreneurial mind-sets, in particular among young people, as well as link university graduates with young rural entrepreneurs to share knowledge and possibly create new collaborations;

Proposals may provide financial support to third parties in particular to support start up or businesses. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Proposals are expected to build upon already existing results and to search collaboration with the other action funded under this topic and with other relevant projects funded under Horizon

³¹⁹ Indicatively, 'young' is understood to mean up to a maximum of 40 years old.

Europe. Proposals should include a task and appropriate resources to ensure these collaborations.

Proposals should also allocate appropriate resources to coordinate their work with relevant initiatives developed by the Joint Research Centre (JRC), particularly in the context of the Rural Observatory and the Startup Village Forum initiative.

This topic requires the effective contribution of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) disciplines (e.g., economics, business and administration, education science, gender studies) and the involvement of SSH experts.

Proposals must consider gender in all aspects of project design and implementation, particularly in data analysis, support for start-ups and businesses, the development of solutions, as well as the provision of education and training opportunities.

2027

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-COMMUNITIES-01: Strengthening rural communities' resilience to shocks

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the

	Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³²⁰ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- rural communities become more resilient by benefiting from an improved capacity to anticipate, prepare for, and recover from climate, environmental and socio-economic shocks;
- local governance is strengthened and becomes more inclusive, benefiting from the active involvement of young people in responding to various types of shocks;
- rural specificities regarding crisis preparedness and management are better understood at all governance levels, allowing for more targeted provisions in crisis preparedness and management plans.

Scope: The successful proposals should contribute to fostering a sustainable, balanced, equitable and inclusive development of rural areas, supporting the implementation of the long-term vision for the EU's rural areas and its objectives that see EU rural areas stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous by 2040. The successful proposals will also support the vision for agriculture and food and its objective to foster fair living and working conditions in vibrant rural areas, and to the Commission priority to sustain our quality of life by boosting climate adaptation, preparedness and solidarity.

The geopolitical situation and climate change pose new challenges that people must confront at the local level. Research and innovation can support rural communities with evidence and participatory methodologies to anticipate, prepare for, and recover from various types of shocks, while building resilience.

Proposals should:

- assess the different types of shocks (understood as sudden disruptions) that can impact the livelihoods, well-being, gender-based differences, and resilience of rural communities. These shocks may include critical infrastructure disruptions (e.g., energy shortages, transportation disruptions, communication failures) as well as economic (e.g., job losses, financial and economic crises, market instability), socio-cultural and demographic (e.g., social conflicts, health crises, migration), and environmental phenomena (e.g., natural disasters, climate change, extreme weather events, ecosystem disruptions);
- measure rural communities resilience with appropriate indicators by evaluating the initial impact of shocks and the capacity for recovery;

³²⁰ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- foster inclusive, participatory, and anticipatory governance by actively engaging women, youth, and people in a vulnerable situation in the development and implementation of disaster risk reduction and management plans, thereby strengthening local governance and ensuring their needs and perspectives are fully integrated into planning and decision-making;
- identify and mobilise local resources to strengthen community-based adaptation and resilience and support the co-design of solutions that help anticipate, prepare for, and recover from environmental and socio-economic shocks;
- support all levels of government (local, regional, national, European and international) in understanding rural vulnerabilities to climate, environmental, and socio-economic shocks, and in designing, assessing, implementing, and evaluating effective response and recovery strategies;

Proposals are expected to build upon already existing results and to collaborate with the other actions funded under this topic, and with other relevant projects funded under Horizon Europe. Proposals should include a task and appropriate resources to ensure these collaborations.

Proposals should also contribute to rural proof the Resilience Dashboards³²¹ developed by the Joint Research Centre (JRC).

This topic is interdisciplinary and includes the involvement of diverse areas of expertise, including territorial planning, disaster risk management, emergency response, and participatory governance. This topic requires the effective contribution of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) disciplines and the involvement of SSH experts.

Proposals must use the multi-actor approach: researchers, local authorities, rural communities and other stakeholders operating at local level (as for example civil protection) should collaborate to co-create and co-produce strategies and solutions that address local needs and priorities.

International cooperation is encouraged to foster knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer learning across countries.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-COMMUNITIES-02: Empowering local urban food systems entrepreneurship and innovation

Call: Call 02 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.

³²¹ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/strategic-foresight/2020-strategic-foresight-report/resilience-dashboards_en

<i>project</i>	Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B. Activities may start at any TRL.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³²² .

Expected Outcome: Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- accelerated growth and success of innovation-led local urban food start-ups, through strengthened business development services, access to capital and investment, and boosted innovation capacities;
- empowered urban food entrepreneurs through inclusive, multi-actor governance models that foster mentoring, collaboration, and co-creation among local actors;
- established and interconnected European-wide competitive urban food systems innovation ecosystems, scaled and deployed widely, that increase the resilience, inclusiveness, and well-being of urban communities through socially innovative and climate smart approaches.

Scope: The successful proposals should drive transformative and inclusive innovation in local urban food systems, boosting decentralised competitiveness and creating positive social and environmental spillovers that enhance well-being of urban communities. It will contribute to

³²² This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

the European Green Deal priorities and the EU's climate ambition for 2030 and 2050, while aligning with the priorities of the Food 2030 R&I initiative: nutrition for sustainable healthy diets, circularity and resource efficiency, innovation and empowering communities. It will also support the Clean Industrial Deal, the Competitiveness Compass, in particular, the EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy, and contribute to the EU Food System Monitoring Dashboard.

Proposals should:

- develop and pilot decentralized local capacities and ecosystems, such as food innovation incubators, accelerators and hubs, which support high-impact and sustainable urban food solutions. These should provide targeted support and access to capital and investment, while connecting fragmented ecosystems across Member States and Associated Countries;
- integrate tailored mentorship programs to stimulate entrepreneurship and start-ups in urban food systems and facilitate participatory co-creation of place-based collaborative sustainable and climate smart business models, utilizing the networks and solutions developed through the local capacities;
- leverage these pilot implementations to accelerate urban food system transformation and scalability, ensuring market uptake, scaling and replication across diverse EU contexts, while measuring the impact on all dimensions of sustainability by relevant indicators;
- connect with already established R&I initiatives, such as partnerships, missions, platforms, and other relevant projects to derive economically viable, and sustainable, business models from these initiatives, accelerating the uptake of research outcomes.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) disciplines.

Proposals should integrate the gender dimension where applicable. Consideration of other social categories besides gender (disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnic and/or cultural origin, sexual orientation, etc.), and their intersections, should be also ensured.

Proposals must implement the multi-actor approach, involving local and regional authorities, urban planners, SMEs and start-ups, food entrepreneurs, research and innovation actors, educational institutions, civil society organisations, and citizens, to co-create inclusive, sustainable, and scalable urban food system innovations.

Destination - Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal

This destination will support the EU Commission priorities ‘Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature’ and ‘A new plan for Europe’s sustainable prosperity and competitiveness’, which require innovative and agile governance models and tools to support transformative change within planetary boundaries.

R&I supporting decision-making is a key enabler for the Vision for Agriculture and Food that aims to secure the long-term competitiveness and sustainability of the EU's farming and food systems within the boundaries of our planet, as well as to meet the objectives set out in the Common Agricultural Policy.

Besides, the R&I supporting the bioeconomy, with a focus on bio-based solutions and the role of biotechnology, needs to be further strengthened, in line with the EU Bioeconomy Strategy and its expected update, the Communication on Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing and the upcoming Life Sciences Strategy.

There is also a need to unlock the potential of applied digital and data technologies to support sectors covered by this cluster in becoming more competitive, sustainable, resilient and inclusive in line with the evolving EU policies on cyber, data and data technologies and digital services, notably the European Data Strategy, the Europe’s Digital Decade Policy Programme, the AI Continent Action Plan and the upcoming EU digital strategy for agriculture. This destination will contribute to the development, support and take up of digital and data-based solutions to implement the European Green Deal, while fostering innovation and supporting start-ups, thereby supporting the EU Competitiveness Compass.

The destination supports the European Ocean Pact, aiming at bringing coherence across all EU policy areas linked to the ocean, supporting a resilient and healthy ocean and coastal areas and promoting the sustainable blue economy. In particular, land-sea connection areas are crucial for addressing the effects of climate change, such as sea level rise, coastal erosion, extreme events, and hydrological crises. When relevant, actions are encouraged to align with the EU Mission ‘Restore our Ocean and Waters’, leveraging its digital infrastructures (such as the Digital Twin Ocean), stakeholder networks, and knowledge systems to enhance governance, environmental observation, and policy-support tools across terrestrial and aquatic systems.

This destination implements research actions to address water challenges in the EU and support the European Water Resilience Strategy by advancing the capacity for proper management of water sources.

In line with the global approach on R&I, this destination will foster and support regional and international initiatives, encourage international cooperation, contribute substantially to the implementation of key international treaties and to the work of various international bodies, assessments and other initiatives, and help achieve international commitments, notably under

the Paris Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), and the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement.

Knowledge and advice are key to improving competitiveness, sustainability and resilience. R&I actions under this destination will support effective Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) that are at the heart of the 2023-2027 CAP's cross-cutting objective as a key mean to bridge the gap between science and practice. Synergies with the EU-CAP Network, and particularly the EIP-AGRI Operational Groups supported by the CAP, will be further exploited.

The European Research Area is further integrated, and the global efforts are well-coordinated for impact-oriented science on food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture-forestry, aquaculture and fisheries, and environment.

The Destination supports unlocking the unique assets for research and innovation of the EU outermost regions, in line with the EU strategy for outermost regions³²³.

Expected Impact: Proposals for topics under this destination should set out credible pathways to **developing innovative governance models and tools enabling sustainability and resilience**, and more specifically to one or several of the following **expected impacts**:

- improved evidence-based knowledge, tools and science-society-policy interfaces support effective policy mixes and multi-level governance that are capable of anticipating a changing world, enabling a just sustainable transition for all, engaging society at large and balancing economic, social and environmental goals;
- competitiveness, sustainability and resilience of the economy are supported by more accessible and interoperable environmental observations and improved Earth Intelligence;
- productivity is boosted and transformative changes required by the European Green Deal are facilitated, leaving no one behind, thanks to enhanced digital and data technologies, flows of existing and new knowledge, solutions and skills among actors and communities, as well as maximised synergies between initiatives.

2026

Innovating with governance models and supporting policies

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

³²³ COM(2022) Putting people first, securing sustainable and inclusive growth, unlocking the potential of the EU's outermost regions.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-GOVERNANCE-01: Additional activities for the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership (SBEP)

Call: Call 03 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 38.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 38.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Programme Co-fund Action
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The proposal must be submitted by the coordinator of the consortium funded under HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-02 and HORIZON-CL6-2024-GOVERNANCE-01-1: European Partnership for a climate neutral, sustainable and productive Blue Economy. This eligibility condition is without prejudice to the possibility to include additional partners.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The evaluation committee will be composed partially by representatives of EU institutions. If the proposal is successful, the next stage of the procedure will be the grant agreement amendment preparations. If the outcome of amendment preparations is an award decision, the coordinator of the consortium funded under HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-02: European Partnership for a climate neutral, sustainable and productive Blue Economy will be invited to submit an amendment to the grant agreement, on behalf of the beneficiaries.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: This action is intended to be implemented in the form of an amendment of the grant agreement concluded pursuant to topic HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-02. For the additional activities covered by this action the funding rate is 30% of the eligible costs. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP). The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. As a

	co-funded European Partnership, providing financial support to third parties (FSTP) is a core activity of this action in order to achieve its objectives. Consequently, the EUR 60 000 threshold laid down in Article 207 of Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 does not apply. The maximum amount of FSTP that may be awarded to any single third party is set at EUR 10 million. This ceiling is justified by the fact that FSTP is a primary activity of this action, by its expected duration of 7–10 years (exceeding a standard project lifespan), and by the extensive experience gained under predecessor partnerships. The starting date of grants awarded under this topic may be as of the submission date of the application. Applicants must justify the need for a retroactive starting date in their application. Costs incurred from the starting date of the action may be considered eligible (and will be reflected in the entry into force date of the amendment to the grant agreement).
<i>Total indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 38 million committed in annual instalments over the years 2026-2027 (EUR 22 million from the 2026 budget and EUR 16 million from the 2027 budget). The total indicative budget of the Partnership for the whole duration is EUR 150 million.

Expected Outcome: This topic is for the continuation of the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership (SBEP), i.e. EU contribution in WP 2026. The third instalment of the partnership is expected to contribute to expected outcomes specified in topic HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-02 and HORIZON-CL6-2024-GOVERNANCE-01-1.

Scope: The objective of this action is to continue to provide support to the European Partnership for a climate-neutral, sustainable and productive Blue Economy (SBEP) identified in the Horizon Europe Strategic Plan 2021-2024 and first implemented under the topic HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-02: European Partnership for a climate neutral, sustainable and productive Blue Economy, and in particular to fund additional activities (which may also be undertaken by additional partners) in view of its intended scope and duration, and in accordance with Article 24(2) of the Horizon Europe Regulation.

Taking into account that the present action is a continuation of the existing topic and foresees an amendment to an existing grant agreement, the proposal should present additional activities (including additional partners) to be covered by the award primarily in terms of grant agreement revisions.

The consortium which applied to and received funding under HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-02 and HORIZON-CL6-2024-GOVERNANCE-01-1 is uniquely placed to submit a proposal to continue the envisioned partnership. Not only did this consortium submit the proposal leading to the identification of the partnership in the Horizon Europe

strategic planning 2021-2024, it has also implemented the partnership through co-funded calls in year 2022 based on this planning and further to topic HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-02 and HORIZON-CL6-2024-GOVERNANCE-01-1. In this context, the current consortium has particular expertise in relation to the objectives of the Partnership, the activities to be implemented, in particular FSTP calls or other calls/scope of calls clearly required/envisioned pursuant to the initial proposal/partnership, and other relevant aspects of the action. In practice, another consortium could not continue the activities of the Partnership underway without significant disruption to the ongoing activities, if at all.

The scope of the application for this call on the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership should focus on the 2023-27 programmes according to the partnership's co-created strategic research and innovation agenda for seven years. It should pursue alignment, cooperation and structuring of research and innovation efforts across the EU and national levels, focusing on regional seas and on the objectives of the EU Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters and of the Ocean Pact, to support a just and inclusive transition to a regenerative, carbon-neutral and circular blue economy and to foster knowledge exchange and co-creation of actions with regulators, policymakers and businesses. It should also continue or expand the priority areas identified in the Strategic Research & Innovation Agenda, promoting R&I alignments across national, regional, and EU levels, and fostering integration across science, industry, governance, and society. The partnership will focus on multiple strategic areas like ocean health, sustainable blue economy, digital twins, and citizen well-being, while aligning with EU policies such as the European Green Deal and other directives. It should recognise the diversity of citizens to be involved and the vulnerability of different groups when approaching different analyses, and develop more inclusive recommendations. The Partnership should consolidate relevant structuring activities and propose additional ones (potentially done by additional partners) aiming at promoting Blue Economy Innovations, contributing to the development of the European Ocean Observing System (EOOS), for instance by facilitating and promoting coordination of cross-border ocean and coastal observations programmes, at increasing the availability of FAIR data for environmental, climate and blue economy purposes, at exploiting the opportunities offered by Artificial Intelligence and other cutting-edge technologies, etc.

The partnership is expected to continue to organise joint calls as part of the additional activities and therefore it should factor in ample time to run the co-funded projects.

The partnership's additional activities are expected to be designed and described in such a way that it is clear how they will increase scientific contributions, applicable in a legal/regulatory context, and how they will facilitate the use of scientific knowledge by regulators and policymakers and support the development of a sustainable blue economy. The additional activities are expected to be implemented through the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure adequate involvement of researchers from different disciplines, advisors, local, regional and national authorities, government representatives, industry and businesses, including SMEs, knowledge institutions and citizens, civil society organisations including NGOs, and other relevant actors of the value chain, supported through Open Science practices and an inclusive governance, policy and decision-making.

While the award of a grant to continue the Partnership in accordance with this call should be based on a proposal submitted by the coordinator of the consortium funded under HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-02: European Partnership for a climate neutral, sustainable and productive Blue Economy and the additional activities (which may include additional partners) to be funded by the grant should be subject to an evaluation, this evaluation should take into account the existing context and the scope of the initial evaluation as relevant, and related obligations enshrined in the grant agreement.

Taking into account that the present action is a continuation of topic HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-02 and HORIZON-CL6-2024-GOVERNANCE-01-1 and foresees an amendment to an existing grant agreement, the proposal should also present in a separate document the additional activities and additional partners, if any, to be covered by the award in terms of how they would be reflected in the grant agreement. The proposal should also describe the specific activities foreseen to strengthen the synergies with other related Missions and Partnerships.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-GOVERNANCE-02: Improving analytical capacity and understanding of social drivers in agriculture to better assess social sustainability in the sector

Call: Call 03 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 5.00 and 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 11.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the

	Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³²⁴ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- the research community benefit from increased data availability, interoperability and use, and improved analytical capacity on social dimensions of agriculture, meaning appropriate data, better indicators, methods and tools to assess social sustainability in the sector;
- policymakers are better equipped with reliable and harmonised analytical research methodologies, and consequently with new and improved knowledge and better understanding of social drivers in agriculture to design evidence-based policies, inter alia to ensure a just transition in the agriculture sector;
- improved social sustainability of the agri-food sector thanks to better knowledge and better policies.

Scope: Knowledge gaps exist between agricultural policy priorities and data infrastructure to evaluate social sustainability issues, particularly regarding farmers. Often social issues are addressed by various policy instruments from different policy areas, but there are inconsistencies, for example in the way that target groups are identified and measured in the statistics collected at European level. A framing of the social dimension of agriculture is necessary to complement the existing environmental and economic aspects of sustainability of assessment tools, strategies and policies for agriculture in the EU. Social issues may remain hidden if there is no consistent data able to capture them. Social aspects seem to be excluded from most of the analytical tools available. Greater understanding of social issues and the best policy approaches to address them requires appropriate data to develop better indicators and measurement that can be integrated into analytical tools. Successful proposals should therefore directly and/ or indirectly contribute to the enhancement of the sustainability performance of the sector, including social sustainability, and competitiveness in agriculture.

Proposals should:

- identify the social impacts of agriculture on farmers (e.g., employment, demography, migration, distributional aspects, procedural justice, inclusiveness, health and well-being, social integration, gender equality, etc.), by considering various type of agricultural activities and farming methods (including organic farming) at various geographical scales, from local, national, EU to global levels;

³²⁴ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- map, assess and address gaps in data, indicators, and modelling approaches currently lacking social perspective by considering various type of agricultural activities and farming methods (including organic farming) to improve the assessment of social performance including determinants, synergies, trade-offs and benefits;
- advance access, harmonize and improve interoperability of evidence/data available from observational, qualitative or case-study approaches to complement quantitative research methods. Examine networking structures to reach all relevant actors, interactions and relations, both work- and life-related;
- test, demonstrate and pilot promising new/improved indicators, models, tools and approaches to assess social performance;
- identify and address challenges for the EU, Member States and regions to deploy social sustainability principles in the agricultural sector and provide policy recommendations to overcome them.
- provide recommendations on how to improve the social sustainability of the agricultural sector and ensure a just transition;
- widely disseminate and share knowledge and solutions to policymakers, farmers, businesses and other relevant end-users in order to facilitate their uptake.

Proposals under this topic should support EU ambitions related to the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP), the EU Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production³²⁵, and contribute to the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food for 2040 aiming at an agri-food system that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, and thus attractive, competitive, future-proof and fair for current and future generations. Furthermore, in line with the objectives of the CAP to promote fair jobs and social inclusion for farmers, the successful proposal will support the development of innovative governance models by providing strong evidence-based knowledge and analytical capacity to support its implementation. Proposals will aswell support the development and implementation of the future CAP post 2027.

New interdisciplinary knowledge combining economic and social sciences will offer a new perspective on agricultural sciences in which social elements could be the starting point for sustainability evaluations of agricultural systems. To this purpose, proposals should involve the effective contribution of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, demography, behavioural science and education.

Proposals are expected to take into consideration the results of other related Horizon 2020/ Europe projects as well as of other relevant EU-funded projects and initiatives.

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding. The participation could involve contributing to scenario assessment with the iMAP modelling platform, sharing of information, and contribution to dissemination of results.

³²⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0141R%2801%29>

HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-GOVERNANCE-03: Empowering the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

Call: Call 03 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: All international organisations are exceptionally eligible for funding.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³²⁶ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- at least one of the outcomes of the ocean Decade: 1- A clean ocean, 2-A healthy and resilient ocean, 3-A productive ocean, 4-A predicted ocean, 5-A safe ocean, 6-An accessible ocean, 7-An inspiring and engaging ocean;
- structural and long-lasting changes as per how ocean science is supported and performed globally, driven by initiatives developed under the Ocean Decade and continuing beyond it.

Scope: The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) aims at mobilising the global scientific community, policymakers, industry, and civil society to advance ocean science and generate knowledge that supports the sustainable

³²⁶ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

management of the ocean. The initiative aims to reverse the decline in ocean health and ensure that ocean science can fully support countries in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This topic aims at further consolidating international cooperation, through European Leadership, and at ensuring that key processes, initiatives and structures that have been put in place through the Decade continue after its end.

Proposals should:

- provide substantial contribution to key global efforts, including capacity development and international coordination, undertaken through endorsed Ocean Decade Programmes, Actions, Decade Collaborative Centres and Decade Coordination Offices, or for the implementation of the Vision 2030 white papers³²⁷ or of the Ocean Decade data & information strategy³²⁸;
- have consideration for how to achieve longer-term sustainability and legacy of Ocean Decade activities;
- choose the scope of activities in alignment with one or several of the priorities indicated in the EC-RTD roadmap for Cooperation on the UN Decade of Ocean Science³²⁹ namely the EU Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters, the All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance, making marine data, knowledge and R&I solutions readily available);
- In line with the above-mentioned roadmap, address at least one of the following Decade Challenges: Challenge 1 “Understand and beat marine pollution”, Challenge 2 “Protect and restore ecosystems and biodiversity”, Challenge 6 “Increase community resilience to ocean and coastal risks”, Challenge 7 “Sustainably expand the Global Ocean Observing System”, Challenge 8 “Create a digital representation of the ocean”, Challenge 9 “Skills, knowledge, technology and participation for all” and Challenge 10 “Restore society’s relationship with the ocean”.

International cooperation is encouraged.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-GOVERNANCE-04: Supporting All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance

Call: Call 03 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.

³²⁷ [Vision 2030](#)

³²⁸ [Ocean Decade data & information strategy: The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development \(2021-2030\) - UNESCO Digital Library](#)

³²⁹ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/document/download/2e5f29fb-cb0c-4d0d-8840-97ce0ee9730c_en?filename=ec_rtd_roadmap-cooperation-un-decade-ocean-science.pdf

<i>project</i>	Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.50 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in Brazil are exceptionally eligible for Union funding. The following additional eligibility criteria apply: If eligible for funding, legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action as beneficiary or affiliated entity. In order to achieve the expected outcomes of the action, namely contribution to the implementation of the All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance (AAORIA) Declaration, participation, as a beneficiary or associated partner, of at least three legal entities established in at least three of the AAORIA Partner countries³³⁰. is required.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025)³³¹.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- coordinated marine and maritime research and innovation activities with Atlantic Ocean stakeholders, integrating the North and South Atlantic dimension, aligned with the priorities identified in the 2022 All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance (AAORIA) Declaration, as well as with areas of action agreed in Cape town in 2023 on

³³⁰ AAORIA Partner countries: [Home - All Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance](#)

³³¹ This [decision](#) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

increasing resilience of coastal communities, and ocean observing and modelling, including in support of marine ecosystems and biodiversity;

- enhanced visibility to the AAORIA activities, and support to its governance;
- established All-Atlantic Intergenerational Programme fostering a self-sustaining, intergenerational, and transdisciplinary community of Atlantic Ocean experts, promoting science diplomacy, innovation, and governance, as well as connecting, empowering and strengthening the future All Atlantic Leaders and Stewards to make strategic investments, take difficult decisions and facilitate community acceptance.

Scope: Tackling ocean and coastal challenges for the long term requires creating new knowledge, community acceptance and engagement, difficult decisions and strategic investments. This requires cooperation across generations, cultures, geographies and sectors.

Building on past cooperative efforts under the Galway and Belém Statements, the AAORIA Declaration, and the related actions from successive EU Framework Programmes, proposals should contribute to upscaling collaboration across the Atlantic Ocean and promote its sustainable management, including its northern and southern parts and links to polar areas. This includes connecting scientists, stakeholders from public and private sectors, indigenous communities, civil society, and various generations, sectors, and disciplines with data, knowledge, expertise, and resources for the benefit All-Atlantic community. This also requires that proposals develop an All-Atlantic Intergenerational Programme to open access to knowledge, effective knowledge transfer, and stakeholder engagement in an intergenerational context.

In particular, the proposals should:

- consolidate and support existing and new AAORIA initiatives in the priority areas identified in the 2022 AAORIA Declaration, ensuring their long-term self-sustainability;
- contribute with professional support to the coordination, monitoring, communication, and outreach activities of the Alliance, as well as to organisation of the annual AAORIA Forums;
- foresee actions to incorporate new Partners and supporters in AAORIA;
- support an overarching All-Atlantic Intergenerational Cooperation Programme with an integrated platform and network by implementing key actions such as:
 - o strengthening research and training capacity in ocean science diplomacy, governance and international cooperation; engagement and cooperation with relevant private initiatives, etc. through activities such as summer schools, an annual intergenerational event for knowledge transfer between generations and hosting of the Atlantic Ocean Decade network of the Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOP);

- o creating and supporting an Atlantic network complementing the Our Shared Ocean Initiative and benefiting Small Island Developing States (SIDS); it should engage coastal communities through the Coastal Resilience Beacon Sites Network and explore innovative cooperation models, such as the Floating Universities Network. To support the network, the proposals should develop an open access platform;
- o establishing and supporting an annual high-level event to promote intergenerational dialogue and a healthy and peaceful Atlantic region; maximising visibility and policy impact through global forums such as the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the G20;
- o creating an independent fund through building partnerships with the private sector and philanthropic organisations to ensure financial support to Atlantic intergenerational cooperation, with a particular focus on providing financial support for ECOPs from Low and Middle Income Countries, as well as the Atlantic and the Caribbean SIDS.

Proposals should link with relevant international bodies such as IOC-UNESCO supporting the All-Atlantic contributions to the UN Decade of Ocean Science, and facilitate dialogue and synergies with EU Missions and Partnerships relevant for the All-Atlantic work, as well as relevant EU projects, such as those resulting from topic HORIZON-CL6-2025-02-COMMUNITIES-03.

Proposals should ensure broad participation across generations, disciplines, and geographical regions through a strong involvement of citizens/civil society, academia/research, industry/SMEs and government/public authorities, as well as cooperation with philanthropists. In order to achieve the expected outcomes, international cooperation is mandatory. Consortia submitting proposals to this topic are encouraged to include in particular participants from AAORIA Partner countries³³² and other Atlantic coastal nations.

Deploying and adding value to environmental observations

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-GOVERNANCE-05: Coordinated European contribution to the WMO Global Greenhouse Gas Watch and its international governance

Call: Call 03 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a

³³²

[Home - All Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance](#)

	proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 7.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used). The following additional eligibility criteria apply: International organisations with headquarters in a Member State or Horizon Europe associated country are exceptionally eligible for funding as this topic targets international cooperation in the frame of initiatives related to the United Nations (UN).
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³³³.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- EU strategic climate data autonomy and decision-making sovereignty;
- global benchmarking of EU Greenhouse Gas observations and monitoring;
- enhanced coordinated EU contribution and support to global GHG monitoring, reporting and verification;

³³³ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- effective EU climate policy implementation, as well as reporting and diplomacy on the global scene;
- visibility of the EU climate action on the global scene.

Scope: The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) established in 2023 a new global greenhouse gas monitoring initiative that aims to support WMO Members in climate change mitigation actions undertaken to implement the Paris Agreement. The WMO Global Greenhouse Gas Watch (G3W) will fill critical information gaps and provide an integrated, operational framework that brings under one roof all space-based and surface-based observing systems, as well as modelling and data assimilation capabilities in relation to greenhouse gas monitoring. G3W plays a key supporting role to the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. Proposals are expected to:

- consolidate the EU contributions to these global GHG monitoring efforts through resilient and competitive environmental observing network capabilities, and to foster international data exchange cooperation.
- develop innovative (including AI/ML-based) digital solutions, which can facilitate inversions, automate monitoring, reporting and verification obligations, as well as the overall operationalization of GHG monitoring.
- focus on new GHG data products on global, regional, national and local scales. These should make use of all relevant existing and upcoming EO data including Copernicus Sentinels and relevant contributing missions, as well as ground-based networks (e.g. GAW, ICOS, TCCON, etc.) and socio-economic data as relevant.
- support international intercomparison and benchmarking (e.g. uncertainty characterization) efforts. Use cases addressing hot spot emission monitoring are particularly welcome.
- provide clear plans for global cooperation, transition into operational services, data sharing and integration across sectors, policy uptake, knowledge exchange and capacity building activities.

Additionally, the action should embrace all the relevant initiatives existing at the European level and include a relevant panel of users and stakeholders at EU and national level. It should support the EU in addressing its international commitments under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

The European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) may join the consortium selected for funding as a member, or participate in the project in another way, as the tools developed under this action are relevant for JRC's role as leader of the Copernicus CO₂ Task force and can facilitate EU level assessments of greenhouse gas emissions.

International cooperation is encouraged.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-GOVERNANCE-06: A services and business incubator for geospatial open-source developments

Call: Call 03 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000³³⁴ Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025)³³⁵.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- strengthened European competitiveness in the environmental and Earth Observation service industry, including climate services and analytics services for nature and biodiversity, through leadership in open-source geospatial, including compute capabilities, software and algorithms, facilitating the integration of Earth observations and other geospatial data, models and software into sustained business opportunities;
- strengthened strategic sovereignty of the European open geospatial developer and geospatial software community with increased economic sustainability;

³³⁴ However, if the objectives of the action would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult (and duly justified in the proposal) the maximum amount may be higher.

³³⁵ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- accelerated transition of critical European open-source geospatial software assets and innovation towards sustainable business ventures.

Scope: Open-source geospatial software ecosystems form a critical digital infrastructure for climate services, agriculture, biodiversity, environmental monitoring, and beyond. While Europe is home to world-class developers and software assets used globally and presenting the backbone to the modern geospatial sector (e.g. GDAL, QGIS, Pangeo stack, etc), their long-term sustainability remains challenged by fragmented, voluntary support, low visibility in funding and investment channels, and limited access to business knowledge and opportunity tailored to open-source development models.

Importantly, many open-source projects already operate at high technology readiness levels (TRL), with active user communities, broad adoption, and demonstrated product-market fit. However, these projects often lack the business frameworks and institutional support necessary to facilitate long-term sustainability, resilience and European software sovereignty. Their challenges are distinct from those of early-stage research projects or conventional start-ups, and they require tailored approaches to governance, licensing, service monetization, and maintenance.

To address open-source geospatial specific challenges, proposals under this topic should:

- Establish a business incubation and support hub for the geospatial open-source community in Europe, acting as a single-entry point to foster entrepreneurship and sustained open development across critical geospatial open-source projects. To this end, the hub should identify and develop pathways for open-source geospatial software communities to partake in viable business opportunities, fostering innovation and entrepreneurial growth within the open-source ecosystem and working towards long-term sustainability of the critical geospatial open-source software ecosystem;
- Analyse the European market and innovation landscape, to identify current and future demands for geospatial open-source software across public and private sectors, identify gaps and business opportunities for commercial uptake of open-source software and the creation of business models;
- In collaboration with the European geospatial and open-source communities, including established organizations, such as NumFOCUS, OSGeo, Linux Foundation and others, proposals should identify, and catalogue critical geospatial open-source software projects, and support fundamental, mature open-source projects with high TRL and demonstrated user traction in developing sustainability and sovereignty strategies, including tailored business strategies, IP models (where applicable), and investment readiness, to bridge the gap between open innovation and venture-ready business opportunities.

Proposals should include capacity-building elements and services, such as business mentoring, legal and IP advice, training on licensing and open business models, match making with investors, alignment with European Innovation Council (EIC) selection criteria,

and community-building actions for the critical geospatial open-source projects. The applicants should furthermore plan facilitating pathways from critical open-source software to Venture Capital support, such as EIC support instruments, including Transition and Accelerator programmes.

Proposals should foresee a range of 45-60% of the proposed budget for providing financial support to third parties (FSTP), with the aim of establishing seed funding mechanisms to aid identified critical geospatial open-source projects and associated entities established in EU and Horizon Europe associated countries. In accordance with the developed critical open-source software to business and sustainability pathways, these Grants should aid critical open-source projects to implement measures to start identified business opportunities with activities such as administrative and legal set-up, productization, business development, branding and marketing, etc.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-GOVERNANCE-07: Interconnect Earth Observation research for addressing environmental policies

Call: Call 03 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.40 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.40 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used). The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The

	maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000³³⁶ Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025)³³⁷.

Expected Outcome: Successful proposals will contribute to the expected impact of this Destination on competitiveness, sustainability and resilience of the economy enabled by more accessible and interoperable environmental observations and improved Earth Intelligence.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- a single-entry point linking European research and policymaking that will be embedded in the European Commission's Knowledge Centre on Earth Observation (KCEO)³³⁸ as ‘scientific pillar’, which will collect and organise knowledge resulting from science that is relevant for European and international environmental policies and conventions (notably those related to biodiversity), in particular knowledge generated from EU-funded R&I projects, relevant infrastructures and platforms;
- a strengthened and structured EuroGEO EO Community building on the competences of its Action Groups and the Member States’ uptake actions (e.g. as through the Copernicus National Collaboration Programme) offering to its members services reflecting Europe’s EO vision for Earth Intelligence in the post-2025 global GEO;
- the timely contribution to the update, under the guidance of the KCEO of a policy driven Earth observation R&I Roadmap for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda).

Scope: Earth Observation (EO) research is interconnected across Europe, supporting and enhancing the ambition of national, European and international policies and conventions. Contributing to Europe’s competitiveness and the European Green Deal, the topic aims to give support to the development and implementation of EU policies, including environmental policies (notably those related to biodiversity) through knowledge generation, to guide governance, and help implementing the simplification agenda. It supports the evolution of the long-term strategic research agenda for earth observation by engaging with EO stakeholders.

³³⁶ However, if the objectives of the action would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult (and duly justified in the proposal) the maximum amount may be higher.

³³⁷ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

³³⁸ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/earthobservation_en

This call topic provides an Earth Observation Science Service as a dedicated tool to systematically insert the best EO science into EU climate and environmental policymaking valorising last mile policy applications building on core services provided through Copernicus.

To address those objectives, proposals under this topic should:

- build a consolidated and structured EuroGEO community able to provide competitive services such as the setting up of a R&I observatory, linking past and present research investments to policy needs for EO, and the support to the co-design of the necessary tools and methods to create earth intelligence from EO data and services;
- engage community through annual fora bringing together the relevant EO communities to take stock of the research and innovation priorities in support of uptake of EO in EU climate and environmental policies;
- foresee cooperation with the KCEO;
- address cross-cutting policy issues such as the use of EO in support of policy obligation, certification, official statistics, reporting simplification and compliance;
- demonstrate how Europe can test and lead the way on how Earth intelligence can help developing innovative products and services addressing policy needs in Europe and beyond.

Proposals may provide, when relevant, financial support to third parties (FSTP) to, for instance,

- develop, test or validate EO intelligence creation approaches or
- collect and prepare data sets or
- provide other contributions to achieve the project objectives such as prototype last mile policy applications, building on core services provided through Copernicus, addressing the continued and critical gap in knowledge sharing and complementing other EU-funded initiatives.

A maximum of 30% of the EU funding should be allocated to this purpose. Consortia need to define the selection process of organisations, for which financial support may be granted.

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may join as member the consortium selected for funding, to ensure a close collaboration with the KCEO.

Digital and data technologies as key enablers

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-GOVERNANCE-08: Boosting data availability and AI solutions in food for consumers and food service professionals

Call: Call 03 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: In line with the “<i>restriction on control in innovation actions in critical technology areas</i>” delineated in General Annex B of the General Annexes, entities established in an eligible country but which are directly or indirectly controlled by China or by a legal entity established in China are not eligible to participate in the action. The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part. Subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000. Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³³⁹.

³³⁹ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- generative AI solutions for consumers and food service professionals have significantly scaled-up and improved the productivity and sustainability (including for mitigation of climate change) of food purchasing, preservation and preparation, and enabled dietary health;
- high value and high quality digital datasets for food products, and data driven consumer and food service applications are developed and contribute to increasing productivity, sustainability and dietary health;
- data sovereignty is ensured, including for consumers and farmers.

Scope: The decisions taken by consumers and food service professionals when they purchase, prepare and preserve food impact their productivity as well as the sustainability of food systems, and dietary health. AI solutions offer opportunities to assist consumers and food service professionals in these decisions. To maximize the impact of these AI solutions it is necessary to increase their uptake as well as the availability and quality of the data on which they rely.

Proposals should:

- develop and deploy human-centric, generative AI solutions for consumers and food service professionals to support them in the processes of food purchasing, preservation and preparation, with a view to increase dietary health, sustainability (lower greenhouse gas emissions, energy & water footprint; lower food waste, and packaging waste) and productivity.
- support innovators working on generative AI solutions in food. The support should include: Encourage participation of SMEs and start-ups. Offer innovation support packages that are tailored to innovative SMEs and start-ups, that go beyond FSTP, and that are effective in bringing solutions to market. Prioritize support based on end-users needs, data availability and the likely impact potential on dietary health, sustainability and productivity when solutions are scaled-up, including for reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- engage with a broad range of stakeholders (e.g. consumers, retailers, caterers, equipment manufacturers) to ensure that the solutions developed are practical and widely adopted. Include plans for providing training and ongoing support to end users to maximize the effective and significant use of the AI solutions;
- advance the access to trustworthy digital product data in food. Improve the availability, sovereignty and quality of data sets that are high value in view of end-users needs, and the likely impact potential on dietary health, sustainability and productivity when solutions are scaled-up, including for reducing greenhouse gas emissions;

- encourage businesses and other relevant actors (e.g. public authorities, certification bodies) in the food system to enhance data capture, optimize data sharing, and promote data reuse;
- ensure that sufficient and good quality data is mobilised from different relevant data sources (e.g. in-situ data, model data, sensor data, device data, remote sensing, personal data, government data) across the computing continuum, and from different parts of the food system, from primary production, over food processing to consumption and disposal.

Proposal may provide support to third parties to develop generative AI solutions. This support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. As a maximum, 30% of the EU funding may be allocated to financial support to the third-party grants. Proposals should focus their support for the development on third party projects from start-ups and SMEs and allow multiple third parties to be funded in parallel.

Where appropriate, proposals should use, federate, optimise and complete tools, capacities and infrastructures created under the Digital Europe Program (incl. European Data Spaces, EDIHs) and under Horizon Europe projects and partnerships (incl. Partnerships Agriculture of Data & FutureFoods). Proposals are encouraged to building on results from previous and relevant calls and projects. Proposals should also comply with existing EU framework and strategies and building upon the concepts and solutions developed in other Union initiatives aimed to facilitate data sharing, such as the Common European Agricultural Data Space (CEADS).

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure adequate involvement of the main stakeholders of food systems and the data economy. This topic should involve the effective contribution of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) disciplines.

Strengthening agricultural knowledge and innovation systems (AKIS)

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-GOVERNANCE-09: Increasing knowledge flows to practice within AKIS via EU thematic knowledge hubs

Call: Call 03 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 7.00 million.

<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: To ensure a balanced portfolio, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least to one application highest ranked within each area, A and B, provided that the applications attain all thresholds. Proposals shall clearly indicate the area they are applying to.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000. Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³⁴⁰.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- competitiveness, sustainability (where relevant including climate adaptation) and resilience of agriculture, forestry and rural areas is fostered, by providing impartial and tailored knowledge to advisors and end-users³⁴¹ ;
- advisors are better integrated into the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS³⁴²) with up-to-date, practice-oriented knowledge that enables them to provide farmers with high quality impartial advice;

³⁴⁰ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

³⁴¹ An “(end-)user” of R&I result(s) is a person who is him/herself putting the results into practice (i.e. practitioner); depending on the thematic area which the knowledge hub is expected to focus on, end-users could be farmers and/or foresters and/or other rural actors, or all of them.

- research findings, innovative solutions, practical knowledge and best practices, are well known, widely shared and used in practice by end-users.

Scope: There is a growing need to disseminate practical knowledge on challenges and opportunities for agriculture, forestry and rural areas stemming from both scientific-research and practical experience, and to link it to relevant actors through enhanced thematic collaboration between researchers, advisors and farmers.

EU thematic knowledge hubs will transform existing and new knowledge into accessible formats for advisors and targeted end-users, focusing on dissemination over collection. By blending the strengths of thematic and advisory networks, these hubs will offer services to widely disseminate information on specific themes among practitioners on the ground, contributing to a well-informed, and engaged AKIS community. Proposal should set up these hubs as a go-to source for valuable content, facilitating access to thematic research findings, innovative solutions, and best practices, empowering advisors with cutting-edge knowledge and providing ample opportunities of collaboration and cross-fertilization amongst the different AKIS actors.

Proposals should:

- compile a comprehensive range of up-to-date scientific and practical knowledge, best practices and innovative solutions within the thematic area indicated, which are effective and ready for use in practice, but not commonly known and/or used by the end-users. This objective should be achieved by primarily drawing from existing resources, while also remaining open to incorporating new sources as they become available;
- develop and widely share and disseminate an extensive range of useful, applicable and appealing informative materials and training courses using the most effective approaches, formats, tools (including audio-visual) to reach end-users and advisors through diverse channels mostly used by practitioners. The information provided should be easy to access and understand, and translated into at least all 24 EU official languages to allow dissemination across the whole EU. Consortia should ensure collection and dissemination of knowledge from and to at least fourteen EU Member States, guaranteeing a balanced geographical coverage;
- offer services that enhance networking, cross fertilization and knowledge exchange between the different AKIS actors³⁴³, to stimulate dialogue on innovative solutions and initiatives, to build relations and support mutual learning across the EU;
- actively involve advisors in knowledge hubs and mobilise relevant AKIS actors (including the AKIS coordination bodies) and actions at European/ national/regional levels to support the implementation of the knowledge and solutions in practice across the EU;

³⁴² AKIS is defined in Article 3(9) of the [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/2115](#)
³⁴³ [akisconnect](#) | [Connecting all EU AKIS actors](#)

- include a dedicated task and appropriate resources to collaborate with, ensure complementarities, avoid duplication of efforts and use efficiently the outputs and activities of the relevant past, existing and future AKIS projects³⁴⁴.
- establish strong collaborations with national or regional authorities and ecosystems ensuring effective partnerships that support Member States in the training of advisors and enable them to provide practical guidance tailored to diverse contexts, including accessing finance;
- develop a long-term plan to update and maintain the knowledge hub and its outputs beyond the project duration. Ensure that all resources are created with interoperability, adaptability and transferability in mind to facilitate their continued use and transfer/integration across diverse platforms and stakeholders.

Proposals should either address the thematic Area A: Enhancing competitiveness of protein crops, or Area B: Sustainable water management under climate change. The area (A or B) should be clearly indicated in the proposal. Within the frame of each of the broad thematic area, applicants should select specific topics in a bottom-up way in order to respond to the most urgent need(s) from practice and explain the theme's relevance in relation to end-users' need(s), clarifying the added-value of the proposal and how it avoids duplication with the ongoing or completed thematic networks and projects³⁴⁵.

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach', with a balanced consortium of relevant actors with complementary knowledge, actively involving advisors and end-users to identify the most urgent practical needs and plan and execute the main tasks of the knowledge hub. Minimum 30% of the number of people involved in the project should be impartial advisors³⁴⁶ spending at least half of their working time on giving advice to farmers. Consortium partners should have a wide network and be capable to involve as many professionally active advisors as possible across the EU into the activities of the project. To this end, proposals may involve financial support to third parties (FSTP) to ensure the involvement of advisors from across the whole EU in the activities of the advisory network. The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food and the cross-cutting objective of the common agricultural policy (CAP) to enhance knowledge flows among AKIS actors, in particular advisory services and end-users.

³⁴⁴ In particular but not exhaustive the projects funded under Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe and CAP: advisory and thematic networks, ATTRACTISS, modernAKIS, i2connect, PREMIERE, EU-FarmBook, the future project to be selected under the topic HORIZON-CL6-2025-03-GOVERNANCE-14, and relevant EIP-AGRI Operational Groups projects.

³⁴⁵ A theme already covered by a finished thematic network(s) is not allowed, unless the added value of the thematic network proposal is clearly explained and justified.

³⁴⁶ In line with the Article 15(3) of the [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/2115](#), advisors must be suitably qualified, appropriately trained and have no conflict of interest.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-GOVERNANCE-10: Embracing innovation in agriculture by peer-to-peer learning via on farm-demonstrations and cost-benefit analysis

Call: Call 03 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: To ensure a balanced portfolio, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least to one application highest ranked within each area, A and B, provided that the applications attain all thresholds. Proposals shall clearly indicate the area they are applying to.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000. Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³⁴⁷.

³⁴⁷ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- enhanced peer-to-peer learning leads to widespread sharing and uptake of the innovative solutions by farmers across the EU, thereby improving competitiveness, sustainability and resilience of the agricultural sector;
- the costs and benefits of applying innovative solutions in real context are better understood by farmers, advisors and other AKIS actors across the EU.

Scope: On-farm demonstrations can be crucial for enabling innovation uptake in agriculture, as they provide a platform for showcasing and evaluating new practices, but also serve as an effective avenue for peer-to-peer (or farmer to farmer) learning, leading to skill empowerment, higher adoption rates and increased practice change compared to the traditional top-down approaches. By engaging in on-farm demonstrations, farmers are better positioned to assess the applicability of innovative practices or tools. Complementing on-farm demonstrations with comprehensive cost-benefit analyses further empowers farmers, allowing them to quantitatively evaluate the costs and benefits associated with the adoption of new solutions/practices. This approach will not only promote informed decision-making but also accelerate the uptake and integration of innovative practices across the agricultural sector. Proposals should either address Area A: Crop production systems, or Area B: Livestock and mixed production systems. The area (A or B) should be clearly indicated in the proposal.

Proposals should:

- develop objective benchmarking criteria to select agricultural innovations, considering factors such as their impact, ease of implementation, scalability and applicability across different agricultural systems.
- develop and apply a standardised methodology to assess the economic, environmental (including biodiversity effects), and social impacts of adopting these innovations, with focus on the analysis of the costs and benefits for the practitioners.
- screen and select promising practice-oriented innovative solutions developed by research and innovation projects in the area of agriculture to be tested on-farm and by farmers, on the basis of the objective benchmarking criteria;
- test, validate and showcase the innovative solutions in real conditions directly on- farms across different geographic realities in real conditions, and thoroughly analyse their costs and benefits for the practitioners. It is essential that proposals ensure complementarity and cooperation with existing and future peer-to-peer and on-farm demo activities in their planning and avoid overlaps and repetitions, ensuring geographical coverage of the EU;
- develop and widely share learning materials and courses, and incentivise peer-to-peer learning by organising, e.g., cross-border field visits and farmer-centered webinars presenting the most effective innovative solutions to farmers and advisors.

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach', with a consortium based on a balanced mix of relevant actors with complementary knowledge clearly activating advisors, farmers and/or foresters and/or rural actors. To effectively support the transition of innovations into the market, the participation of startups and SMEs is strongly encouraged.

Proposals may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP) to, for instance, develop, test and demonstrate innovative measures. A maximum of 30% of the EU funding should be allocated to this purpose. Particular efforts³⁴⁸ in outreach and communication should be made by the project to help publicise these calls to the stakeholder targeted as beneficiaries of the support.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of social sciences and humanities (SSH) disciplines.

The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food and the cross-cutting objective of the common agricultural policy (CAP) to enhance knowledge flows and the adoption of innovation among AKIS³⁴⁹ actors, in particular advisory services and end-users³⁵⁰.

Deploying and adding value to environmental observations

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-GOVERNANCE-01-two-stage: Open topic: Develop Earth Intelligence solutions using environmental observations and state-of-the-art AI for sustainable competitiveness and policy making

Call: Call 03 - two-stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A. The following exceptions apply: Applicants submitting a proposal for a blind evaluation (see General

³⁴⁸ activities that go beyond the minimum requirements set out in General Annex B.

³⁴⁹ AKIS is defined in Article 3(9) of the Regulation (EU) 2021/2115.

³⁵⁰ An “(end-)user” of R&I result(s) is a person who is him/herself putting the results into practice (i.e. practitioner); depending on the area selected, end-users could be farmers and/or other rural actors, or both of them.

	Annex F) must not disclose their organisation names, acronyms, logos nor names of personnel in the proposal abstract and Part B of their first-stage application (see General Annex E).
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The first-stage proposals of this topic will be evaluated blindly.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³⁵¹ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- AI-based demonstrators for Earth Intelligence tools integrating observations and socio-economic data, for evidence-based decision making. Whereby Earth Intelligence refers to data-driven decision support tools with relevant research-based assessments, data, and options;
- support to national, EU and international environmental policy making or implementation (e.g. European Climate Law, Preparedness Union Strategy, Nature Restoration Regulation, Paris Agreement, or Sustainable Development Goals).

Scope: Proposals should develop and demonstrate downstream applications for a range of use cases (e.g. weather-, climate-related risks, environmental hazards, or biodiversity reporting) using broadly and intensively Earth Observation and relevant datasets for supporting sustainability and competitiveness through the provision of Earth Intelligence. The aim should be the provision of AI-driven tools and insights to public or private actors, also in the frame of

³⁵¹ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

GEO Work Programme Activities, providing observation-based evidence to include preparedness, resilience, sustainability, competitiveness, biodiversity-friendliness or climate neutrality in their operations, decision- or policymaking.

Towards this end, the actions funded under this topic should:

- engage in uptake of Earth Observation (EO) data, including output data from Copernicus, operational European weather satellites, in-situ systems (incl. relevant European Research Infrastructures data), as well as socio-economic and impact datasets;
- follow a user-tailored, co-design approach in the development of the use cases, to provide innovative and competitive, fit-for-purpose information for decision and planning;
- demonstrate explainability, robustness and replicability of the approach;
- convincingly demonstrate, test or validate the developed products and delineate the plans to develop possible future uptake and upscaling at national and regional (incl. beyond EU) level for possible next steps after the research project.

Proposals should build on most recent advances of AI approaches and models trained/integrating information from Earth Observations, as well as digital twins, developments in Destination Earth (e.g. including related projects funded under HORIZON-INFRA-2024-TECH-01-03: “New digital twins for Destination Earth”) and available EURO HPC and EU AI Factory tools and facilities.

Applicants are also encouraged to identify start-up and scale-ups and seek to develop business models and market opportunities for its products, potentially in cooperation with the project funded under HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-GOVERNANCE-07.

This topic is part of the EC-ESA Earth System Science Initiative, projects should collaborate with related projects funded by ESA’s FuturEO programme and should towards this end include sufficient means and resources for effective coordination.

Innovating with governance models and supporting policies

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2026-04-GOVERNANCE-01: Additional activities for the European Partnership of Agriculture of Data

Call: Call 04 - single stage (2026)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 60.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and

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<i>project</i>	selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 60.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Programme Co-fund Action
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposal must be submitted by the coordinator of the consortium funded under HORIZON-CL6-2024-GOVERNANCE-02-01: European Partnership of Agriculture of Data. This eligibility condition is without prejudice to the possibility to include additional partners. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The evaluation committee may be composed partially by representatives of EU institutions. If the proposal is successful, the next stage of the procedure will be the grant agreement amendment preparations. If the outcome of amendment preparations is an award decision, the coordinator of the consortium funded under HORIZON-CL6-2024-GOVERNANCE-02-01: European Partnership of Agriculture of Data will be invited to submit an amendment to the grant agreement, on behalf of the beneficiaries.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: This action is intended to be implemented in the form of an amendment of the grant agreement concluded pursuant to topic HORIZON-CL6-2024-GOVERNANCE-02-01. For the additional activities covered by this action the funding rate is 30% of the eligible costs. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP). The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. As a co-funded European Partnership, providing financial support to third parties (FSTP) is a core activity of this action in order to achieve its objectives. Consequently, the EUR 60 000 threshold laid down in Article 207 of Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 does not apply. The maximum amount of FSTP that may be awarded to any

	single third party is set at EUR 10 million ³⁵² . This ceiling is justified by the fact that FSTP is a primary activity of this action, by its expected duration of 7–10 years (exceeding a standard project lifespan), and by the extensive experience gained under predecessor partnerships.
<i>Total indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 60 million committed in annual instalments over years 2026-2027 (EUR 23 million from the 2026 budget and EUR 37 million from the 2027 budget). The total indicative budget for the duration of the partnership is EUR 90 million.

Expected Outcome: The successful proposal is expected to further contribute to the expected outcomes specified in topic HORIZON-CL6-2024-GOVERNANCE-02-01: European Partnership of Agriculture of Data, for continuation of the activities in line with already agreed outcomes.

Scope: The objective of this action is to continue to provide support to the European partnership of Agriculture of Data identified in the Horizon Europe Strategic Plan 2021-2024 and first implemented under the topic HORIZON-CL6-2024-GOVERNANCE-02-01: European Partnership of Agriculture of Data, and in particular to fund additional activities (which may also be undertaken by additional partners) in view of its intended scope and duration, and in accordance with Article 24(2) of the Horizon Europe Regulation.

The consortium which applied to and received funding under HORIZON-CL6-2024-GOVERNANCE-02-01: European Partnership of Agriculture of Data is uniquely placed to submit a proposal to continue the envisioned partnership. Not only did this consortium submit the proposal leading to the identification of the partnership in the Horizon Europe strategic planning 2021-2024, it has also been implementing the partnership through a co-funded call launched in year 2024 and a number of internal activities, including research projects, based on this planning and further to topic HORIZON-CL6-2024-GOVERNANCE-02-01. In this context, the current consortium has unique expertise in relation to the objectives of the partnership, the activities to be implemented in particular through financial support to third parties and internal activities clearly required/envisioned pursuant to the initial proposal/partnership. In practice, another consortium could not continue the activities of the partnership underway without significant disruption to the ongoing activities, if at all.

The partnership should seek to include additional partners, in particular from Member States and Associated countries not yet in the consortium funded under HORIZON-CL6-2024-GOVERNANCE-02-01.

³⁵² However, if the objectives of the action would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult (and duly justified in the proposal) the maximum amount may be higher.
The starting date of grants awarded under this topic may be as of the submission date of the application. Applicants must justify the need for a retroactive starting date in their application. Costs incurred from the starting date of the action may be considered eligible (and will be reflected in the entry into force date of the amendment to the grant agreement).

While the award of a grant to continue the Partnership in accordance with this call should be based on a proposal submitted by the coordinator of the consortium funded under HORIZON-CL6-2024-GOVERNANCE-02-01 and the additional activities (which may include additional partners) to be funded by the grant should be subject to an evaluation, this evaluation should take into account the existing context and the scope of the initial evaluation as relevant, and related obligations enshrined in the grant agreement. Taking into account that the present action is a continuation of the existing topic and foresees an amendment to an existing grant agreement, the proposal should present additional activities (including additional partners) to be covered by the award primarily in terms of grant agreement revisions.

The proposal submitted to this call should align with the partnership's co-created strategic research and innovation agenda. Through its activities, the partnership should deliver and give rise to ready-to-use tools, solutions and innovations, seek uptake of results by farmers/agricultural producers, advisors, policy-makers, public administrations and all relevant stakeholders, and provide science-based policy advisory activities. The proposal should focus on additional priority activities and when duly justified, on continuation of on-going activities.

The partnership should create an “umbrella effect” through taking stock, linking and, assessing Research and Innovation (R&I) initiatives and use cases. It will leverage on nationally funded research activities to create critical mass and synergies across borders and also support defragmentation of the European data landscape. It will also pool the necessary financial resources from the participating national (or regional) research programmes with a view to organising and implementing joint calls for transnational proposals resulting in grants to third parties, for which it should factor ample time to run and report on the co-funded projects.

Proposals are encouraged to consider, where relevant, the data, expertise and services offered by European research infrastructures³⁵³ in the environment, food and digital domains.

Specific additional activities to enhance the partnership's collaborations at international level, should also be described.

2027

Innovating with governance models and supporting policies

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2027-03-GOVERNANCE-01: Strengthening the resilience of European farmers through improved capacity in coping with risks and crises

Call: Call 03 - single stage (2027)

³⁵³ The catalogue of European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) research infrastructures portfolio can be browsed from ESFRI website <https://ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/>

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³⁵⁴.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- the capacity of farmers and other agri-food supply chain operators to prevent, prepare for, cope with and manage diverse risks and crises, considering potential compound and amplifier effects under climate change, and their impacts, is improved in an integrated way;
- policymakers benefit from evidence and better understanding on how to enable more effective strategies for prevention and management of diverse risks and crises affecting farmers, considering compound and amplifier effects of climate change and biodiversity loss;

³⁵⁴ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- knowledge and solutions to improve the resilience of farming systems are available and accessible to farmers and other agri-food supply chain operators through active and effective dissemination and engagement activities.

Scope: Farmers are exposed to numerous and increasing risks and crises of diverse nature and scale, putting pressure on their wellbeing, business viability and income. So far, available risk and crisis management tools have been insufficient in addressing the growing needs for strengthening resilience capacities. There is a need for more knowledge and solutions adapted to the diversity of farming systems and contexts. This would enable more integrated management of risks and crises, leading to more effective emergency response and adequate prevention and management on the long term. Proposals should target one or more risks and crises (e.g., sanitary, environmental, economic, geopolitical, ecological, demographic, technological) that are causing, or likely to cause, significant socio-economic impacts directly or indirectly affecting EU farmers, considering among others potential compound and amplifier effects under climate change and biodiversity loss.

The actions funded under this topic should support the EU policies related to the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food and the Common Agricultural Policy.

Proposals should:

- improve understanding of farmers' individual and collective options, strategies, incentives, behaviour and decision-making regarding uncertainties, risk and crisis management. This work should capture the context in which farmers operate, including interactions with other agri-food supply chain operators, critical dependencies, as well as market conditions and policies;
- assess the anticipation, robustness and adaptation capacities of farms, costs and benefits of action vs. non-action, and the interactions between risk management, crisis management and the adoption of preventive practices on farms, at landscape level and/or along agri-food supply chains. This work should also analyse the transformative capacities of farms in response to challenges that make business as usual not viable or not possible;
- propose inclusive solutions, improve and develop integrated risk and crisis management strategies, at farm and landscape level and/or along the agri-food supply chain, to improve the resilience of farming systems. Proposed solutions should consider different types of production and the risk perceptions of practitioners, and they should be adapted to the practitioners' risk preferences and resilience requirements. This work should also include an assessment of the costs and benefits of the solutions;
- propose criteria and measures to improve fair risk sharing along the agri-food supply chain and for derisking, to mitigate economic risks for farmers;

- test the proposed strategies and/or measures, using an experimental approach. Proposals are encouraged to build for this purpose on existing participatory infrastructures (e.g., demonstration sites, living labs etc);
- support inclusive and accessible capacity building, training, and education on risk and crisis management for farmers and other relevant agri-food supply chain operators (“risk literacy”);
- consider compound and amplifier effects of climate change and biodiversity loss on other types of risks and crises in all activities whenever appropriate and relevant.

Proposals should assess and compare options and strategies developed by farmers implementing various farming approaches, one of which should be organic farming.

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding. The JRC’s participation could involve contributing to the understanding of farmer risk preferences, measurement and design of risk sharing alternatives for the agri-food supply chain and testing alternatives using experimental methods.

Proposals should capitalise on existing relevant research findings and tools. They should also ensure complementarities with other relevant EU-funded projects, including from the EU Missions on Adaptation to Climate Change and on Soil. Proposals should also ensure synergies with other relevant EU-funded studies (e.g., fi-compass studies), projects, initiatives and processes.

Proposals should include a dedicated task, appropriate resources and a plan on how they will collaborate with other projects selected under this topic (e.g., by participating in joint activities, workshops, as well as common communication and dissemination activities, etc.). The selected projects are also expected to collaborate with relevant projects selected under the topic HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-CLIMATE-03: Strengthening evidence-based policies for the resilience of European agriculture and forestry and related supply chains against crises and systemic risks.

Proposals must implement the ‘multi-actor approach’, with a consortium based on a balanced mix of actors with complementary knowledge, including farmers, researchers, government representatives, agri-food supply chain operators (e.g., processors), and civil society organisations.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) disciplines.

International cooperation is encouraged.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-03-GOVERNANCE-02: Improving analytical capacity for sustainable competitiveness of the agricultural sector

Call: Call 03 - single stage (2027)

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³⁵⁵.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- farmers and other decision makers of the agri-food supply chains have a better understanding of the determinants of competitiveness, and the interactions with the sustainability dimensions (economic, social, environmental, including biodiversity protection and climate change mitigation and adaptation);
- farmers, policy makers and other decision makers of the agri-food supply chains benefit from improved collection and access to data and analytical tools, enabling better-informed decisions conciliating competitiveness, sustainability and resilience objectives;

³⁵⁵ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- policy makers are better equipped to develop evidence-based policies.

Scope: The agri-food sector is an important pillar to EU competitiveness. It is composed of diversified businesses representing around 15% of total EU employment and contributes to provide essential services and secure a stable and affordable supply of food to EU citizens. The concept of agricultural competitiveness is complex and approached with different perspectives and methodologies in the scientific literature. EU policies aim at addressing a growing number of objectives in a challenging and evolving context (e.g., climate change, biodiversity loss, geopolitical tensions, fast digitalisation). There is a need to update knowledge and tools on agricultural competitiveness. This will contribute to improve our capacity to design and implement agricultural policies, effective in navigating and addressing multiple objectives while enabling green and digital transitions without undermining our competitiveness over time. Successful proposals under this topic should support the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food, the Competitiveness Compass, the Common Agricultural Policy, the sustainability objectives (including on climate and biodiversity) of the Green Deal, and the SDGs.

Proposals should:

- address analytical gaps on competitiveness to better account for their various drivers, inputs (including land, labour, capital), components (e.g., costs, price, innovation capacity, investment capacity, market share, market position, resilience, knowledge, skills, productivity, product quality, differentiation) and impacts (economic, environmental and social). Consider various value chains and farming systems in different regions, one of which should be organic farming. This activity should integrate knowledge from different disciplines (e.g., economics, management, agronomy, environmental sciences);
- improve the capacity to analyse agriculture-related policies supporting and recognising sustainable practices (such as supporting climate, biodiversity, and sustainable development goals) across the value chain (e.g., due diligence, deforestation-free products) and in trade agreements, in particular their capacity to support competitiveness and resilience objectives, and to mitigate leakage effects;
- provide evidence on the social, economic and environmental drivers of competitiveness, synergies, trade-offs between the sustainability dimensions, at and between different stages of the value chain (including farm-level, producer organisations, upstream and downstream operators etc.) as well as spatial (local to global) and time scales (short to long term). Proposals are encouraged to consider different lengths of value chains (e.g., short, mid-tier, global), business strategies (e.g., economies of scale, specialisation and agglomeration vs economies of scope) and marketing strategies (e.g., quality differentiation);
- identify, improve and/or develop adequate indicators and metrics, and collect the necessary data, to improve the measurement of performance, sustainability, resilience, productivity and competitiveness in analytical tools. This work should take into account

the practical needs of decision-makers and the context of their operations (e.g., international versus local strategy). Particular attention should be paid to prioritising relevant robust indicators that could be replicated in different countries;

- provide recommendations and propose levers to anticipate trade-offs and conciliate competitiveness, resilience and sustainability objectives in business strategies and policies and support the long-term prosperity of the agricultural sector.

Proposals should capitalise on existing relevant research findings and tools and ensure complementarities with other relevant EU-funded projects. Proposals should also ensure synergies with other relevant EU-funded studies, projects, initiatives and processes (e.g., competitiveness check).

The JRC's participation could involve contributing to scenario assessment with the iMAP modelling platform, sharing of information and contribution to dissemination of results.

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach', with a consortium based on a balanced mix of actors with complementary knowledge, including farmers, researchers, businesses and other relevant actors from agri-food supply chains.

International cooperation is encouraged, in particular with Mediterranean countries.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) disciplines.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-03-GOVERNANCE-03: International dimension of the circular bio-based economy: seeking win-win opportunities

Call: Call 03 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy

	Community (2021-2025) ³⁵⁶ .

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- improved multi-level governance capable of anticipating a changing world and enabling a just sustainable transition for all, as related to the potential of bio-based innovation and industry in the global bioeconomy to deliver on multilateral climate and biodiversity targets;
- improved stakeholder engagement and trust, related to the global dimension of sustainable bioeconomy, with a focus on circular bio-based solutions and approaches with reduced carbon footprint as well as biotechnology, biomanufacturing and biorefining.

Scope: This topic is in line with the Commission communication on: Building the future with nature: Boosting Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing in the EU, the Life Sciences Strategy, the EU Biotech Act, the Clean Industrial Deal, the upcoming EU Circular Economy Act, the policies related to the fair green transition (i.e. EU Green Deal ambition of leaving no one behind) as well as the EU global commitments on climate change and biodiversity.

Proposals should:

- analyse bottlenecks and opportunities (in terms of measurable socio-economic and environmental impacts) of the international cooperation in sustainable and fair/just bio-based circular innovation, identifying key interested players active in this area, including the European circular bio-based industry, international organisations (e.g. OECD, FAO, Global Bioeconomy Summit) and like-minded international partners, civil society actors). The focus should be on actions in selected key areas (including, but not limited to biorefining ³⁵⁷, biotechnology ³⁵⁸, biomanufacturing, environmental applications, international biomass trade analysis, circularity of bio-based economy, intellectual property (IP) aspects, global infrastructure mapping, etc). This should take into account the diversity of approaches, perspectives and initiatives in non-EU contexts (e.g. G20 work on bioeconomy), in view of effective international cooperation and dialogue on circular and fair bio-economy/bio-based economy;
- develop an inclusive and transparent networking approach to support stakeholder engagement and international dialogue (via existing structures, platforms, bioeconomy

³⁵⁶ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

³⁵⁷ With focus on bio-based materials and chemicals. In case bioenergy is considered, it should be covered in the frame of the cascading use of biomass and ensuring synergy with Horizon Europe Cluster 5.

³⁵⁸ With focus on industrial, agro-food, environmental or marine biotechnology sectors. In case health biotechnology is considered, ensure synergy with Horizon Europe Cluster 1.

databases and dashboards³⁵⁹, and other instruments³⁶⁰), considering the role of the governance actors, propose suitable trust-building measures (e.g. co-creation, sharing of best practice, mutual learning), aiming at the global common challenges and win-win solutions, with impact on sustainable economic development, UN SDGs³⁶¹, climate and biodiversity);

- prepare a roadmap for next steps of international cooperation in this area, provide recommendations to policy makers on national and regional level, and other interested stakeholders (e.g. industry), propose solutions to ensure long-term impact, including by linking to existing activities and by applying suitable digital means (e.g. webinars, scientifically robust social media use, etc).

Proposals are encouraged to work together with relevant initiatives including those of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy, Bioeconomy Monitoring System etc).

Synergies with activities under the Circular Bio-based Europe (CBE) Joint Undertaking and International Bioeconomy Forum as well as Global Bioeconomy Summit are encouraged.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) disciplines.

International cooperation is strongly encouraged, in particular with South Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Digital and data technologies as key enablers

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2027-03-GOVERNANCE-04: AI supporting informed advice for farmers and foresters to improve competitiveness and sustainability

Call: Call 03 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions

³⁵⁹ e.g. [DataM - Bioeconomy - European Commission](#)

³⁶⁰ Among others, European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, Circular Cities and Regions Initiative, Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking, etc.

³⁶¹ In particular SDG 8, 9 and 12.

<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: In line with the “<i>restriction on control in innovation actions in critical technology areas</i>” delineated in General Annex B of the General Annexes, entities established in an eligible country but which are directly or indirectly controlled by China or by a legal entity established in China are not eligible to participate in the action. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used). Subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks. The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding as a beneficiary with zero funding, or as an associated partner. The JRC will not participate in the preparation and submission of the proposal - see General Annex B.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³⁶². Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

³⁶² This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- innovative AI-based solutions provide advisors, farmers and foresters with comprehensive, tailored and impartial advice to farmers and foresters to support them in their decisions as well as on the selection of innovative solutions, boosting the competitiveness, sustainability and resilience of the EU agriculture and forestry sectors;
- capacity and skills of advisors, farmers, and foresters related to the effective use of AI solutions are improved;
- use of existing and new data relevant for the decision-making for the optimized management of operations and the selection of innovative solutions on farms and in forests is increased.

Scope: Digital technologies hold the potential to revolutionise farming and forestry, offering new opportunities to meet the rising demand for food, as well as biomass, while taking care of the environment, climate and people. With the growing availability of datasets relevant for both the agricultural and forestry sector, artificial intelligence technologies offer significant opportunities to harness data, enhance access to tailored information, and develop effective tools to support advisors, farmers and foresters in their operations. Successful proposals will contribute to build a competitive and resilient agriculture and forestry sectors.

Proposals should:

- develop and pilot cost-effective AI-based solutions that make use of the various existing reliable and trustable knowledge reservoirs and provide contextual, effective and impartial advice for advisors, farmers and foresters.
- capitalise on standardised and comprehensive data collected from different sources (e.g. public and private databases, in-situ data generated during the project implementation) for the development of AI-based solutions capable of providing advice based on the interpretation of multimodal inputs (e.g. text, images, audio, video etc...) provided by the end user. By doing so, successful proposals should ensure the availability of curated datasets by connecting to and harvesting data from existing public and private data sources, making use of privacy-preserving techniques when needed. The curated datasets, to be released as outputs, should be interoperable to maximise reuse, in order to support information fusion and third-party usage of the data;
- involve advisors, farmers and foresters from across Europe in the co-development, testing and validation of the AI-based solutions; and improve end users' awareness, understanding, competences and skills on the use, benefits, and risks of the developed AI-based solutions in view of improving the competitiveness and sustainability of EU agriculture and forestry;
- build on results and ensure synergies with other Horizon 2020/ Europe as well as other relevant EU-funded initiatives and projects (e.g. EU Missions, project that may follow from the topic "HORIZON-CL6-2024-GOVERNANCE-02-01: European Partnership of

Agriculture of Data”, and the Common European Agriculture Data Space) and demonstrate adequate planning and use of resources for this purpose;

- ensure wide dissemination and uptake including by demonstrating tangible benefits and added value compared to existing solutions for farmers, forester and their advisors.

Proposals are encouraged to explore the application of data retrieval techniques (e.g. RAG) for the retrieval of up-to-date and context-specific information from external knowledge sources (e.g. market information, evolving regulation/legislative requirements).

This topic should involve the effective contribution of social sciences and humanities (SSH) disciplines. By integrating relevant SSH expertise (e.g. legal expertise, gender expertise, education and behavioural sciences), the successful proposal aims to produce meaningful results that enhance the societal impact of related research activities, engaging advisors (e.g. including Advisory Networks), farmers, foresters, and other rural actors.

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach', with a consortium based on a balanced mix of relevant actors with complementary knowledge to achieve the objectives of the projects, seeking for the involvement of SMEs, start-ups, and including for instance relevant rural actors (in particular end-users of the AI-enabled solution), universities, research and technology organisations. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding. The participation could involve sharing of information and contribution to dissemination of results. Proposals should develop diverse practice-oriented dissemination materials (e.g. audiovisual materials, brochures) presenting the AI-enabled solutions and other R&I results developed within the project and feed them into communication channels most consulted by the potential end-users.

Proposals may involve financial support to third parties e.g. to academic researchers, hi-tech start-ups, SMEs, and other multidisciplinary actors, to, for instance, develop, test or validate developed applications. A maximum of 20% of the EU funding should be allocated to this purpose.

The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the policy ambition "Sustaining our quality of life: Food security, water and nature", the Vision for Agriculture and Food, as well as the objectives set out in the common agricultural policy, and the zero pollution action plan.

Strengthening agricultural knowledge and innovation systems (AKIS)

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL6-2027-03-GOVERNANCE-05: Increasing knowledge flows to practice within AKIS via EU thematic knowledge hubs

Call: Call 03 - single stage (2027)
Specific conditions

<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 7.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: To ensure a balanced portfolio, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least to one application highest ranked within each area, A and B, provided that the applications attain all thresholds. Proposals must clearly indicate the area they are applying to.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³⁶³. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

³⁶³ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/lump-sum-decision_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/lump-sum-decision_en.pdf

- competitiveness, sustainability (where relevant including biodiversity restoration), and resilience of agriculture, forestry and rural areas is fostered, by providing impartial and tailored knowledge to advisors and end-users³⁶⁴;
- advisors are better integrated into the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) with up-to-date, practice-oriented knowledge that enables them to provide farmers with high quality and impartial advice;
- research findings, innovative solutions, practical knowledge and best practices, are well known, widely shared and used in practice by end-users.

Scope: There is a growing need to disseminate practical knowledge on challenges and opportunities for agriculture, forestry and rural areas stemming from both scientific-research and practical experience, and to effectively link it to the relevant actors through enhanced thematic collaboration between researchers, advisors and farmers.

EU thematic knowledge hubs will transform both existing and new knowledge into accessible formats for advisors and targeted end-users, focusing on dissemination over collection. By blending the strengths of thematic and advisory networks, these hubs will offer services to widely disseminate information on specific themes among practitioners on the ground, contributing to a well-informed, and engaged AKIS community. Proposal should set up these hubs as a go-to source for valuable content, facilitating access to relevant thematic research findings presented in a practical way, innovative solutions, and best practices, empowering advisors with cutting-edge knowledge and providing ample opportunities of collaboration and cross fertilization amongst the different AKIS actors.

Proposals should:

- compile a comprehensive up-to-date scientific and practical knowledge, best practices and innovative solutions within the thematic area indicated, which are effective and ready for use in practice, but not commonly known and/or used by the end-users. This objective should be achieved by primarily drawing from existing resources, while also remaining open to incorporating new sources as they become available;
- develop and widely share and disseminate an extensive range of useful, applicable and appealing informative materials and training courses using the most effective approaches, formats, tools (including audio-visual) to reach end-users and advisors through diverse channels mostly used by practitioners. The information provided should be easy to access and understand and translated into at least all 24 EU official languages to allow dissemination across the whole EU. Consortia should ensure collection and dissemination of knowledge from and to at least fourteen EU Member States, guaranteeing a balanced geographical coverage across the EU;

³⁶⁴ An “(end-)user” of R&I result(s) is a person who is him/herself putting the results into practice (i.e. practitioner); depending on the thematic area which the knowledge hub is expected to focus on, end-users could be farmers and/or foresters and/or other rural actors, or all of them

- offer services that enhance networking, cross-fertilization and knowledge exchange between the different AKIS actors³⁶⁵, to stimulate dialogue on innovative solutions and initiatives, to build relations and support mutual learning across the EU;
- actively involve advisors in EU thematic knowledge hubs and mobilise also other relevant AKIS actors (including the AKIS coordination bodies) and actions at European/national/regional levels to support the implementation of the knowledge and solutions in practice across the EU;
- include a dedicated task and appropriate resources to collaborate with, ensure complementarities, avoid duplication of efforts and use efficiently the outputs and activities of the relevant past, existing and future AKIS projects³⁶⁶;
- establish strong collaborations with national or regional authorities and ecosystems ensuring effective partnerships that support Member States in the training of advisors and enable them to provide practical guidance tailored to diverse contexts, including accessing finance;
- develop a long-term plan to update and maintain the knowledge hub and its outputs beyond the project duration. Ensure that all resources are created with interoperability, adaptability and transferability in mind to facilitate their continued use and transfer/integration across diverse platforms and stakeholders.

Proposals should either address the thematic Area A: Holistic management of crop nutrition and protection for resilient and healthy cropping systems or Area B: Agrobiodiversity and wild pollinators for economic and environmental sustainability. The area (A or B) should be clearly indicated in the proposal. Within the frame of each of the broad thematic area, applicants should select specific topics in a bottom-up way in order to respond to the most urgent need(s) from practice, explain the relevance of the theme in relation to end-users' need(s), clarifying the added-value of the proposal and how it avoids duplication with ongoing or completed thematic networks and projects³⁶⁷.

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach', with a balanced consortium of relevant actors with complementary knowledge, actively involving advisors and end-users to identify the most urgent practical needs and plan and execute the main tasks of the thematic knowledge hub. Minimum 30% of the number of people involved in the project should be impartial advisors³⁶⁸ and spending at least half of their working time on giving advice to farmers. Consortium partners should have a wide network and be capable to involve as many

³⁶⁵ [akisconnect | Connecting all EU AKIS actors](#)

³⁶⁶ In particular but not exhaustive the projects funded under Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe and CAP: advisory and thematic networks, ATTRACTISS, modernAKIS, i2connect, PREMIERE, EU-FarmBook, the future project to be selected under the topic HORIZON-CL6-2025-03-GOVERNANCE-14, and relevant EIP-AGRI Operational Groups projects.

³⁶⁷ A theme already covered by a finished thematic network(s) is not allowed, unless the added value of the thematic network proposal is clearly explained and justified.

³⁶⁸ In line with the Article 15(3) of the [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/2115](#), advisors must be suitably qualified, appropriately trained and have no conflict of interest.

professionally active advisors as possible across the EU into the activities of the project. To this end, proposals may involve financial support to third parties (FSTP) to ensure the involvement of advisors from across the whole EU in the activities of the advisory network.

The projects under this topic are relevant to the EU policies related to the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food and the cross-cutting objective of the common agricultural policy (CAP) to enhance knowledge flows among AKIS actors, in particular advisory services and end-users.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-03-GOVERNANCE-06: Fostering generational renewal in agriculture via EU advisory network

Call: Call 03 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.50 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: the proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in this work programme part.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³⁶⁹.

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

³⁶⁹ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- advisors are better equipped with up-to-date knowledge, skills and tools to support young generation in entering into and successfully running the farming business, while taking into account the consequences of climate change and biodiversity loss;
- an attractive, high-quality training offer and advice suited to the evolving skills demands of the new generation attract young, talented farm entrepreneurs and lead to a new wave of innovative agricultural businesses.

Scope: Generational renewal is a prerequisite for European farming systems to remain resilient and competitive in the medium and long term. The actions funded under this topic is relevant to the EU policies related to the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food and the objective to shape an attractive farming and agri-food sector for future generations. To accomplish this, it is important to provide active support and specialised trainings for newcomers and young farmers. Advisors are best placed to accompany, monitor and mentor new farmers in the different stages of setting up and managing new farms. In addition, they can support new farmers in building social networks from a professional point of view and provide guidance on the different needs of takeovers and new farms. They can also contribute to advance gender equality and inclusion in this sector.

A novelty in the current CAP strategic plans is that advisors should be integrated within the AKIS as well as be impartial, competent and up to date on scientific and innovation developments³⁷⁰. They should be able to translate the knowledge and provide concrete, targeted and practical solutions for farmers adapted to specific local circumstances.

Proposals should:

- foster in-depth exchange of knowledge and experiences among advisors across the EU on the needs of young farmers and new entrants to successfully enter and run an agricultural business in the long-term;
- develop and widely share diverse useful resources, tools and approaches, including learning materials and courses, new business strategies/plans, cross-border visits, internships and other initiatives that will empower advisors to effectively support young and/or new farmers in addressing the identified needs for taking over / entering and staying in the farming sector;
- equip advisors to deliver guidance and support throughout the various stages of farm establishment. This should include offering guidance on various preparatory steps such as securing land, exploring financing options, and crafting business strategies. Advisors should also help farmers navigate practical elements like technology use, financial management, legal matters, and sustainable farming practices addressing among others climate change and biodiversity loss practices addressing among others climate change and biodiversity loss. Additionally, they should address challenges that arise in the early

³⁷⁰ In line with the Article 15(3) of the [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/2115](#), Member States shall ensure that the advice given is impartial and that advisors are suitably qualified, appropriately trained and have no conflict of interest.

years of farm development. Special attention should be given to promoting generational transfer, helping older farmers plan for and facilitate farm succession;

- involve advisors in an innovative EU-wide communication and awareness-raising campaigns to reposition farming as an attractive and rewarding career choice for the young generations;
- ensure collaborations with national or regional authorities and AKIS ecosystems to promote the project outputs and ensure that they will be updated and maintained in the long-term beyond the project duration.

The proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure adequate involvement of all relevant stakeholders. Minimum 50% of the number of the people involved in the project should be impartial advisors spending at least half of their time on giving advice to farmers. A plan for financial sustainability and maintenance of the EU advisory network in the long-term beyond the project duration should be included in the proposal.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-03-GOVERNANCE-07: Strengthening strategic advice and synergies between EU and national Research and Innovation agendas and investments

Call: Call 03 - single stage (2027)	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as 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) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ³⁷¹.

³⁷¹ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/lump-sum-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/lump-sum-decision_he_en.pdf

Expected Outcome: Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- strengthened coordination between European and national research and innovation programmes and agendas in the areas of the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR) Working Groups (WGs), resulting in a reinforced European Research Area (ERA);
- improved impact and visibility of the SCAR WGs through organisation, facilitation and reporting of SCAR WGs activities on the various themes of main relevance for European R&I activities and relevant policy initiatives, leading to enhanced R&I cooperation and information exchange between Member States and Associated Countries and synergies at national and EU level;
- SCAR WGs are supported in delivering their objectives as outlined in their mandates by various measures including through capacity building and support for SCAR WG cross-collaboration and inclusiveness;
- broad dissemination of the outputs of the SCAR WGs to relevant stakeholders, such as EU level and national policy makers, the research community and practitioners, which should also be available to the SCAR Steering Group and Plenary.

Scope: The successful proposal will contribute to relevant R&I priorities in the thematic areas of the SCAR, in agriculture, fisheries, food systems, forestry, and the wider bioeconomy, as well as foresight. It will contribute to the European Green Deal priorities, the implementation of the new Bioeconomy Strategy, the objectives of the Vision for Agriculture and Food, the EU Forest Strategy, and other relevant upcoming initiatives and policies.

Proposals should:

- support the administrative and logistic organisation, the facilitation, and the reporting of the meetings and workshops of SCAR WGs, according to the needs and initiatives taken by the groups themselves;
- support the thematic work of the groups by preparing relevant analyses and outputs adapted to their needs (e.g., portfolio analysis, policy briefs, research studies etc.);
- encourage and facilitate cross-collaboration across SCAR WGs and support collaboration, information exchange and synergies with other EU-level R&I initiatives, such as partnerships, missions, and relevant projects, as well as support on interactions with relevant stakeholders and practitioners;
- allow for sufficient flexibility to support SCAR WGs groups based on their needs, and to balance support across WGs;
- use innovative and where applicable digital tools and methods for supporting SCAR WGs in all its domains.

Other Actions not subject to calls of proposals

Grants to identified beneficiaries

1. Presidency event (LT) – Competitive, resilient, digital, inclusive and sustainable European agricultural, food and bioeconomy sector

Research and innovation (R&I) are key enablers for the deployment of the bioeconomy and for developing sustainable food systems.

Lithuania will take on the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2027. By supporting the European Biotech Act, the EU Bioeconomy Strategy, Life Sciences Strategy, the Vision for Agriculture and Food, the Competitiveness Compass, and other key European initiatives, this event will not only showcase scientific advancements and market opportunities but also align with broader policy goals on food security, agricultural sector economic resilience, and enhancing sector attractiveness for future generations.

Expected Impact: The event should set out a credible pathway to contributing to “ensuring healthy food and nutrition security by making agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and food systems sustainable, resilient, inclusive and within planetary boundaries”.

Expected Outcome: This upcoming Presidency event is expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- serve as a key platform to promote scientific dialogue, research collaboration, and innovation supporting the EU green and digital transitions.
- tackle challenges in agriculture, food, and the bioeconomy, while focusing on evidence-based policy and advanced technologies.
- build a competitive, resilient, and sustainable agri-food system, addressing environmental issues, generational renewal, and industrial transformation.

Scope: The conference should address all of the following activities:

- include topics related to cutting-edge developments in biotechnology and life sciences, such as the microbiome, genome editing, and synthetic biology, and their impact on sustainability and food systems.
- give a special focus to advisory services, rural development, food security, digitalisation, and smart technologies in the agri-food value chain.
- showcase successful Horizon Europe projects and foster knowledge exchange.

Possible synergies with the Standing Committee for Agricultural Research (SCAR) can be embedded.

The event will bring together Member States: the main participants would be representatives from ministries, other institutions, representatives from the European Commission, other EU institutions, Members of the European Parliament, experts, representatives from farmer, business associations, NGOs and interested citizens, including youth representatives from the R&I community across Europe.

The event will take place in Vilnius during the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The European Commission will support the organisation of the event in cooperation with the entity designated by the Lithuanian Presidency.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposal according to Article 198(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 24(3)(b) of the Horizon Europe Regulation to the legal entity identified below.

Legal entities:

Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania, Gedimino Ave.19, LT-01103 Vilnius, Lithuania

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 198(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes

Indicative timetable: As of second quarter of 2026

Indicative budget: EUR 0.15 million from the 2026 budget

2. Presidency event (IT) - Advancing the digitally assisted ecosystem restoration, food-water-energy security, climate resilience and regenerative Bioeconomy in the Mediterranean and North Africa areas

Italy will take on the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2028. The foreseen Presidency event will be an opportunity for sharing and jointly assessing a) the actual needs of restoration and regenerative bioeconomy of the Mediterranean and North Africa macro area, b) the advanced solutions currently adopted for addressing them, c) the digital technologies and infrastructures available in the same macro-region and d) the advantages deriving from the adoption of digitally assisted scalable solutions for addressing the local needs of food-water-energy security, resilience of coastal, rural and urban communities, and safe protection from extreme events.

The event will build on the new “Biotech Act” and “EU Bioeconomy Strategy”, “AI factory initiative”, “AI applying in Science”, “Vision for Food and Agriculture”, “Ocean Pact”, “Water Resilience Strategy” and the new “Mediterranean Pact”.

Expected Impact: The event should set out a credible pathway to contributing to “ensuring healthy food and nutrition security by making agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and food systems sustainable, resilient, inclusive and within planetary boundaries”.

Expected Outcome: The conference is expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- joint engagement of public and private actors, EU, national, regional and local, authorities and central institutions implementing restoration and regenerative bioeconomy measures for reversing biodiversity losses, ecosystems degradation, food-water-energy insecurity, and for increasing resilience of rural, coastal and urban communities of the Med and North Africa , leveraging the potential of Earth Observation. They will assess the actual needs of innovative solutions of this macro-region, with a view to achievements and prospects of digitally assisted solutions for addressing them;
- promote synergies, maximise impacts and exploit complementarities among ongoing restoration and regenerative bioeconomy R&I programmes, projects and initiatives at EU and national level in the Mediterranean macro-area, including PRIMA, SBEP, Water4All, Missions “Ocean and Waters”, “A Soil deal for Europe”, and “Adaptation to climate changes” and the EURO HPC JU and the EU AI Factory initiatives;
- present and assess pilot examples of already existing digitally assisted scalable restoration practices applied in Europe, Mediterranean and Africa macro area, also able to predict, mitigate, and effectively manage the impacts of potential new extreme events, including the digital twins;
- promote the local deployment of the developed digitally-assisted scalable approaches and solutions in the frame of the New Mediterranean Pact, focussing on a regenerative bioeconomy and blue economy, and resilience of coastal, urban and rural communities;
- address needs and actions for adapted bioeconomy and blue skills development, cross-disciplinary curricula, researchers exchanges and intergenerational programmes, Universities alliances and links to innovation and starts ups for a healthy, secure, prosperous and sustainably competitive Mediterranean area.

Scope: The Mediterranean area and North Africa are facing severe biodiversity losses and ecosystems degradation due to aggressive changes of the local climate and the associated extreme events, droughts, floods and sea level rise. These in turn are adversely impacting the health and security of the local agroforestry and blue economies, and they are threatening the resilience of rural and coastal communities, urban systems and waterfront cities. The Mediterranean Sea is the fastest warming basin, with record-high increasing temperature and

levels of pollution. Tailored policies, prevention and preparedness measures along with innovative tools and practices to efficiently predict, mitigate and manage such (impacts and) risks, as well as to restore and regenerate the impacted ecosystems in the Mediterranean and North Africa area are urgently required. The partnerships PRIMA, SBEP and Water4All and the Missions “Ocean and Waters”, “A Soil deal for Europe”, and “Adaptation to climate changes are sustaining the set up and implementation of innovative solutions for the ecological restoration, the food-water-energy security and climate resilience of the macro-region, but the challenges mentioned are requiring urgent, digital enabled and scalable solutions through digital twins, machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) methods. On the digital front, the EU Member States and the European Commission jointly invested on the “EURO HPC JU” and more recently on the “EU AI Factory initiative”, ensuring the availability of prominent HPCs and AI technologies/solutions also in the southern Europe (e.g. Spain, Italy, but also in Morocco). Digital Twins have been developed, such as the EU Digital Twin of the Ocean (DTO) by the EU Mission Ocean and Waters, enabling data gathering, modelling and forecasting for resilience, security, sustainable competitiveness and ocean health. However, such technologies and infrastructures have to be better grafted in the innovative restoration and regenerative bioeconomy actions implemented in the area and this is asking for tailored, pilot and site-specific initiatives jointly exploiting and synergising the know-how and infrastructures generated by various EU and national programmes. This is also one of the main outcomes/recommendations from the “High Level Conference on Mediterranean and Atlantic Ocean Health and Coastal Resilience” jointly organized by the European Commission (DG RTD) and the Italian Ministry of University and Research, as a side event of the 2024 G7 Science and Technology Ministerial meeting hosted in Bologna on July 11, 2024. Such a need of digitally enabled recovery solutions for the Mediterranean and North Africa areas has been endorsed by the former EU Commissioner Iliana Ivanova and the Ministers of the G7 countries (DE and FR and then UK and Canada among the countries associated to the Horizon Europe programme). The same needs and opportunities are of sure interest for the other EU Member States and the HE associated Countries of the Mediterranean and North Africa areas.

The event will bring together the European Commission, Member States and Associated Countries, Regions, Members of the European Parliament and other EU Institutions, stakeholders, academies and the private sector, experts and interested citizens, including youth representatives, from across Europe. Possible synergies with the EU Clean Industrial Deal, the Agri-Fish and COMPET Council, the UN FAO, IACGB and the Global Bioeconomy Summit, the EU High Level Policy Forum on the Bioeconomy and the Standing Committee for Agricultural Research (SCAR), the new Ocean Pact, Water Resilience Strategy and Mediterranean Pact implementation bodies could be explored.

The event will take place in Palermo during the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposal according to Article 198(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 24(3)(b) of the Horizon Europe Regulation to the legal entity identified below.

Legal entities:

Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca, Largo Antonio Ruberti, 1 - 00153 Roma, Italia

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 198(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes

Indicative timetable: As of the third quarter of 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 0.15 million from the 2027 budget

3. Presidency event (LV) - Transformative Pathways: R&I as a Catalyst for Sustainable Food Systems and Bioeconomy in Europe

Latvia will take on the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2028. The foreseen Presidency event will focus on the transformation of food systems as that has become one of the most important challenges on the European policy agenda. Climate change, biodiversity loss, unsustainable land use, diet-related health issues and social inequalities all converge within food systems, making them critical sites of crisis and strategic sites for systemic change.

During its presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2028, Latvia will host a high-level event to promote a more integrated vision of food system transformation, with a particular focus on fairness and food security as a strategic yet underdeveloped policy dimension.

Expected Impact: The event should set out a credible pathway to contributing to “ensuring healthy food and nutrition security by making agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and food systems sustainable, resilient, inclusive and within planetary boundaries”.

Expected Outcome: The event is expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- A Presidency-level policy statement recognising the importance of fairness, including food security, in EU food system and bioeconomy policy. Fairness — as affordability, labour equity and inclusive innovation access — should be repositioned as a central analytical and policy category in EU food and bioeconomy transformation.
- Identification of R&I (taking into account distributive impacts, social resilience and structural inequalities across the food chain) and policy priorities (including those linking socio-economic inclusion with sustainability transitions, focusing particularly on

marginalised and low-income populations, informal labourers, and small-scale producers) for the incoming Presidencies and the European Commission to take up in future work programmes.

- Strategic visibility for Latvia's leadership and commitment to the transformation of food systems in an inclusive and equitable way.
- A strengthened network of researchers, policymakers and practitioners working on justice-oriented food systems across Europe.

Scope: The event should address all of the following activities:

- policy roundtables with EU Member State representatives and civil society;
- research panels presenting findings from EU projects and national research on food equity and the social impacts of bioeconomy policies, thematic sessions on inclusive innovation models, digital access and labour regulation in green transitions.

There will also be dialogue with grassroots and labour organisations to centre lived experience in policy design.

The event will bring together the European Commission, Member States, Members of the European Parliament and other EU Institutions, stakeholders, R&I community across Europe, youth representatives and other interested parties.

The event will take place in Riga during the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The European Commission will support the organisation of the event in cooperation with the entity designed by the Latvian Presidency.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposal according to Article 198(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 24(3)(b) of the Horizon Europe Regulation to the legal entity identified below.

Legal entities:

Ministry of Agriculture Republic of Latvia, Republikas laukums 2, Riga, Latvia, LV-1981

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 198(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes

Indicative timetable: As of fourth quarter of 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 0.15 million from the 2027 budget

4. Support to the International Platform for Ocean Sustainability (IPOS) Secretariat

Expected impacts:

In line with the European Ocean Pact and the European and global ocean science and sustainability priorities and in support of UN SDG 14, the proposal should set out a credible pathway to contributing to the following impacts:

- overcome fragmentation in ocean knowledge;
- support a strong ocean science-policy interface to inform policies and actions for a healthy and resilient ocean;
- link ocean knowledge, policy and society, and support global, national and regional efforts to meet international ocean commitments;
- promote the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of the ocean by producing global and regional syntheses and actionable advice and engaging decision-makers and fostering scientific inclusiveness through systems-informed scientific research.

Expected outcomes:

Project results are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- science-policy dialogues with policymakers to identify the different needs for different regions, contexts, etc., including considerations of local / indigenous knowledge;
- compilation of multi- and trans- disciplinary ocean sustainability knowledge from the best available sources (IPCC, IPBES, WOA, IRP, etc.) and production of global and regional syntheses and actionable advice and innovative integration of socio-economic data with environmental data in modern decision-support tools (such as digital twins, etc.);
- improved ocean science-policy dialogue and dissemination of systems-informed, timely, credible, salient, multi- and transdisciplinary scientific and socioeconomic evidence with robust and policy-relevant outcomes, contributing to the global, national and regional efforts to meet international ocean commitments EU and multilateral policymaking in the field of ocean long-term sustainability;
- establishment of the International Platform for Ocean Sustainability (IPOS) as a Decade Collaborative Centre in support to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development;
- support the preparation for the—entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement in close coordination with the Global Ocean Programme to ensure no overlap between the activities.

Scope:

After 2 years of development, the *TowardsIPOS* is an ambitious project that aims to address the ocean science-policy interface, which is a critical and timely topic, and has the potential to have a significant impact. *TowardsIPOS* has produced valuable reference reports highlighting gaps in the international and intergovernmental landscape for addressing issues of ocean sustainability, it has made connections with various organizations, governments, and experts, which could facilitate collaboration and resource sharing, it has federated an international group of scientists from various disciplines interested to collaborate on these issues. *TowardsIPOS* links ocean knowledge, policy and society, and the best available knowledge and expertise from a wide array of reliable sources that include global assessment reports from the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC), and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the World Ocean Assessments (WOA), the International Resource Panel (IRP), etc. Additionally, it draws on local and Indigenous knowledge systems, as well as peer reviewed academic literature and expertise from the private sector and civil society to develop action-oriented and context-specific recommendations.

The launch of IPOS took place at the third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC-3) in Nice in June 2025. After the launch, a phased approach will be adopted for testing and adapting services, methodologies and the functionality of the proposed governance structures. A 24-month test period will allow the refinement of IPOS services in a number of pilot geographic regions, and ensure adaptability based on outcomes before gradual expansion into other regions.

For the Commission, there is interest to develop a strong science-policy interface for ocean sustainability, to build on prior investments in the *TowardsIPOS* project, and to develop new innovative tools such as digital twins, and approaches to integrate socio-economic data with environmental data, which could be valuable for ocean sustainability efforts. Many ocean sustainability issues will fall under the mandate of the BBNJ Agreement, which will soon enter into force. Any new investments to support ocean sustainability should take the BBNJ developments into consideration to avoid duplication of efforts. There are many activities that could be undertaken now within the original scope of interest of IPOS that would also support the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement, including but not limited to the following: Engage experts (environmental and social scientists, economists), policy makers, and civil society in a collaborative platform, particularly engaging relevant Ocean Decade programmes and activities and building on the work of the IPCC, IPBES, WOA, IRP, and other intergovernmental assessments to:

- develop an internationally agreed synthesis and assessment of capacities and gaps (data, knowledge) in addressing ocean sustainability issues;
- develop a strategic roadmap of R&D needed to integrate multidisciplinary environmental, social, and economic information into decision-support tools and materials, and develop a compilation of case studies demonstrating use and/or best practice in multidisciplinary decision-support;

- provide access for non-expert audiences to comprehensible validated decision-support information, training, science-policy dialogues, and tools to address key issues of sustainability, and where appropriate, contribute to the BBNJ Agreement clearing-house mechanism.

IPOS is envisaged to be embedded within the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (Ocean Decade) - as a Decade Coordinating Centre - to coalesce momentum and provide a framework for continuity and legacy.

The EU will contribute financially to the IPOS from two programmes: EMFAF (in 2026) and Horizon Europe (in 2027) to help pilot its creation and establish its governance and functioning frameworks and implement its work programmes, providing evidence to policy makers and other relevant stakeholders for timely, high-quality and policy-relevant information and strengthen the science-policy dialogue on ocean sustainability.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposal according to Article 198 (e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 24(3)(b) of the Horizon Europe Regulation to the legal entity identified below.

Legal entities:

Ocean Sustainability Foundation (OSF), hosted by the CNRS Foundation, 3 rue Michel-Ange, 75016 Paris, France

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 198(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes

Indicative timetable: As of 1st quarter of 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 1.00 million from the 2027 budget

5. Support for the Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution Prevention

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution Prevention is a science-policy interface that aims to build capacity for and strengthen the use of science in policymaking. The Commission will pay a contribution on behalf of the EU to the secretariat of the Panel with the aim of supporting the mechanism to further develop work on capacity and knowledge foundations, to communicate and evaluate the Platform's activities, deliverables and findings, including policy tools, and to synthesise, review, assess and critically evaluate relevant information and knowledge on chemicals, waste and pollution prevention, generated notably by governments, academia, scientific organizations and non-

governmental organizations from the EU and worldwide. This action starts in 2026 to guarantee the EU's support from the initial steps of the secretariat.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposal according to Article 198(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 24(3)(b) of the Horizon Europe Regulation to the legal entity identified below.

Legal entities:

Intergovernmental Science-policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution, United Nations Avenue, Gigiri, PO Box 30552 – 00100, Nairobi, Kenya

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 198(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes

Indicative timetable: As of 1st quarter of 2026

Indicative budget: EUR 2.00 million from the 2026 budget

Public procurements

1. Studies, conferences, events and outreach activities

A number of specific contracts will be signed under existing framework contracts to:

- (i) support the dissemination and exploitation of project results;
- (ii) contribute to the definition of future challenge priorities;
- (iii) carry out specific evaluations of programme parts;
- (iv) organise conferences, events and outreach activities.

Should existing framework contracts prove unsuitable or insufficient to support these activities, one or more calls for tender may be launched, as appropriate. The contracts envisaged cover the following subjects: studies, technical assistance, conferences, events and outreach activities.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Throughout 2026 and 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 1.10 million from the 2026 budget and EUR 0.60 million from the 2027 budget

2. Coordination and support service for the European Commission's Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI)

The transition to a circular economy is key to reducing pressures on natural resources. It is also a prerequisite to achieve the EU's 2050 climate neutrality target, strengthen climate resilience and halt biodiversity loss. For these reasons, the circular economy concept is becoming a central component in local and regional economies, which have a suitable scale for closing resources loops, creating sustainable circular ecosystems and driving place-based innovation. An increasing number of European cities, regions and their ecosystem partners (e.g. industries and businesses) are improving circularity in their territories, economic sectors, value chains and services. Although progress is underway, cities and regions are still confronted with important implementation gaps as well as funding and/or capacity challenges.

The Circular Cities and Regions Initiative³⁷² (CCRI) is an innovative cooperation and support scheme that was launched by the European Commission under the mandate (for regional action) of the EU Circular Economy Action Plan 2020. The CCRI specifically targets European cities, regions and their partners. It supports them in the implementation of circular systemic solutions and the testing of innovative governance and business models. The objective is to boost skills and capacities, support concrete cases for more systemic transformations, as well as accelerate innovation and investment at local level. The CCRI is therefore very instrumental in implementing the EU Green Deal on the ground. It contributes to the objectives of the European Green Deal, the bioeconomy strategy, as well as the EU's long-term climate and biodiversity goals.

A dedicated CCRI Coordination and Support Office (CCRI-CSO) was set up in December 2021 as a result of a tender procedure currently run via a 4-year framework contract. The launch of a new open procedure for ensuring the follow-up of this first CCRI-CSO FWC (ending in October 2025) was already announced in the Horizon Europe 2024 work programme³⁷³.

Under the follow-up framework contract foreseen for its second operation phase (2025-2029), the CCRI will consolidate and diversify the technical support it provides to European cities and regions. The focus will therefore smoothly shift from pilot experimentation to larger-scale solution roll-out and upscaling.

Specific contracts under this follow-up framework contract are expected to be signed between October 2025 and October 2029. They will: (i) provide additional support activities to European cities and regions in the implementation of their circular systemic solutions; (ii) deepen the analysis of the remaining R&I gaps, and further identify (technical, regulatory and financial) drivers and obstacles for boosting circularity at local and regional level; (iii) support

³⁷² [Circular Cities and Regions Initiative](#)

³⁷³ Other Action 2, p. 582-583, with an estimated budget ceiling of EUR 6,00 million. See [2024 work programme](#).

the dissemination and exploitation of pilot project results, and (iv) further strengthen the collaboration and synergies with other organisations and initiatives supporting the circular transition at local and regional level.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Throughout 2026 and 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 2.00 million from the 2026 budget and EUR 1.00 million from the 2027 budget

3. Green Transition Support Office

Horizon Europe Cluster 6 supports a wide range of projects that address critical aspects of the green transition, the systemic shift towards climate neutrality and environmental sustainability. This support generates valuable research and innovation (R&I) results across thematic areas such as the circular economy water and oceans, agriculture and food systems, circular bioeconomy and biodiversity, addressing the interlinked challenges of climate change, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and pollution.

To maximise the impact of these efforts, greater coordination, integration, and strategic use of results is needed. The Green Transition Support Office (GTSO) will support the European Commission in ensuring effective monitoring dissemination, and exploitation of R&I outputs that directly contribute to the green transition and related EU policies. Beyond the general focus on furthering the green transition, this work will include dedicated action in support of specific thematic core areas of the green transition, such as circular economy. With Cluster 6 thematic areas as a starting point, the GTSO will identify complementarities and potential synergies across other Clusters and programmes. It will act as a knowledge and coordination hub, improving the coherence of R&I efforts, and enhancing their policy relevance.

The GTSO will contribute to defining a strategic approach to green transition R&I, support priority-setting, and provide aggregated insights on the impact of Horizon Europe funded projects, complementing existing services like the Horizon Booster, BioAgora project and processes such as Feedback to Policy. Expected outputs from the GTSO will include the organisation of thematic events that facilitate reflections and exchanges, and the drafting of policy briefings and analytical reports.

By building bridges between fragmented efforts in view of informing long-term integrated policies, the GTSO will help ensure that EU R&I investments make the strongest possible contribution to the green transition and to the competitiveness of key economic sectors.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: As of 4th quarter 2026

Indicative budget: EUR 3.00 million from the 2026 budget

4. EMODnet for Global

Ocean observing, and especially uninterrupted long time series, is fundamental to ocean science because it provides the consistent, high-quality data needed to understand the ocean's natural variability, biodiversity status, long-term trends, and systemic responses to human-driven changes. This action will support the enhancement of Marine Knowledge globally, via:

- salvaging of international marine (including biodiversity) in-situ data; and
- restructuring of current data management practices under threat, to ensure the continuation of critical data flows from international programmes or networks, guarantee alternative data repositories and ensure global availability of this data through the European Marine Observation and Data network (EMODnet) and through appropriate collaboration and links to IOC UNESCO International Data and Information Exchange (IODE).

The European Marine Observation and Data network (EMODnet) is a partnership of more than 130 organisations which bring together, standardise, harmonise and disseminate marine in-situ (field) data, data products and services in 7 thematic disciplines (bathymetry, biology, geology, chemistry, physics, seabed habitats, human activities). The partnership includes EU and its neighbouring countries, to deliver complete coverage of all European seas. EMODnet brings together marine in-situ data from more than 600 data holders around Europe and, when relevant, globally.

The EMODnet service has three main objectives around data:

- i) to implement common data standards and distribute trusted FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) pan-European data from the marine environmental and human activities domains, aggregated from Europe's diverse in situ ocean observation capability, accompanied by consistent and standardised metadata. Data of hundreds of parameters are available through EMODnet;
- ii) to distribute open access marine data products, metadata and services covering the European regional seas and beyond. Many of these products are unique EU assets in coverage and resolution, as the EUSEaMap broad-scale seabed habitat map, the International biogeographic datasets from EurOBIS, the EU Digital Terrain Model for harmonised bathymetry, the pan-European Marine Litter Database, the Vessel Density composite maps and many others;
- iii) to increase understanding around the concept of FAIR marine data and to develop new collaborations with the public and private sector, in Europe and internationally.

The Ocean Pact announced a new European Ocean Observation Initiative to become more independent and autonomous in all critical ocean infrastructures, data and information

services, and to help Europe's partners to "Choose Europe" as a reliable science-based, high-tech, secure and open ally.

As geopolitics shifts, international marine databases and other infrastructures, previously served by the US, are in immediate risk due to discontinuation of funding and/or disengagement from global commitments. This is jeopardising the continuation of established marine data flows, data safeguarding and data management procedures. These data represent significant global commitments in marine knowledge and ocean sustainability, great resource investment and an invaluable resource for ocean, environmental and climate science and, among others, key European services, such as the Copernicus services (and the EU DTO), which require it to continue operating autonomously and deliver quality information.

EMODnet for Global will ensure:

- Establishing permanent collaboration and links between EMODnet and IOC UNESCO IODE, developing and promoting international marine data management practices;
- Salvaging, safe-keeping and management of international marine in-situ data which are under threat;
- Mirroring or restructuring of marine in-situ data flows to guarantee resilience and long-term availability of these data (not only save the existing data, but ensure that new data are available, standardised and incorporated in global collections);
- Ensure the work continuation and sustainability of Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) data products of international importance, as for instance the Surface Ocean CO₂ Atlas (SOCAT), biodiversity data, etc.;
- Increase global interoperability, by negotiating and implementing common data standards and data management principles;
- Develop cooperation with appropriate international organisations and partner countries on the above objectives or issues.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: As of first quarter of 2026

Indicative budget: EUR 12.00 million from the 2026 budget

Expert contract actions

1. External expertise to assess and advise on EU research and innovation policy

This action will support the provision of independent expertise in support of the design, implementation and valorisation of EU research policies in the areas currently in scope of Cluster 6: i. environmental observation; ii. biodiversity and natural resources; iii. agriculture,

forestry and rural areas; iv. seas, oceans and inland waters; v. food systems; vi. bio-based innovation systems in the EU's bioeconomy and vii. circular systems.

Individual experts will work on the assessment, analysis and valorisation of completed and on-going research and innovation actions and programmes and the identification of future research and innovation needs.

The assessment and advisory tasks of individual experts can include the following:

- analysis of the contribution of research results (at national, EU and/or international level) to EU policy objectives and emerging issues, including policy recommendations where appropriate.
- analysis of research results at national, EU and/or international level (e.g. portfolio analysis), which may imply quantitative assessments and/or qualitative assessments.
- identification of innovative solutions as well as potential gaps and synergies to be addressed by EU research and innovation policy.
- advice on the valorisation, communication, dissemination and exploitation of research results.
- participation in conferences and events, e.g. including the drafting of papers and reports on their conclusions.

A special allowance of EUR 450/day will be paid to the experts appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest.

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

Indicative budget: EUR 0.65 million from the 2026 budget and EUR 0.75 million from the 2027 budget

2. Experts assisting in monitoring of actions (grant agreement, grant decision, public procurement, financial instruments)

This action will support the use of appointed independent experts for the monitoring of running actions (grant agreement, grant decision, public procurement actions, financial instruments) funded under Horizon Europe and previous Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation, and where appropriate include ethics checks, as well as compliance checks regarding the Gender Equality Plan eligibility criterion.

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

Indicative budget: EUR 3.50 million from the 2026 budget and EUR 4.40 million from the 2027 budget

Subscription actions

1. GEO subscription 2026-2027

The EU supports the activities of the Group of Earth Observations (GEO) by paying an annual contribution to the GEO Trust Fund for 2026 and 2027. With the adoption of the new Post-2025 GEO Work Programme, GEO is embracing Earth Intelligence — a concept that dynamically integrates Earth observation data with socio-economic data, artificial intelligence, and Indigenous and local knowledge to drive informed decision-making across global, national, and regional scales in support of the implementation of multi-lateral environmental agreements, including the those of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The EU invests massively in Earth Observation with the Copernicus programme and through actions funded by this work programme, among others. GEO supports the visibility and impact of these investments on a global scale.

As a full member of the GEO, the Commission will pay a subscription fee on the EU's behalf to the GEO Trust Fund, which is the budgetary structure agreed by GEO members and which is hosted by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) in Geneva.

This contribution will help ensure that the GEO secretariat operates according to its concept of operations and annual operations plan, agreed by the GEO Executive Committee (which the EU is co-chairing together with China, USA, and South Africa. At least EUR 0.20 million EUR of the contribution shall be used to support the function of a regional GEO support function in charge of the European caucus. Another EUR 0.30 million EUR of the contribution shall be reserved for the GEOGLAM directorate hosted by the GEO secretariat.

Type of Action: Subscription action

Indicative timetable: As of second quarter of 2026 and second quarter of 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 1.60 million from the 2026 budget and EUR 1.60 million from the 2027 budget

Scientific and technical services by the JRC

1. Enhancing Economic and Financial Resilience to Nature-Related Risks

Recent analysis has revealed that the European economy and financial system are critically dependent on nature and the ecosystem services it provides. The rapid decline of ecosystem services, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation, and their linkages with climate change, present increasing challenges to economic growth and financial stability, by affecting economic activities and disrupting supply chains. In order to protect European productivity and competitiveness, this action should support research to integrate nature and ecosystem

considerations into financial and economic assessments, and help to develop tools and methodologies that enhance resilience and sustainability. The research should explore the broader economic and financial implications of nature-related risks and nature dependencies, including their potential impact on markets' stability, corporate resilience, and economic stability. It should contribute to a deeper understanding of how environmental challenges influence financial and economic decision-making, including impacts on access to finance, and their risk implications for financial institutions, especially banks. By leveraging advanced methods (such as advanced econometric analysis, spatial econometrics, machine learning approaches, large language models, text mining, and techniques for integrating and linking different datasets), the action should provide valuable insights that could be used by financial institutions and regulators, businesses, and policymakers to support the development of enhanced risk assessment methodologies, and of more informed and sustainable strategies and approaches. Collaboration with internal and external data partners across disciplinary domains, including JRC's Knowledge Centre on Biodiversity, will strengthen economic and financial analyses, by integrating environmental, regulatory, and geo-spatial data sources with financial and economic data, especially at granular level (e.g. balance sheet data, access to credit and finance, credit risk data). This work will support a more comprehensive approach to the evaluation of financial and economic resilience and to the design and assessment of equitable economic transitions. One of the main objectives of the action is therefore to mainstream information on nature-related risks into financial risk management as well as into economic modelling and discourse. The action will be implemented by a service level-agreement (Article 59 of the Financial Regulation).

Type of Action: Provision of technical/scientific services by the Joint Research Centre

Indicative timetable: As of first quarter 2026

Indicative budget: EUR 2.00 million from the 2026 budget

2. Reinforcing the European contribution to GEO in addressing EU and global Policy needs (EC4GEO II, 2028-2030)

This action will reinforce the EuroGEO community's policy response capacity by implementing a dynamic engagement framework that creates direct channels between EuroGEO Action Groups and relevant EC policy priorities, enabling rapid mobilisation of EO expertise to address evolving policy needs and evidence requirements. It will ensure the policy-science interface for a developing European EO Science Service. It will establish a structured prioritisation framework that identifies and selects high-impact "last-mile" applications for development based on cross-cutting policy priorities and their potential to address critical European and global environmental and societal challenges.

The action will also ensure a strong European contribution to global GEO flagships and Initiatives (GEOGLAM, GEO Human Planet, GEOLDN, GEOBON, etc.), developing harmonised European methodologies for various flagship initiatives that ensure consistency across EU contributions and valorising the contribution from Copernicus. All these activities should provide additional visibility of EU research investments by developing case studies

highlighting specific EU policy decisions and environmental legislation, such as the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 and the Nature Restoration Regulation, directly influenced by EO research outputs.

Additionally, efforts will be made to further rationalise EO Data Infrastructure selection for users by providing a data infrastructure decision support mechanism. Guiding users with tailored recommendations for accessing and processing EO data across available platforms, focusing on the EuroGEO community and operational EU data infrastructure (e.g., CDSE). Finally, the action will provide technical support to the European voice in GEO governance by providing scientific expertise to EU representatives in GEO forums while coordinating between diverse EU stakeholders to ensure cohesive positions. This coordinated approach strengthens Europe's influence by articulating European EO priorities within GEO's strategic direction and work programmes.

The action will be implemented by a service level-agreement (Article 59 of the Financial Regulation).

Type of Action: Provision of technical/scientific services by the Joint Research Centre

Indicative timetable: As of fourth quarter of 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 2.00 million from the 2027 budget

3. Scientific support for implementation and further development of policies addressing greenhouse gas emissions and removals from the land sector

The two parts of this action, both to be carried out by the Joint Research Centre, support the implementation and further development of the EU's new Carbon Removal Certification Framework and of its greenhouse gas inventory under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement.

Part A: Carbon Farming Simulator development and carbon removal resilience assessment

The EU Carbon Removals and Carbon Farming Regulation of 2024 establishes a voluntary framework for certifying carbon credits, focusing on carbon removal and reduced emissions on land. The objectives of this part of the work are: (1) Developing a Carbon Farming Simulator (i.e., a scalable monitoring, reporting, and verification tool) to support the Commission in the development of certification methodologies for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions and carbon removals quantification at the level of individual farms or forest holdings, building also upon Earth Observation data, the Farm Sustainability Data Network (FSDN), Land Use and Coverage Area frame Survey (LUCAS), forest statistics etc.; (2) Evaluating the carbon removal resilience of European landscapes to climate change, weather extremes, and other disturbances, making use of the tools developed in (1), Copernicus data, and existing or newly developed tools for assessing the risk of carbon removal reversal; and (3) Assessing the impact of climate change and anthropogenic land interventions on the carbon cycle and carbon sink, using pan-European modelling and new

data from Copernicus and other Earth observation programmes, to identify the largest feedback on the carbon cycle, evaluate mitigation potential, and detect tipping points.

Part B: Streamlining the assessment of greenhouse gas mitigation under the Common Agricultural Policy and the EU GHG inventory

The EU and its Member States, as signatories to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, report annually on their GHG emissions across all sectors, including agriculture as well as land use and land use change (LULUCF). The European Environment Agency compiles, and oversees the quality of, the EU's GHG inventory, and of modelled sectoral GHG projections. These projections normally include scenarios with existing measures (WEM) and with additional measures (WAM). They don't lend themselves to assessing the impact of existing policies and measures on GHG emissions of a given sector. To fill this gap, a recent study by the AGRI Evaluation Helpdesk estimated significant mitigation potential of the Common Agricultural Policy's (CAP) Strategic Plans, projecting a reduction of 35 072 kt CO₂eq/year in emissions, particularly in agriculture and LULUCF sectors. Further work is needed to refine this first and rough assessment, due to inherent uncertainties in the estimation of non-CO₂ GHG emissions. This will involve conducting case studies of Member States, matching farm practices across different methodologies, comparing results with projections, and related tasks.

The action will be implemented by a service level-agreement (Article 59 of the Financial Regulation).

Type of Action: Provision of technical/scientific services by the Joint Research Centre

Indicative timetable: As of first quarter 2026

Indicative budget: EUR 3.00 million from the 2026 budget

4. Application of JRC modelling tools in support of the New Bioeconomy Strategy

The main outcome of the action is providing bioeconomy assessments in support of the New Bioeconomy Strategy, thus helping achieve the overarching EU climate and biodiversity objectives.

The Bioeconomy Knowledge Centre presents the state of advancement of a systematic policy, market and science and technology analysis and monitoring and has developed a portfolio of relevant complementary modelling frameworks.

Activities conducted under the action should include:

- Adapting the Bioeconomy Monitoring System to the objectives and required indicators of the New Bioeconomy Strategy and compiling indicators and data to monitor economic, social and environmental development of the EU bioeconomy,

- Application of bioeconomy assessment and modelling approaches, including Integrated Bioeconomy Land Use Assessment, economic bioeconomy modelling framework, and consumption-based assessments.
- Support the establishment of an international, publicly available bioeconomy data repository, in cooperation with international partners.

The action will be implemented by a service level-agreement (Article 59 of the Financial Regulation).

Type of Action: Provision of technical/scientific services by the Joint Research Centre

Indicative timetable: As of first quarter 2026

Indicative budget: EUR 3.00 million from the 2026 budget

5. Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy and integrated bioeconomy assessment support action

The main outcome of the action is the continuous improvement of the current system of strategic intelligence on bioeconomy solutions and assessments in support of the New Bioeconomy Strategy, thus helping achieve the overarching EU climate and biodiversity objectives.

The Bioeconomy Knowledge Centre presents the state of advancement of a systematic policy, market and science and technology analysis and monitoring.

Research activities conducted under the action should include:

- further developing bioeconomy assessment and modelling approaches, including Integrated Bioeconomy Land Use Assessment, economic bioeconomy modelling framework, and consumption-based assessments;
- closing knowledge gaps, e.g. on biomass supply and use, trade-offs relevant for the water-food-material-energy nexus;
- carrying out relevant knowledge syntheses;
- disseminating the above-mentioned knowledge and monitoring outputs.

The action will be implemented by a service level-agreement (Article 59 of the Financial Regulation).

Type of Action: Provision of technical/scientific services by the Joint Research Centre

Indicative timetable: As of first quarter 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 3.00 million from the 2027 budget

6. Technical and scientific support to drive food systems transformation

The JRC has broad in-house interdisciplinary scientific and technical expertise for supporting evidence-based EU policies. The JRC portfolio ‘sustainable food systems’ contributes with scientific support to the transition towards more sustainable and resilient food systems, including the development of innovative scientific and technical solutions and methodologies. Areas of work and expertise cover diverse topics of relevance including food systems monitoring, alternative proteins and novel foods, sustainable and healthy diets, food security and food safety.

This action aims to maximize the impact of R&I on sustainable and competitive food systems, drawing on the interdisciplinary food systems knowledge of the JRC and its scientific and technical expertise on monitoring the EU food system.

- Technical and scientific support for the implementation of R&I activities supporting the transition towards sustainable and competitive food systems, the Food 2030 R&I policy framework, the implementation of the Vision for Agriculture and Food and the Biotech Act;
- Strengthening of the EU science-for-policy interface in the context of the European partnership for Sustainable Food Systems, including collaborations to support its Knowledge Hub, living labs, and food systems monitoring through the Observatory planned under this partnership;
- Scientific support to the development, assessment and monitoring of innovative and competitive solutions including new food technologies that enable the transition to more competitive and sustainable food systems.

The action will be implemented by a service level-agreement (Article 59 of the Financial Regulation).

Type of Action: Provision of technical/scientific services by the Joint Research Centre

Indicative timetable: From 2027 to 2031 (four years)

Indicative budget: EUR 1.00 million from the 2027 budget

Service level agreements

1. Service Level Agreement with European Environmental Agency (EEA) on integration of in-situ Earth Observation data

A contribution over three years (2027-2029) to the European Environment Agency (EEA) will help to accelerate the adoption and implementation of the GEO in-situ strategy post-25 and continue to support the data sharing and management principles, in view of realizing GEO’s objectives or Earth Intelligence for all.

As an integral component of the European Commission's EuroGEO initiative, this action will support European activities to coordinate, promote and engage with in-situ data users and enable the implementation of the GEO in-situ data strategy.

The contribution will be primarily focused on supporting the accessibility and the integration of in situ data (including from citizen science and Horizon Europe projects) as well as socio-economic data relevant for implementing the EU Mission on adaptation to climate change, the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change, the European Climate and Health Observatory, the second European Climate Risk Assessment, the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the EU Nature Restoration Law and the Destination Earth's Climate change adaptation Digital Twin. Towards this end, the activity should collaborate with and support projects funded by this work programme, in particular under topics HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-01: "Integrating Remote Sensing and in-situ observations of Biodiversity, towards a fully interoperable observation and data framework", and HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-GOVERNANCE-01-two-stage: "Develop Earth Intelligence solutions with observations and state-of-the-art AI for sustainable competitiveness and policy making" It will also explore the availability and exploitation of in situ data for enhancing the links between climate change, biodiversity loss and air pollution.

This work will reinforce already existing synergies with the Copernicus In-Situ Component for which the EEA is coordinator. It will also benefit from the EEA's existing activities and role in initiatives such as the CLIMATE-ADAPT platform, the Biodiversity Information System for Europe (BISE), and the European climate risk assessment (EUCRA) through which it can explore additional synergies on how in-situ data can help better define risks.

The action should be implemented through a Service Level Agreement with the EEA, as foreseen under Article 59.2 of the Financial Regulation.

Type of Action: Service Level Agreement

Indicative timetable: As of first quarter of 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 2.00 million from the 2027 budget

Indirectly managed actions

1. Support to the International Resource Panel (IRP) Secretariat

In line with the environmental priorities of the European Commission, the proposal should set out a credible pathway to contributing to all of the following impacts:

- Achieving sustainable and circular management and use of natural resources;
- Lowering the use of primary non-renewable raw materials and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants, achieving an improved environmental footprint (including on biodiversity), enabling climate-neutrality, zero pollution and higher resource efficiency;

- Contribution to achieving EU policy objectives and targets, such as those in the EU Competitiveness Compass, the EU Clean Industrial Deal, the Critical Raw Materials Act, the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, the EU Water Resilience Strategy, the upcoming Circular Economy Act and the revised EU Bioeconomy Strategy.

Expected outcomes:

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Improved knowledge of information on the sustainable use and management of resources to shift away from overconsumption, waste and ecological harm;
- Enhanced science-policy dialogue and dissemination of robust and policy-relevant outcomes, contributing to the EU and multilateral policymaking in the field of natural resource management, circular economy, sustainable consumption and production and strategic autonomy;
- Strengthened synergies between the deliverables of EU research and innovation (R&I) framework programmes and the International Resource Panel.

Scope: The International Resource Panel (IRP)¹⁵ is a science-policy interface which aims to build and share the knowledge needed to improve the use of resources worldwide. The IRP was launched by the European Commission (COM(2005) 670) and set up in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Commission co-chairs the IRP's Steering Committee, which guides the IRP strategic direction, ensures policy relevance, helps setting the work programme, oversees budgets and provides advice on the scientific composition of the Panel. The IRP findings have been used by the Commission when shaping the European Green Deal and have informed resolutions of the United Nations Environment Assembly¹⁶. The IRP work is quoted or is sometime at the basis of G7/G20 documents and communiqués related to sustainable consumption and production, resource efficiency and the circular economy.

The EU will provide a financial contribution to the IRP to implement the IRP work programme 2026-2029 and beyond inter alia supporting the preparation and dissemination of IRP reports; facilitating the participation of scientists from the EU, Associated and Third countries in this process; communicating about IRP deliverables and findings, also using the EU institutions platforms and channels of communication; and to strengthen the synergies between Horizon programmes' outcomes and IRP deliverables. EU financial support to the IRP aims also at providing evidence to policy makers and other relevant stakeholders for timely, high-quality and policy-relevant information and strengthen the science-policy dialogue on sustainable use of resources.

The proposal should inter alia present how the IRP work programme 2026-2029 and beyond will use new dissemination channels, reaching broader target users, etc. It should also describe how relevant results from Horizon Europe and previous EU R&I Framework Programmes will be used in delivering on the work programme 2026-2029 and beyond and,

where appropriate, create synergies with ongoing initiatives (e.g. collaboration with Horizon experts, use of common events, etc). It will also demonstrate how it will ensure complementarities and synergies with the work of IPCC and IPBES.

Legal entities:

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), based in Nairobi (Kenya), in favour of the International Resource Panel (IRP) Secretariat, hosted by UNEP's Economy Division, 1 Rue Miollis, Building VII, 75015, Paris, France

Form of Funding: Indirectly managed actions

Type of Action: Indirectly managed action

Indicative timetable: As of Q1 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 4.00 million from the 2026 budget

2. Strengthening the role of place-based innovation for sustainable and resilient agriculture: contribution to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Expected Outcome:

- Improve knowledge on the contribution of living labs and other co-innovation facilities to foster the transition of agri-food systems, in particular their contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- Strengthened capacities for place-based innovation, through living labs but not only, towards sustainable and resilient agriculture and its scaling up in different contexts.
- Enhance the capacities of Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs) to innovate towards more sustainable agrifood systems in their own contexts.

Scope:

The mandate of FAO is to improve food security and nutrition, increase agricultural productivity, raise the standard of living in rural populations and contribute to global economic growth. FAO places science, technology and innovation as means to accelerate the transformation of agri-food systems, so they become more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind. At the same time, FAO acknowledges the role of agroecology as an overarching and comprehensive systems framework to guide public policies towards sustainable agriculture and food systems, having defined ten elements of agroecology³⁷⁴ also endorsed by the EU.

³⁷⁴

<https://www.fao.org/agroecology/overview/overview10elements/en/>

The Vision for EU agriculture and food acknowledges the enabling role of knowledge, research and innovation as catalysts of change. To deliver results tailored to farmers' needs, the co-creation of knowledge and innovation through local experimentation settings, such as Living Labs (LL), involving farmers, scientists, innovators, business, and government services when relevant, should be scaled. LL are places where innovative research takes place in close collaboration with the end-users. The Vision further acknowledges that addressing skills shortages and mismatches in the farming sector through anticipation and dedicated investment in high-quality capacity development and support services will be key to attract a new generation of talented farm entrepreneurs, and build competitive, sustainable and resilient agriculture and food systems. Agroecological farming practices are examples of attractive options for younger farmers, combining economic possibilities with environmental sustainability and social responsibility.

The 2025 Communiqué³⁷⁵ of the G20 Chief Agriculture Scientists acknowledges that agroecological approaches, among other, can increase productivity while improving agricultural resilience and sustainability. The Communiqué further identifies the need to strengthen knowledge and innovation hubs/centres/networks and place-based innovation tools as LL.

The collaboration and iteration processes between researchers, innovators, policymakers, agricultural advisors, farmers and other actors, fosters the generation of relevant knowledge and strengthens the co-innovation process when addressing the needs of the end users of innovation. Place-based co-innovation settings are mechanisms to integrate and adapt technical, organisational and institutional novelties in a specific territory in ways that are driven by local actors and responsive to urgent problems, needs and opportunities for innovation in the farming sector in each context.

The activities should:

- map and connect LL and, where relevant, other relevant co-innovation facilities for knowledge, best practice exchange and capacity strengthening as regards agro-ecological practices;
- implement and/or strengthen place-based co-innovation facilities, in particular but not restricted to LL, in specific innovation areas and territories;
- track promising innovations related to agroecology and incubate them, while supporting further scaling of place-based innovation through the identification of lessons learnt and support to public policies;
- leverage the potential of initiatives that follow the LL approach by upgrading, expanding and finding synergies with other place-based co-innovation facilities, such as Farmer

³⁷⁵

[Communique 14th MACS Meeting 26-28 May in RSA-final.pdf](#)

Field Schools³⁷⁶ (and as relevant, Innovation Policy Labs) to maximize impacts at different levels of agroecological innovations.

- generate and assess evidence on the potential of LL and other co-innovation facilities in different regions (EU, Africa, Latin America, Asia) to foster the transition of the EU and global agri-food systems, in particular their contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation, including through the FAO Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation (TAPE).

Coordination will be ensured with relevant regional and global activities such as CGIAR, the Agroecology Coalition of the UN, relevant European Commission initiatives including the EU Partnership on Agroecology, the EU Mission Soil, relevant investments through the FAO-EC MAINSTREAM programme on innovation and any other relevant European Commission initiatives under Horizon Europe and the DESIRA+ Initiative, as well as with the European Network of Living Labs. The Action will provide lessons to inform the implementation of the Roadmap towards an EU-Africa Research and Innovation Partnership on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA).

Legal entities:

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153, Rome, Italy

Form of Funding: Indirectly managed actions

Type of Action: Indirectly managed action

Indicative timetable: As of first quarter 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 3.50 million from the 2027 budget

³⁷⁶ For an overview of Farmer Field Schools to scale co-innovation with agricultural producers, see <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/0aeb1ccf-4136-48e5-a9a5-7abe3a78b8a3/content> and the Global Farmer Field School Platform.

Budget^{377 378}

	Budget line(s)	2026 Budget (EUR million)	2027 Budget (EUR million)
Calls			
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01		210.00	
	<i>from 01.020260</i>	<i>210.00</i>	
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02		167.00	
	<i>from 01.020260</i>	<i>167.00</i>	
HORIZON-CL6-2026-03		96.90	16.00
	<i>from 01.020260</i>	<i>96.90</i>	<i>16.00</i>
HORIZON-CL6-2026-04		23.00	37.00
	<i>from 01.020260</i>	<i>23.00</i>	<i>37.00</i>
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-two-stage		105.00	
	<i>from 01.020260</i>	<i>105.00</i>	
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-two-stage		25.50	
	<i>from 01.020260</i>	<i>25.50</i>	

³⁷⁷ The budget figures given in this table are rounded to two decimal places.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027.

³⁷⁸ The contribution from Cluster 6 for year 2026 is EUR 148.38 million for the Missions work programme part and EUR 27.30 million for the New European Bauhaus Facility work programme part.

The contribution from Cluster 6 for year 2027 is EUR 147.27 million for the Missions work programme part and EUR 26.27 million for the New European Bauhaus Facility work programme part.

The contribution from Cluster 6 for year 2026 is EUR 13 million for the financing of EIC Challenges (Biotech for regenerating agricultural soils) through a transfer to the EIC budget line.

The contribution from Cluster 6 for year 2027 is EUR 15 million for the financing of EIC Challenges (Ocean observation technologies) through a transfer to the EIC budget line.

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HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-two-stage		12.00	
	<i>from 01.020260</i>	<i>12.00</i>	
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01			262.00
	<i>from 01.020260</i>		<i>262.00</i>
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02			183.50
	<i>from 01.020260</i>		<i>183.50</i>
HORIZON-CL6-2027-03			49.50
	<i>from 01.020260</i>		<i>49.50</i>
HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-two-stage			28.00
	<i>from 01.020260</i>		<i>28.00</i>
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-two-stage			35.00
	<i>from 01.020260</i>		<i>35.00</i>
Other actions			
Grant awarded without a call for proposals according to Financial Regulation Article 198(e)		2.15	1.30
	<i>from 01.020260</i>	<i>2.15</i>	<i>1.30</i>
Public procurement		18.10	1.60
	<i>from 01.020260</i>	<i>18.10</i>	<i>1.60</i>
Expert contract action		4.15	5.15
	<i>from 01.020260</i>	<i>4.15</i>	<i>5.15</i>
Subscription action		1.60	1.60
	<i>from 01.020260</i>	<i>1.60</i>	<i>1.60</i>

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Provision of technical/scientific services by the Joint Research Centre		8.00	6.00
	<i>from 01.020260</i>	<i>8.00</i>	<i>6.00</i>
Service Level Agreement			2.00
	<i>from 01.020260</i>		<i>2.00</i>
Indirectly managed action		4.00	3.50
	<i>from 01.020260</i>	<i>4.00</i>	<i>3.50</i>
Estimated total budget		677.40	632.15