

## **WORK PROGRAMME 2021-2022**

### **PRIORITIZING INVESTMENT AND REFORM**

**CALL:** [Support for policy makers – Programme level collaboration between national R&I programmes](#)

**SUBMISSION:** 20 April 2022

**BUDGET:** 2 to 3 MILLION Euro

**TYPE OF ACTION:** Coordination and Support

**Expected Outcome:** The actions funded under this topic will coordinate national and regional R&I programmes by pooling national resources and contributing to the alignment of national research and innovation policies. Projects are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes

identification of common research and innovation priorities agreed among the participating national and regional R&I programmes, taking into account international developments where relevant;

- Implementation of multiannual joint calls, resulting in the funding of transnational collaborative R&I projects;
- Implementation of other joint activities supporting the market, regulatory or societal uptake of results;
- Contribution to participating states meeting Global Challenges, including relevant contribution to the SDGs.

**Scope:** Since the introduction of the European Research Area (ERA) and starting with FP6, Programme level collaboration among Member States and their research and innovation programmes has become a cornerstone of the ERA, with annual investment from Member States of more than € 800 million per year. More than 250 networks among research funders have been created over time, serving different research needs but always coordinating public research investments across borders and allowing researchers to apply for calls for transnational research projects funded by the participating states.

The new policy approach to European Partnerships limits co-funding to Member State collaboration to Union and Horizon Europe priorities. Therefore, the ERA part of the Horizon Europe provides the possibility for Member States, Associated Countries and civil society organisations such as foundations, to maintain existing and establish new collaborations on priorities of their choice. T

The successful proposal should align national and regional research funding programmes (managed by national or regional programme owners / managers) on agreed common priorities and implement joint calls for transnational R&I projects as well as other joint calls. Proposers have to demonstrate clear commitments from participating programmes to pool resources and ensure complementarity between activities and policies with those of the Framework Programme and relevant European Partnership Initiatives. Applicants should pool the necessary resources from the participating national (or regional) research programmes as well as, where appropriate, leverage resources from pertinent foundations, charities and transnational initiatives, with a view to implementing calls for proposals resulting in grants to third parties without EU co-funding in this area. The proposal should also demonstrate potential impact at national, regional and transnational level research and innovation. The proposal should

demonstrate that activities exclude overlaps with on-going actions co-funded by the EU under Horizon 2020 or Horizon Europe. Participation of legal entities from third countries, and/or regions including those not automatically eligible for funding is encouraged.

## **TRANSLATING R&I RESULTS INTO THE ECONOMY**

### **PRIORITIZING INVESTMENT AND REFORM**

**CALL: Testing of the ERA Hub concept – pilot phase**

**SUBMISSION: 20 April 2022**

**BUDGET: 2 to 3 MILLION Euro**

**TYPE OF ACTION: Coordination and Support**

**Expected Outcome:** Projects are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

- Test the new ERA Hubs<sup>77</sup> concept across different geographies and structures in Europe, based on common compliance criteria; the process should act as an incentive for advanced ecosystems to seek recognition, and for less advanced ecosystems to reach the criteria facilitating support from European, national and regional level.
- Better coordinate relationships between the European Research Area and relevant national or regional stakeholders in order to ensure the smart directionality introduced in the new ERA.
- Develop a common platform for collaboration and best practice sharing across borders, sectors and disciplines on knowledge production, circulation and use, and facilitate cross-fertilisation and smart directionality among ecosystem actors to achieve transformative changes and advance Europe together.
- Increase both the interoperability of the European ecosystems and the intra-operability within each territorial ecosystem, aiming to improve coordination, and foster excellence.
- Facilitate a better circulation and absorption of talents in countries/regions, as well as improve knowledge circulation and uptake of research results;
- Provide a toolbox of best practices for researchers, innovators, industry and institutions across Europe to cooperate.

**Scope:** A vibrant ecosystem is an essential condition for growth. In order to take full advantage of possible synergies and complementarities between the EU and national and regional ecosystems for knowledge production, circulation and use, there is a need to make compatible and interoperable the policy frameworks that govern existing structures for knowledge transfer and sharing, and address common criteria for assessing work, processes and outputs. Reinforcing the networking interconnecting geographically or thematically, the ecosystem actors on the basis of smart specialisation and other strategic considerations, such as value chains, will consequently stimulate excellence and complete the coverage across Europe.

This action should build on the preparatory work of the previous Work Programme on Knowledge Ecosystems, which provides among others a mapping of existing ecosystem actors engaged in knowledge production, circulation and use across Europe, as well as designing the ERA Hubs concept as a toolbox of pre-defined common standards of work, processes and outputs, and key performance indicators on operational, programme and strategic impacts.

The concept should be tested on collaborations, platforms, or other structures bringing together ecosystem actors, and increase networking between those structures in a coordinated approach, around a common agenda and compliance criteria. The rollout of the concept across Europe is expected to support and coordinate the efforts at local and regional level for the implementation of a pan-European ERA Hubs initiative. The scope of this action is to pilot the ERA Hub concept with a limited number of ecosystems through implementation in countries and regions where knowledge ecosystem structures aligned to the ERA Hubs concept already exist, combined with countries or regions where an integrated place-based approach is missing.

The main goal of the action is to fine-tune through experimentation the designed concept of ERA Hubs and its technical specifications and compliance criteria, share practices, as well as provide a toolkit of best practices and activities that ensure a strong basis for a potential scale-up in different geographies across the EU territory in the next phase. Projects will be assigned to entities or networks of structures involved in knowledge production, circulation and use activities at European, national, regional or city level, which should take the coordination role in orchestrating the actors of an ecosystem working together to implement the ERA Hubs concept, in pursuit of intra-operability with the territorial ecosystem and a common agenda supporting the economic transitions and smart specialisation strategies, as well as job creation and skills development to better absorb talent in a country or region. These structures could be entities that have the competences and/or the willingness to become pioneers, benchmarks and ambassadors of the new concept and should include higher education institutions or their tech transfer offices, research institutes, business schools, private companies, not for profit organisations, or entities already part of pan-European networks or coming from different funding communities, in order to better connect those communities.

Support from institutional, regional, or national sources is highly encouraged (proven through e.g. letters of commitment), in order to make considerable progress in the deployment of the ERA Hubs initiative in the respective country or region. The action should include the development of an independent monitoring mechanism to assess the progress of the ecosystem actors engaged in a common agenda and implementation of the ERA Hubs concept in a dedicated country or region. On the basis of the assessment, projects should also provide recommendations on how to deploy the ERA Hubs in different geographies and regions.