

Horizon Europe Made Easy:

Your Guide to Accessing Funding and Opportunities



Welcome to the Horizon Europe Information Package!

This package is designed to provide you with basic information regarding Canada's participation in **Horizon Europe** as an associated country. Horizon Europe is the European Union's flagship funding program for research and innovation, which runs from **2021 to 2027** with a budget of approximately €93.5 billion (over \$140 billion CAN). Canada became associated to Pillar II of Horizon Europe in 2024 and as a result is eligible to participate in Horizon Europe projects under almost equal terms to participants from EU Member States. This document will guide you through some of the basic key facts, opportunities, and participation rules.

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Overview of Horizon Europe

What is Horizon Europe?

Horizon Europe is the EU's current framework program for research and innovation with EUR 93.5 billion budget. It is structured according to three Pillars focused on research excellence; global challenges and industrial competitiveness; and on innovation. It offers funding across all scientific disciplines.

It is the largest multilateral research and innovation funding program in the world.

As a country associated to **Pillar II**, Canada contributes to the Horizon Europe budget

(nearly EUR 100 million over the next four years) and as a result Canadian researchers can participate in Pillar II collaborative research projects on almost equal terms to EU member State entities.

Program Pillars:

- **Pillar I:** Excellent Science
- **Pillar II:** Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness
- **Pillar III:** Innovative Europe

Canada's Opportunities in Horizon Europe at a Glance

Pillar I: Excellent Science

This Pillar funds cutting-edge scientific projects and promotes researcher mobility. It supports the pursuit of frontier knowledge and fosters international collaboration to advance science and innovation globally.

Canada's Participation Status:

Although Canada is not associated with Pillar I, individual Canadian researchers can continue to seek direct funding under this Pillar. In fact, for many years now, Canadian researchers have successfully participated in the various programs of Pillar I and are encouraged to continue doing so. There are also opportunities for

research-performing organisations to participate in collaborative research projects (bringing their own funding to the table).

Who Can Participate:

European Research Council (ERC)

[The European Research Council](#) (ERC) offers grants to researchers in all research domains for frontier research. Grants are available for researchers starting or consolidating their independent careers and for advanced researchers. Researchers based in Canada are welcome to apply to Starting, Consolidator and Advanced grants with a Host Institution



based in the EU or countries associated also to Pillar I.

Synergy grants are also available, where a group of 2-4 Principal Investigators (PIs) may include one Canadian PI, to tackle together an ambitious research problem, and all PIs are funded by the ERC.

The European Commission has signed an implementing agreement with the Canadian Tri-Agency Institutional Programs Secretariat to enable Canadian researchers holding specific Canadian grants (e.g. Canada Research Chairholders and some postdoctoral fellowships) to visit and pursue research collaboration with research teams led by ERC grant holders.

Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions

Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions program offers fellowships for post-doctoral researchers from Canada (and other countries) to spend up to 2 years in a European group – or for European researchers to spend up to 2 years in a Canadian lab. Opportunities for Canadian institutions to participate in Doctoral Networks and Staff Exchange consortia are also offered (Canadian institutions are self-funded in Doctoral Networks and Staff Exchange). Application guidelines are available [here](#).

Where can I find more information?

Visit the [European Research Council](#) website and/or the [Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions](#) website.

EURAXESS North America: a network of contact points for Pillar I

For contact in Canada:
horizoneurope@ised-isde.gc.ca

Pillar II: Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness

Partnerships are initiatives in which the European Union and private and/or public partners commit themselves to jointly support the development and implementation of a research and innovation program. They make a significant contribution to achieving political priorities, such as the Green Deal, the digital strategy or pandemic preparedness.

This Pillar funds research and innovation that addresses pressing global challenges while enhancing industrial competitiveness. It is focused on collaborative research and innovation, and funds projects involving **at least** three entities from at least one EU member state and two partners from another EU member state or associated countries develop innovative solutions in fields such as health, climate, energy, and digital transformation.

There are three types of Horizon Europe initiatives:

- Clusters (see below)
- **Horizon Europe Missions:** Within the Clusters of Pillar II, Horizon Europe incorporates Missions to increase the effectiveness of funding by pursuing clearly defined targets with a concrete impact on citizen's daily lives. Citizens' engagement is a key element for the Horizon Europe Missions. The aim is to achieve bold, inspirational and measurable goals within a set timeframe in areas such as adaptation to climate change, cancer research,



ocean restoration, climate neutral and smart cities and soil protection.

- **Horizon Europe European Partnerships:** Partnerships are initiatives in which the European Union and private and/or public partners commit themselves to jointly support the development and implementation of a research and innovation program. They make a significant contribution to achieving political priorities, such as the Green Deal, the digital strategy or pandemic preparedness.

Canada's Participation Status:

Canada is fully associated to this Pillar and pays into the budget; therefore, Canadian researchers can participate on equal terms as EU Member States. Canadian organizations with prior Horizon Europe experience can collaborate as funded partners (beneficiaries) in research consortia and can also lead (coordinate) consortia.

Who Can Participate:

Canadian researchers and innovators at companies, and public and private institutions, non-profits, and public institutions.

Where can I find more information?

Check out the thematic work programs on the [Horizon Europe official site](#) or contact the Canadian Horizon Europe National Contact Points (NCPs) using the [Horizon Europe NCP Portal](#). The [Horizon Europe Academy](#) provides useful resources about the various aspects of the program's administration. For information on successful projects and contacts to past winners, see [CORDIS](#).

Information for application can be further obtained through the [EU Funding and Tenders Portal](#) and through the [Horizon Europe Applicant Resources page](#) of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada.

Pillar III: Innovative Europe

This Pillar focuses mainly on developing the **European** innovation ecosystem.

Canada's Participation Status:

Canada is not associated to this Pillar, however there are some opportunities for Canadian innovators and start-ups to collaborate on projects enhancing innovation ecosystems, including participation in some initiatives under the European Innovation Council (EIC) (see below).

Who Can Participate:

Start-ups, SMEs, incubators, and accelerators from Canada interested in innovation funding, commercialisation, and scaling solutions in partnership with EU collaborators. Participation is allowed for entities located in the countries **fully associated to Pillar III**. In practical terms, since Canada is **NOT** a part of Pillar III, this means participation through a subsidiary, relocation or participation through joint ventures with the European participants countries.

Where can I find more information?

Detailed guidelines and opportunities can be accessed through the [EIC Hub](#) or Canada's [Trade Commissioner Service](#), which supports innovation collaborations with Europe.

How to Participate in Pillar II

Taking part in Horizon Europe Pillar II call is a step-by-step process. It involves understanding the top-down nature of the program and then finding the right call and the right partners, submitting an excellent proposal that corresponds to the scope and requirements of the call, providing the required documentation, and, if successful, meeting reporting requirements. Here's a simple breakdown:

The Work Programme

The Pillar II calls for proposals are published in a work programme. This is the guidebook for Horizon Europe calls. It is published every one or two years with new calls, under thematic headings called Clusters, listing the topics where applications are invited. It outlines the research areas, funding opportunities, and rules for applying. **Only proposals corresponding to the scope and eligibility requirements of the calls should be submitted.**

How it's organized:

The Pillar II Work Programme is divided into 6 broad 'Clusters'. The table below provides an overview of these clusters.

Table 1: Overview of Clusters

1	Health
2	Culture, Creativity & Inclusive Societies
3	Civil Security for Society
4	Digital, Industry & Space
5	Climate, Energy & Mobility
6	Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture & Environment

What to look for:

The Clusters are further divided into more specific '**Destinations**'. Each Destination:

- Indicates all the **topics** under the Destination (usually one call per Destination per year)
- Indicates the Budget per topic, and the **deadlines** for submission of proposals

Each **topic** then describes:

- Title of the topic
- Eligibility Conditions (mostly all the same - but very important to check in case of special conditions)



- Expected impact of the projects
- Scope of the topic

Where to find it:

Visit the [Horizon Europe Funding & Tenders Portal](#) to access the work programme and register your organisation.

Application Templates

What's included:

- **Part A:** Basic project information, like the budget, partner details, and contact info.
- **Part B:** The main proposal with sections on project goals, expected impacts, and how you'll carry it out.

Tips for using templates:

- Stick to the guidelines provided.
- Double-check you've filled in all the required sections.
- Use the checklists at the end of templates to ensure everything is covered.

Where to get them:

Proposals must follow specific formats provided [here](#).

Partners and Building a Consortium

Working with the right team is essential. Most Horizon Europe projects require multiple partners from different countries.

How to find partners:

- **Existing Contacts:** Reach out to universities, businesses, or

organizations in Europe that you've worked with before and with whom you can build an excellent proposal using your complementary skills and expertise.

- **Online Tools:** Use the Partner Search feature on the Horizon Europe portal or platforms like [CORDIS](#).
- **Networking Events:** Join matchmaking events and webinars organized by various research networks or NCP networks. You can monitor the calendar at the [Horizon Europe Portal](#).

Who's in the consortium:

- A consortium must include partners from at least three different [EU Member States](#) or [associated countries](#) (minimum one EU Member State).

Tips:

- Start building your team early to give everyone time to contribute to the application.
- Do not attempt to lead a consortium if you do not have previous, documented experience in Horizon Europe projects.

There's lots of help available if you need guidance.

National Contact Points (NCPs):

[These are experts in Canada](#) who can explain how the program works, **help** you understand calls, and find partner.

Horizon Europe Portal:

The portal has official templates, guides, FAQs, and step-by-step instructions.



Workshops:

Look for training sessions or webinars on how to write strong proposals. These are often hosted by the EU or research organizations. Follow the [Horizon Europe Academy](#) webinars; Join the [Euraxess North America Network](#) to get regular updates on upcoming calls etc.

Info Days:

Organized per Cluster and taking place online shortly after the publication of the Work Programmes, they provide detailed information on all published topics.

The Evaluation Process

All eligible proposals submitted are evaluated and ranked by a panel of independent experts according to a set of award criteria.

The award criteria are Excellence, Impact and Quality of Implementation (described in detail in the [General Annexes](#) to the Work Programme).

Canadian researchers are encouraged to register as Horizon Europe evaluating experts. You can register [here](#).

Reporting Requirements

If the proposal is selected for funding, the consortium must regularly report on its progress towards the milestones and production of deliverables to the EU. This exercise is coordinated across all project participants by the project coordinator.

Types of reports:

- **Periodic Reports:** Submitted throughout the project, these reports cover achievements, challenges, and spending.
- **Final Report:** At the end of the project, summarize all results and provide a financial overview.

How to report:

Use the online system on the Funding & Tenders Portal. Templates for technical and financial reporting are provided.

How to prepare (if you are the coordinator):

- Set up a clear process for tracking progress and [expenses from the start](#).
- [Make sure all partners keep good records \(e.g., receipts, payroll\)](#).
- [Assign someone to oversee reporting](#) to avoid missing deadlines.

Tips for Success

1. **Read the Work Programme Carefully:** Choose the call topic to which your idea for a project proposal corresponds. Prepare your proposal to correspond to the requirements of the call topic.
2. **Build (or participate in) a Strong Team:** Partners should bring unique and complementary skills and experience to the project.
3. **Stay Organized:** Use shared tools or project management software to keep everyone on track.



4. **Use Available Support:** Don't hesitate to contact Canadian NCPs or attend info sessions -they're there to help.
5. **If the proposal is selected for funding: Plan for Reporting Early:** Set up regular check-ins with your team to keep records updated and prepare for reporting deadlines.

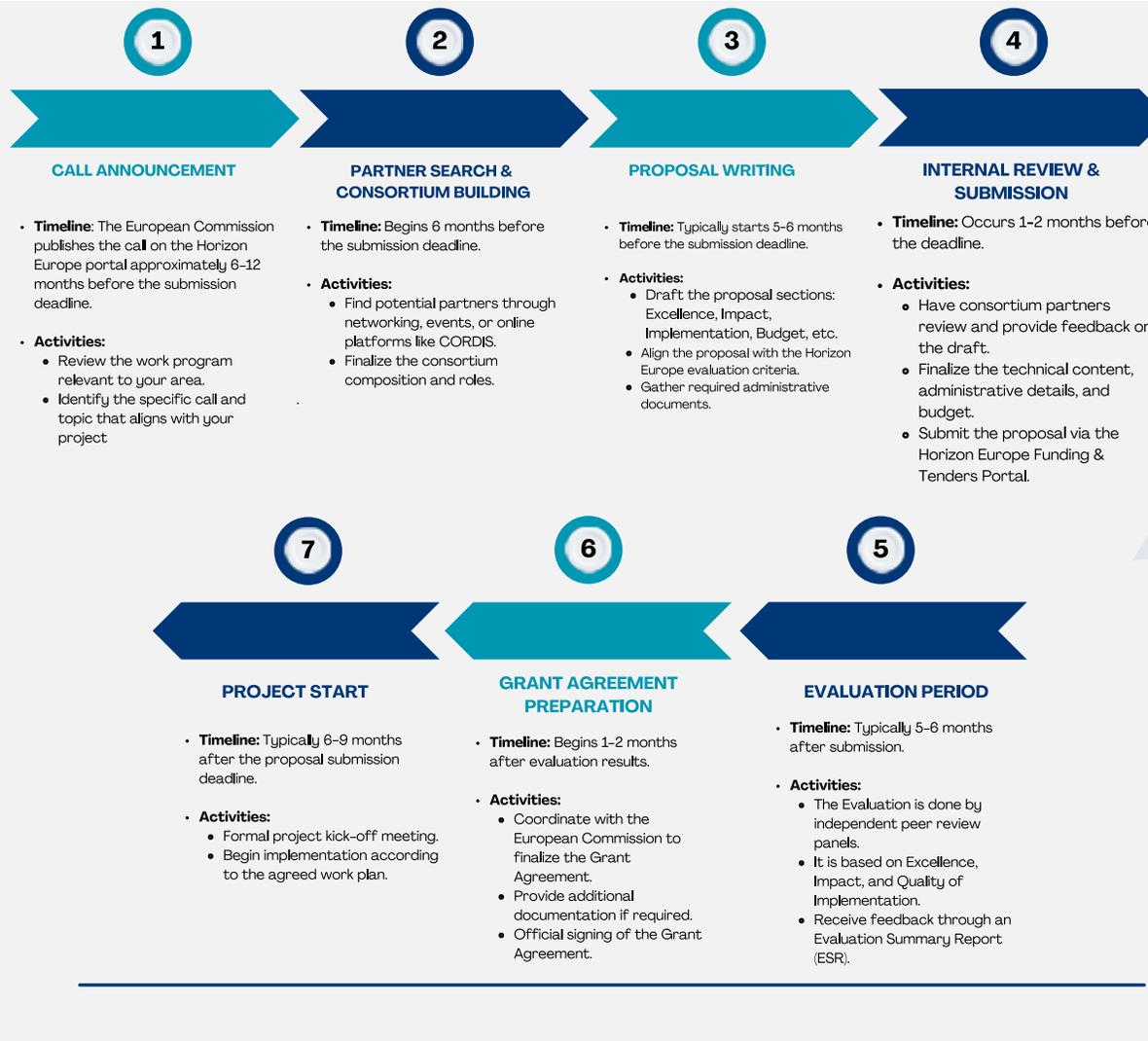
Contact Information

For additional questions or support related to Horizon Europe participation, feel free to reach out to the following resources:

[ISED Horizon Europe website](#)

[Canadian National Contact Points](#)

Horizon Europe Application Timeline





Key Horizon Europe Terms

Stage 1: Application and Proposal Preparation

These terms relate to the initial stages of identifying opportunities, preparing proposals, and forming partnerships.

Associated Country

Non-EU countries that have signed agreements associating them to the programme. They pay into the budget and can participate in Horizon Europe on almost equal terms as EU members. You can check the list in each Work Programme. The latest is available [here](#).

Example: Canada is an associated country, so its researchers can lead or participate in Horizon Europe projects and be funded by the programme.

Calls for Proposals

Detailed public invitations for researchers, organizations, or companies to submit project ideas for Horizon Europe funding usually in response to a challenge or problem set by the European Commission. Calls for proposals are available [here](#).

Example: A call might seek projects related to renewable energy, prompting a Canadian solar company to submit an application.

Consortium

A group of organizations from different countries that join forces to submit an application and ultimately carry out a Horizon Europe project.

Example: A consortium might include a Canadian university, a French tech company, and an Italian NGO working on climate resilience. (Minimum number of 3 entities from 3 different Member States/ Associated Countries, but usually consortia are bigger).

Consortium Agreement

A contract signed between members of a consortium that defines their roles, responsibilities, and how they'll work together. This is usually signed before the Grant Agreement (see below) with the Commission is signed.

Example: The agreement specifies that the Canadian partner will focus on data analysis, while the EU partners handle fieldwork.

Consortium Coordinator

The organization responsible for coordinating the consortium, managing the project, and serving as the main contact for the European Commission.

Example: A Swedish university leads a project on smart cities, coordinating efforts among the Canadian and EU partners.



EU Member State

One of the 27 countries that is a member of the European Union and contributes to its policies, programs, and initiatives.

Example: France and Germany are EU Member States eligible for all Horizon Europe funding. Norway and the UK are not EU Member States but are associated countries.

National Contact Points (NCPs)

Local experts who provide guidance and advice to organizations or researchers in their country interested in Horizon Europe. The list of **Canadian NCPs** is available [here](#).

Example: A Canadian researcher contacts an NCP in Ottawa to understand how they can participate in a Horizon Europe project.

Third Country

Any country not part of the EU or associated with Horizon Europe, can still participate in specific projects under certain conditions.

Example: Australia is a third country that can participate in projects if invited by an EU-based consortium. Usually, industrialised third countries bring their own funding to the project – but in the case of low and middle income countries, these partners can be funded by the Horizon Europe programme.

Work Program

A document outlining specific funding opportunities in a given time period that is

published on the funding and tenders portal, detailing research topics, and rules for participation in the different thematic areas (i.e. clusters) of Horizon Europe. The current Work Programme is available [here](#).

Example: The Work Program for cluster 5 might include calls for green technology projects, outlining deadlines and expected outcomes.

Stage 2: Proposal Evaluation

These terms focus on assessing the quality and eligibility of project proposals.

Evaluation Criteria

The standards used to assess project proposals, focusing on excellence, impact, and how well the project is planned. Evaluation experts are asked to follow a very specific evaluation grid and cannot evaluate based on their personal views or opinions. Every criterion is cross-checked to ensure objectivity. A standard briefing for evaluators is available [here](#).

Evaluation Summary Report (ESR)

A feedback document from the evaluators that explains the strengths, weaknesses, and scores of a project proposal.

Example: A Canadian company receives an ESR highlighting the strong innovation but noting the need for a clearer commercialization strategy.



Excellence

A criterion that evaluates scientific quality, originality, and clarity of the proposed project.

Example: A project to study polar ecosystems is evaluated for its groundbreaking methodology and potential to expand knowledge.

Impact

A criterion that measures how the project's results will benefit society, the economy, or specific industries.

Example: A project on clean energy is rated for its potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Implementation

A criterion assessing whether the project plan is realistic, well-organized, and feasible with the proposed resources.

Example: A detailed timeline, with milestones and thought-out budget are essential to scoring high on implementation.

Thresholds

The minimum scores a proposal must achieve in each evaluation criterion to be considered for funding. The necessary precondition to be considered for EU funding is reaching a threshold of at least three points for each of the criteria and ten points in total. The proposals ranked highest will be funded, until the budget is exhausted.

Example: If a project scores below the 3 points threshold for "Impact," it won't be eligible for Horizon Europe funding.

Stage 3: Project Implementation

These terms involve funding agreements and the execution of approved projects.

Clusters

Broad research areas under Pillar II that address key societal issues like health, climate change, energy, and digitalization.

Example: A Canadian AI company works on a project under the "Digital, Industry, and Space" cluster to improve supply chain efficiency.

CSA (Coordination and Support Action)

A funding type for projects that focus on networking, sharing knowledge, and building collaborations rather than doing research.

Example: A Canadian trade group joins a CSA project to exchange best practices in renewable energy policy.

Gender

The Horizon Europe Work Programme primarily refers to gender in the context of gender equality between women and men. Horizon Europe's gender-related requirements focus on addressing systemic gender imbalances. This includes the requirement for Gender Equality Plans



(GEPs) for certain beneficiaries, the consideration of gender dimensions in research and innovation (R&I), and efforts to address gender imbalances in research teams and decision-making bodies.

Grant Agreement

A non-negotiable formal contract between the project partners and the EU, detailing the funding terms and conditions. The model **is published here**.

Example: The agreement specifies how much funding each partner will receive and what milestones must be achieved.

IA (Innovation Action)

A funding type for projects that produces plans or designs for new, altered or improved products, processes or services at the Technology Readiness Level 6-8. May include prototyping, testing, piloting etc. All IA partners usually receive 70% of their funding from Horizon Europe. IAs are close-to-market projects that aim for commercialization soon after the project.

Example: A Canadian research team completes prototyping, demonstration and validation phases to introduce a new mining robot with an EU partner under an IA.

Missions

Specific, cross-cutting ambitious policy goals set by Horizon Europe to tackle major societal challenges, like fighting cancer or adapting to climate change.

Example: A Canadian research institute collaborates on a mission to make cities climate-neutral by 2030.

RIA (Research and Innovation Action)

A funding type for projects that create new knowledge or test innovative ideas and technologies, at the Technology Readiness Level 2-6. All RIA partners usually receive 100% of their funding from Horizon Europe.

Example: A Canadian research team develops and tests a new AI algorithm in collaboration with an EU partner under an RIA.

TRL (Technology Readiness Level)

A scale that measures how developed a technology is, from basic research (low TRL) to being ready for market use (high TRL).

Example: A TRL of 1 means an idea is just a concept, while TRL 9 means it's ready for commercial deployment.



Stage 4: Reporting and Results

These terms are relevant to the final stages of project evaluation, exploitation, and feedback.

Exploitation

The process of turning project results into real-world benefits, such as new products, services, or policies.

Example: A Horizon Europe project results in a Canadian company developing a marketable app for precision agriculture.

Final Review Report (FRR)

Final feedback on project outcomes and areas for improvement.

Example: A consortium receives an FRR on the proposal highlighting strengths in innovation but identifying weaknesses in commercialization strategies.

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