



Partner Search

Practical Guide

Horizon Europe - Cluster 1 Health

From topic selection to first contact

Post-event resource

This guide complements the EOI / Partner Search Profile Template and helps you prepare for partner search in a structured way.

How to use this guide

A practical companion to the partner-search process



What this guide helps you do

- read a topic with partner search in mind
- define what you can bring
- prepare a concise partner profile / EOI
- identify relevant partners and coordinators
- move from first contact to conversation

Main idea

Partner search is stronger when it starts from a clear topic, a credible contribution and a profile that is easy for others to understand.

Use it with the EOI template

The guide explains the thinking process. The EOI / Partner Search Profile Template is the editable document you can complete, adapt and send to potential partners, coordinators or the NCP network.

What to prepare

- one or two topics or collaboration areas
- a short description of your expertise
- resources you can mobilise
- evidence that supports your credibility
- a clear view of what you still need

What to avoid

- generic institutional presentations
- mass emails with no clear reason for contact
- describing only what you are interested in
- asking others to guess your possible role
- overstating what you can realistically deliver

Be specific. Be concise. Make your relevance easy to see.

1. Before you start searching

Start from fit, not from a mailing list

Partner search starts with a clear understanding of where you fit and what you can bring to a specific topic.

Before approaching potential partners or coordinators, assess your organisation against the requirements of the topic.

1

Start from the topic

Select one or two topics that genuinely match your organisation's expertise and capacity. Read the expected outcomes and scope carefully and identify the requirements most relevant to your profile.

2

Assess what you can bring

Use a topic-specific self-assessment: Topic → Expertise → Resources → Experience / Evidence → Contribution. Identify competences, assets, previous work and the activity your organisation could actually perform in the project.

Assets / resources

What you have: equipment, cohorts, data, methods, technologies, infrastructure or other existing resources.

Contribution

What you can do with those resources in the project, for example: recruit, validate, test, implement, optimise, analyse or coordinate a specific activity.

3

Identify the gaps

You do not need to cover every topic requirement yourself. Identify what you can deliver directly, where your contribution is partial, and what complementary expertise or access is still needed.

Gaps do not disqualify your organisation; they help identify the partners the consortium still needs.

2. Prepare your Partner Profile / EOI

Turn self-assessment into a profile that others can understand quickly

Purpose

Decide whether you want to find a consortium, respond to a partner search, find partners for a consortium you are building, or increase visibility.

Intended role

Clarify whether you are positioning your organisation as coordinator, partner, open to either role or to be discussed.

General profile = who you are

- organisation type
- short profile
- main expertise / capabilities
- relevant experience / evidence
- keywords

Topic-specific contribution = why you are relevant

- full topic code and title
- relevant expertise
- assets / resources
- proposed contribution
- evidence and added value

Be clear about what you are still looking for

Where relevant, specify the expertise or capability sought, the expected contribution from prospective partners, and the current consortium status. This helps others assess quickly whether there is a meaningful fit.

A good EOI should be

Specific - linked to a topic or collaboration area

Concise - easy to scan

Evidence-based - supported by results, experience or resources

Contribution-oriented - focused on what you can actually do

Easy to adapt - reusable across partner-search channels

A strong EOI makes both what you offer and what you still need easy to understand.

3. Where to look for partners

Use several channels in parallel

There is no single route to finding the right partners.

Adapt the same topic-specific partner profile / EOI across different channels.

Official platforms

- Funding & Tenders Portal: topic pages, organisation profiles, visible actors
- BrainMap: visibility in the Romanian research and innovation community
- EEN: relevant for SMEs and organisations with an innovation or market-oriented profile

NCP network

- circulate a clear, topic-specific EOI through the NCP network where appropriate
- respond directly to relevant incoming EOIs shared through NCP channels
- check partner-search announcements on the NCP UEFISCDI website

Tip

Do not rely only on organisations that explicitly advertise that they are looking for partners. Relevant actors may already be visible through projects, publications, networks and previous participation.

NCP role

The NCP can facilitate visibility and circulation; collaboration starts through direct contact between organisations.

Use official tools, but combine them with targeted relationship-building.

3. Where to look for partners

Networking and direct outreach

Networking opportunities

- brokerage and matchmaking events
- conferences and scientific meetings
- thematic workshops and Info Days
- scientific and innovation communities
- networks built around previous projects

Prepare before a meeting

- target topic or collaboration area
- short description of your contribution
- partner profile / EOI
- expertise you are looking for
- two or three clear questions

Direct outreach

- previous collaborators
- COST Actions
- Erasmus and European Universities alliances
- previous Horizon Europe / Horizon 2020 projects
- conference contacts and co-authors
- alumni and institutional networks

How to identify relevant actors

- look at projects funded in the same area
- identify research groups publishing on the topic
- map clinical or technological infrastructures
- look for organisations already active in European collaborations

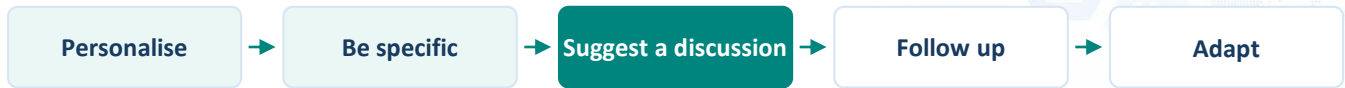
Key principle

The objective is not to contact as many organisations as possible. It is to approach a limited number of relevant organisations with a clear reason for making contact.

Arriving prepared turns networking into partner search.

4. Approaching partners and coordinators

Open a relevant conversation



First approach

- personalise the message
- mention the full topic code and title where relevant
- explain why you are contacting them
- state your contribution early
- explain what you are looking for
- suggest a clear next step

Message structure

1. Topic / reason for contact
2. Why this organisation?
3. Your contribution
4. Evidence
5. What you are looking for
6. Next step

Example first-contact message

Subject: Horizon Europe Cluster 1 Health - potential collaboration on [topic code]

Dear [Name],

I am contacting you regarding [full topic code and title]. Our organisation has expertise in [relevant expertise] and could contribute through [specific proposed contribution]. This is supported by [brief evidence / resource].

Given your organisation's work in [area / project], we believe there may be good complementarity between our profiles. We are currently [looking to join a consortium / looking for complementary partners / responding to your partner search].

If relevant, we would be happy to arrange a short online meeting to discuss potential fit. Our partner profile / EOI is attached for further information.

Best regards,
[Name]

The objective is not to send information. The objective is to open a relevant conversation.

5. After the first contact

Clarify topic fit, role and next steps

Respond quickly

- acknowledge the reply promptly
- keep the momentum
- confirm when you will follow up with more details

Clarify the consortium stage

- is a coordinator identified?
- which partners are involved?
- which work packages are still missing?
- what role could you play?
- what is the timeline?

Confirm your contribution

- activities you could take responsibility for
- resources or evidence expected
- fit with an existing task or work package
- additional expertise required

Share relevant material

- updated EOI / partner profile
- selected project references or publications
- short infrastructure or resource description
- only what helps the discussion move forward

Decide whether the opportunity is a good fit

Not every positive response should lead to participation. Check whether the role is clear, the timeline is realistic, the consortium is credible and your organisation can deliver the proposed contribution.

If there is no reply

A single polite follow-up after a reasonable period is appropriate. Keep it short, refer to the previous message and ask whether the opportunity is still relevant. If there is still no response, move on.

Partner search is also a selection process.

6. Checklist before contacting a partner

A one-page final check before pressing Send

Topic & fit

- ☐ I selected a specific topic or clearly defined collaboration area.
- ☐ I understand the expected outcomes and scope relevant to my contribution.
- ☐ I can explain why my organisation fits this topic.
- ☐ I know which part of the topic I can realistically contribute to.

Contribution

- ☐ I can describe my organisation's contribution in 2-3 clear sentences.
- ☐ I have identified the expertise and resources that support it.
- ☐ I have relevant evidence, e.g.: projects, publications, technologies, cohorts, datasets or infrastructure.
- ☐ I can explain the added value for the consortium.

Gaps & partner needs

- ☐ I know what complementary expertise or capability is still missing.
- ☐ I can explain what I am looking for: consortium, partner, complementary expertise or discussion.
- ☐ I have a realistic idea of the role my organisation could play.

EOI / partner profile

- ☐ My partner profile / EOI is up to date.
- ☐ It is tailored to the topic or opportunity.
- ☐ It separates resources from proposed contribution.
- ☐ It includes the full topic code and title, where relevant.
- ☐ The contact details are correct and the contact person can respond quickly.

Before sending the message

- ☐ I identified the right organisation and, where possible, the right person to contact.
- ☐ I know why I am contacting this particular organisation.
- ☐ My message is short, personalised and contribution-oriented.
- ☐ I mention the topic or opportunity clearly.
- ☐ I suggest a clear next step, such as a short virtual meeting.

Final check

Can the recipient understand, in less than one minute: who we are, why we are contacting them, what we can contribute, what we are looking for and what we would like to happen next?

Be specific. Be concise. Make your relevance easy to see.

Useful resources

Reference points for continuing partner search

Core resources

Funding & Tenders Portal
<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>

NCP UEFISCDI Partner Search
<https://www.ncp.uefiscdi.ro/partener-search>

Visibility and networks

BrainMap
<https://www.brainmap.ro/>

Enterprise Europe Network
<https://een.ec.europa.eu/>

European Universities alliances
<https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/european-universities-initiative>

COST Actions
<https://www.cost.eu/>

Transparency note

LLM-assisted tools were used to support drafting, language refinement and source organisation. All information was reviewed, selected and interpreted by the author, who remains responsible for the final content.