Info-day

HORIZON EUROPE

WIDENING 2026-2027: Advancing Research Excellence, Talent and Institutional Capacity

29th of January 2026, 09.00-15:30 (Bucharest time)
Hybrid event

Dr. Daniela Dragomir, NCP Horizon Europe Widening&ERA

AGENDA

WIDENING 2026-2027: Advancing Research Excellence, Talent and Institutional Capacity, 29 January 2026

9.30-9.40   Opening remarks

9.40-10.50 Session 1: WIDENING 2026-2027

Overview of WIDENING Calls 2026-2027: New and Established Opportunities

Dr. Daniela Dragomir, NCP Horizon Europe Widening&ERA, Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI)

WIDERA Calls 2026-2027: Legal and Financial Considerations

Cristina Anania, RO NCP Coordinator, Legal and Financial National Contact Point for Horizon Europe, National Authority for Research (ANC), Romanian Office for Science and Technology to European Union – ROST

10.50-11.00 Coffee break

11.00 -13.00 Session 2: Stories of Impact: Lessons from Successful Widening Projects

SCEWERO Project: A challenging journey from proposal idea to implementation and impact

Prof.dr.habil Adina-Eliza Croitoru, Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca

VELES in Practice: Building and Operating a Regional Excellence Hub

Dr. Ioana Spanache, Policy and Evaluation Specialist, Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI)

ERA Chair Program - learning from others

Prof.dr.Ciprian Iliescu, National University of Science and Technology "POLITEHNICA" Bucharest

eBIO-hub Project: From Excellent Science in Bioingineering to business

Prof.dr.Cornel Cobianu, National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA" Bucharest

From Practice to Institutional Impact: Research Careers and Management in WIDERA Projects

Turning WIDERA Projects into Institutional Change: Lessons from Research Management Practice

Prof.dr.habil. Ilinca Năstase, Vice-rector with scientific research and international affairs, Technical University of Civil Engineering of Bucharest

Strategy for research careers and management, A personal perspective

Prof.dr.habil. Alina-Adriana Minea, "Gheorghe Asachi" Technical University of Iași

Overview of WIDENING Calls 2026-2027: New and Established Opportunities

Dr. Daniela Dragomir, NCP Horizon Europe Widening&ERA

Horizon Europe WIDERA 2026-2027

Part 1. Widening participation and spreading excellence

Destination: Improved access to excellence

To tackle the R&I gap to move towards a truly integrated and cohesive R&I ecosystem in the European Union

contributes to: Priority III of the Pact for R&I: *Enhancing access to R&I excellence across the Union and enhancing interconnections between innovation ecosystems across the Union*

Bottom-up call topics
but, applicants encouraged to consider key aspects:
Europe's choice -Political guidelines of the European Commission in July 2024 EU Compass to regain competitiveness

to build up and strengthen R&I capacities in Widening countries

Coordinating institutions:
- Legal entities established in Widening countries

9 calls with 10 topics

Part 2. Strengthening the ERA by reforming and enhancing the European R&I system

Destination: Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system

To support the implementation of the second **ERA Policy Agenda**, which outlines ERA Structural Policies and ERA Actions for the period 2025-2027

To build knowledge and capacities at the level of institutions and ecosystems to adopt reforms and practices

Strengthen the ERA by promoting freedom of movement of researchers, scientific knowledge, and technology, societal responsibility, gender equality and inclusiveness, new evidence for better-informed policymaking

ERA Platform   Explore how Horizon Europe supports ERA priorities

Involvement of SSH experts, institutions, and the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise, to enhance the societal impact of project activities - encouraged

2 calls with 13 topics in total

Target groups: e.g., universities, research performing and funding organisations, research evaluation agencies, networks of researchers, publishers, industry and start-ups, policymakers, local authorities, and public bodies, science parks, technology parks, living labs, hubs, and practitioners in citizen engagement for knowledge valorisation, other – See Call text!!

WIDENING 2026-2027: Advancing Research Excellence, Talent and Institutional Capacity, 29 January 2026

WIDENING & ERA Calls 2026-2027

Part 1. Widening participation and spreading excellence	Part 2. Strengthening the ERA by reforming and enhancing the European R&I system
Destination: Improved access to excellence	**Destination: Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system**
Teaming Synergies (2026) Twinning (2026) Excellence Hubs (2026) Hop-on Facility (2026) Research Management Facility (2026) EIC pre-accelerator-Widening (2027) ERA Chairs and Research Managers (2027) ERA Fellowships (2026, 2027)	**Pillar I Institutional changes for ERA (2026, 2027)** *Capacity building and support to foster adoption of ERA policies/practices within institutions.* **Pillar II Ecosystems for ERA (2026, 2027)** *Building and reinforcing networks and partnerships to foster broad uptake of ERA policies/ practices.* **Pillar 3 Citizens and Science in ERA (Pillar III)(2026, 2027)** *Connecting R&I with citizens and other stakeholders.* **New knowledge for ERA (Pillar IV) (2026, 2027) RIA!!** *Creating new knowledge that supports design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and practices.*

Presentations - EC WIDERA Info-day - 22 January 2026 (Widening Calls)

Horizon Europe WIDERA Info-day - Widening Calls - Morning Sessions 22 January 2026

Horizon Europe WIDERA Info-day-Widening Calls - Afternoon Sessions - 22 January 2026

Horizon Europe WIDERA Info-day - ERA Calls -11 December 2025

ERA in Horizon Europe
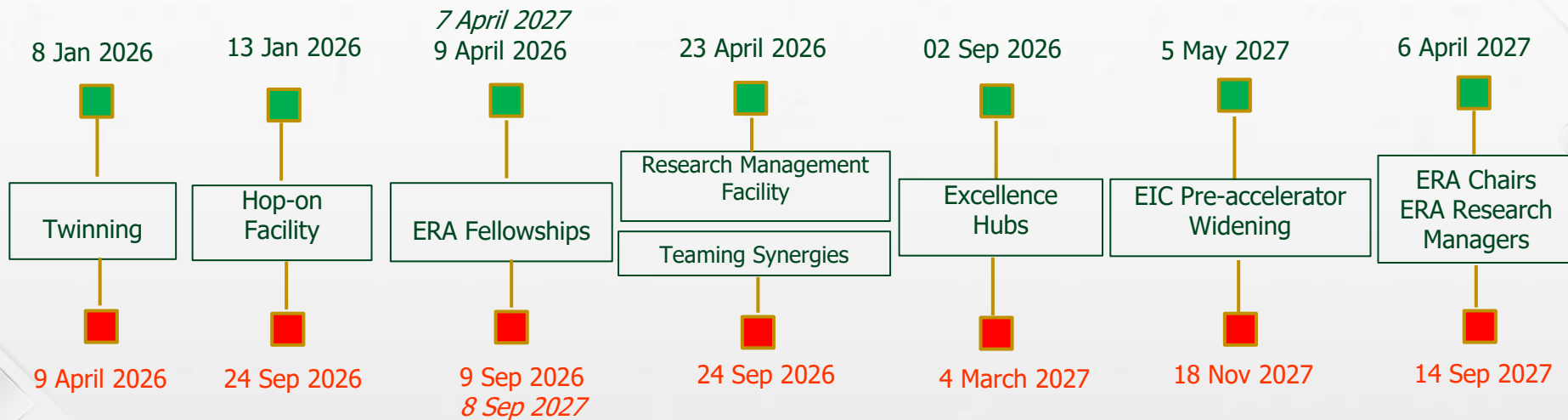
ERA Structural Policies 2025-2027

ERA Policy Agenda 2025-2027 Actions

WIDENING 2026-2027: Advancing Research Excellence, Talent and Institutional Capacity, 29 January 2026

TIMELINE WIDENING CALLS

Horizon Europe WIDERA 2026-2027

		7 April 2027 9 April 2026	23 April 2026	02 Sep 2026	5 May 2027	6 April 2027
8 Jan 2026	13 Jan 2026					

Twinning — 8 Jan 2026 / 9 April 2026

Hop-on Facility — 13 Jan 2026 / 24 Sep 2026

ERA Fellowships — *7 April 2027* / 9 April 2026 ; 9 Sep 2026 / *8 Sep 2027*

Research Management Facility

Teaming Synergies — 23 April 2026 / 24 Sep 2026

Excellence Hubs — 02 Sep 2026 / 4 March 2027

EIC Pre-accelerator Widening — 5 May 2027 / 18 Nov 2027

ERA Chairs ERA Research Managers — 6 April 2027 / 14 Sep 2027

TWINNING

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-02-WIDENING-01

TWINNING

To enhance networking between Widening country coordinators and internationally leading EU partners, fostering excellence through knowledge transfer and best practices exchange.

→ raising the international research profile of the institution from the Widening country and its staff, incl. strengthening the research management capacity.

- 8 Jan 2026/9 April 2026
- CSA

Lump sums/1 reporting period at the end of project (FAQ ID 82072 under Twinning)
- 0.8…1.5 mil. EUR/project/ about 210 projects

- Coordinator: Legal entity from a Widening country, research institutions and research infrastructures, or higher education establishments

- At least two top-class internationally recognized research institutions or higher education establishments, legal entities from two different MS or AC

TWINING PROPOSALS

STRATEGY to enhance scientific excellence and innovation capacity in a specific research area of incl. Partners'scientific excellence and Coordinator's research management capacity

— RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COMPONENT —

(WP1) 'Research component'
- **one defined area of R&I**
  - **-** can be multidisciplinary

Budget of R&I component:
- ≤30% of the total HE grant (incl. the indirect costs) of which
  - ≥ 50% for the Coordinator

!!! training related to R&I beyond SoTA included

— RESEARCH MANAGEMENT CAPACITY —

RM WP or task/ specific activities
- aligned with European Competence Framework for Research Managers

- improved staff RM capacities

- established/upgraded RM team at Cordinator

- dedicated deliverable

— ACTIVITIES —

- Joint R&I activities and projects in the chosen scientific area
- Short-term staff exchanges
- Expert visits
- Short term on-site or virtual trainings
- Workshops
- Conference participation
- Organisation of joint summer schools
- Dissemination activities
- Outreach activities
- Gender equality

— LEADING INSTITUTIONS CONTRIBUTION TO THE —

- Access to new research opportunities

- Enabling creativity/ Novel approaches

- Strengthening the CO's RMA capacity

- Mobility of qualified scientists &young researchers (incl. doctoral candidates)

COGNITIVE ABILITIES/ PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Cultural Sensitivity
- Problem solving
- Strategic Planning
- Decision Making
- Stress Management
- Prioritisation, Time Management and Multitasking
- Adaptability and Professional Flexibility
- Conflict Management
- Reliability and Trustfulness

RESEARCH PROJECT OVERSIGHT

- Research Project Management
- Managing Research Project Deliverables
- Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks and Indicators
- Establishing Research Projects Plans

7 competence areas

50 competencies

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTISE/SPECIALISED KNOWLEDGE

- Pre-Award
- Post-Award
- Managing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Including Gender, Disability and Racism)
- Data Stewardship
- Knowledge Valorisation (Technology Transfer)
- HR for Research – Employment, Training etc of research staff
- Research Finance
- Research Infrastructure Management
- Clinical Research Management
- Research Ethics and Integrity
- Research, Strategy and Policy Development
- Managing the Research Grant/Support Office

COMMUNICATION

- Building and Maintaining Relationships with Research Funders, Partners, or other Stakeholders
- Designing and Implementing Research Communication Plans
- Media Liaison and Associated Activities
- Preparing and Writing Reports (Including Evaluation Reports and Funder Reports)
- Social Media Engagement

LINE MANAGEMENT AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

- People Management and Managing Team Performance
- Team Building
- Change Management
- Coaching Skills
- Research Talent Indentification and Development

TECHNICAL PROFICIENCY

- Research Data collection and Collation
- Data and Statistical Analysis
- Legal Skills
- IT for Research Activities
- Artificial Intelligence

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Research Outreach
- Academic Community Relationship Collaboration
- Community Engagement with Research
- Engagement with Key Stakeholders
- Building Trust within Relevant Research and Strategic Partnerships
- Diplomacy, Negotiation, and Mediation Skills
- Handling Difficult Conversations and Partnerships
- Business and Commercial Liaison Management

RM Comp - European Competence Framework for Research Managers tool - core skills, proficiency levels, and learning outcomes to support professional development and to standardise practices across Europe

How Horizon Europe support research management

CARDEA CAREER FRAMEWORK AND RM COMP

Research Managers

RM1 Research Manager 1: First Stage Research Manager
RM2 Research Manager 2: Recognised Research Manager
RM3 Research Manager 3: Established Research Manager
RM4 Research Manager 4: Senior Stage Research Manager

— Expected outcomes (all) (summary) — **SEE CALL TEXT!!**

- Improved research excellence & capacities in Widening countries
- Strengthened Coordinator RM capacity
- Improved strategic collaboration between Widening countries research institutions and leading research institutions
- Raised reputation, research profile and attractiveness of the coordinating institution& staff
- Novel R&I collaborative approaches with increased mobility of researchers

— qualitative and quantitative indicators —

- Scientific production and peer recognition
- Collaboration agreements with the non-academic sector
- Attracting & mobilising investments from the private sector
- Intellectual property developed
- New innovative products or services
- No. of international students
- No. of female scientists and their roles in the research institutions

- Other useful links -

Funded projects - Twinning - HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ACCESS-03

Funded projects Twinning Bottom-Up - HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02

Funded projects - Twinning Green Deal -HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02

Application forms

Horizon Europe Programme Standard Application Form (HE CSA) Project proposal – Technical description (Part B) Version 5.0, 5 November 2025

28 pages

Detailed Budget Table (HE Lump Sum 70-100)-ver3.4. (applicable to topics with opening dates from 15 August 2025)

Evaluation

- Individual evalution and scoring/four Individual expert evaluators
- Quality check of Individual/assessment reports of the 4 evaluators by an 1 additional evaluator to draft feedback
- Scoring
  - each award criterion score = median of the evaluators' scores
  - overal score/individual evaluation phase = sum of the three median scores
- Quality checker/other quality checkers+cross check for calibration Further discussion at the panel review, if necessary

ESR includes:
- Final score
- Collation of comments from the 4 IERs
- A comment of the evaluation committee that summarizes the assessment

Changes/simplification in Application forms/Evaluation forms

Horizon Implementation day – Novelties in the 2026-2027 Horizon Europe work programme

Signed Grants by EuroSciVoc concept

EuroSciVoc Concept	Signed Grants
climatic changes	7
ecosystems	7
sustainable economy	7
machine learning	6
catalysis	5
agriculture	4
artificial intelligence	4
innovation management	4
pollution	4
renewable energy	4
additive manufacturing	3
big data	3
civil society	3

economics	3	governance	2
microbiology	3	history	2
proteins	3	internet of things	2
robotics	3	mechatronics	2
software	3	nutrition	2
textiles	3	remote sensing	2
automation	2	sea vessels	2
biomolecules	2	semiconductivity	2
coating and films	2	waste management	2
electric vehicles	2		
entrepreneurship	2		
food safety	2		

HOP-ON

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-03-WIDENING-01

Hop-on Facility

[List of funded projects under Horizon Europe pillar 2 and the EIC Pathfinder (europa.eu)](europa.eu)

Improve inclusiveness of Horizon Europe

by allowing legal entities from Widening countries to join already funded
Horizon Pillar and EIC Pathfinder collaborative R&I actions

13 Jan 2026/24 Sep 2026
RIA
Horizon-AG
0.2...0.6 mil EUR/project/
about 60 projects

→ One legal entity, as a beneficiary,
established in a Widening country

→ One legal entity which is the
Coordinator of an 'eligible already
funded action'

' eligible already funded action'
○ No legal entity established in a Widening country
is already as BEN, AE or AF.
○ The first reporting period of the HE grant agreement is
ongoing at the submission deadline.
○ The ongoing grant agreement is between 1 to 12 months
from its starting date by the submission deadline.

HOP - ON FACILITY

Legal entities from Widenining countries not yet in the HE project

↓

Join on-going projects eligible for Hop-on under:
- Pillar II
- EIC Pathfinder

↓

Contribute to the project:
- Relevant task
- Specific work package
- Distinguishable activity

↓

Dedicated proposal template, including:
- R&I added value of the new beneficiary
- detailed description of the profile of the new beneficiary
- R&I role and complementarity for the on-going project

DoA of the on-going project - Annex
The coordinator of the 'eligible already funded action'
submits the proposal

— Expected outcomes — **See call text!**

At system level
mobilise excellence in the Widening countries/increase visibility of the beneficiaries from the widening countries/ increase participation in specific fields/improve knowledge circulation

At consortium level
open up established networks to new connections and partnerships/improve research excellence of the Widening country's institutions in specific fields/
enlarge outreach of the participants' R&I actions/
access to new talent pools

At the level of the Widening beneficiary
develop new competencies and skills for working in transnational projects including research management and dissemination and exploitation.

NEW!!

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-04-WIDENING-01

RESEARCH MANAGEMENT FACILITY

Stronger research
management capacities
are essential for Europe
to capitalize on excellence

Provides tailored support to the institutions in widening countries to stregthen research management capacities.
Advises on developing ERA aligned implementation strategies for the changes in the institutional setup, without supporting their implementation.

23 April 2026/24 September 2026
HORIZON-AG
7 mil.EUR/1 project

≥ 3 independent legal entities: Each established in a different MS or AC, of which two are established in a MS.

About 4-5 years

Research Management Facility

— Expected outcomes (in brief) — **See call text!**

- Encourage the establishment of stronger research management capacities and strengthen human capital with **entrepreneurial and well-trained RM** in Widening countries

- Support institutional reforms in research institutions and national R&I systems

- Promote and support multidisciplinary and transnational cooperation in RM

- Promote alignement of best practices in agreed ERA priorities

- Contribute to a knowledge-based economy and society

*RPO requesting RMA services

** RM Comp: The European Competence Framework for Research Managers - European Commission

Scope – summary
To create a Research Management and Administration (RMA) Facility that support institutions/staff in Widening countries*, by:

- Providing suport services including training to establish or upgrade RM capacities and skills
- Invite RPOs and support them in assessing needs for excellent RMA and developing implementation plans to improve institutional and human capacities
- Connecting successful ERA Research Managers applicants with international research management experts

- Activities – summary

- Support the assessment of institutional RPO RMA needs and training, and train research managers/training modules, to improve their skills**, in Widening countries
- Support establishing/upgrade institutional RMA capacity with tailor-made RMA plans
- Facilitate networking, peer exchange and best practice sharing for research managers from Widening countries
- Dissemination and communication

Proposals

- Estimate numbers of target institutions and individuals
- Explain how services will be prioritized if demand exceeds available resources
- Demonstrate full geographical coverage of Widening countries, including Outermost Regions and relevant Associated Countries
- Demonstrate collective competences and capacities, and relevant expertise

- Include **Methodology** for documenting and giving feedback to the EC on the:
    - profiles of the institutions supported
    - the support provided and recommendations given
    - follow-up actions taken by the institutions and results/impacts achieved

ERA CHAIRS

HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-02-WIDENING-01

ERA Chairs

Need: Stronger links between R&I actors across the ERA are essential for Europe to capitalize on excellence

To attract outstanding scientists and innovators to universities, research organisations or research infrastructures in Widening countries

Brain circulation/Brain gain/Creation of pockets of excellence

→ Improved institutional culture and performance

- 6 April 2027/14 Sep 2027
- CSA
- 1.50 … 2.50 mil.EUR/ project
- 80 funded projects
- Lump sums
- Duration:5 years

Grant: Salaries, recruitment, travel and consumables and equipment (up to 10% of the EU contribution), administrative expenses.

- OUTCOMES (summary) – See Call text

At system level (i.e):
- Increased international mobility of R&I talents towards Widening countries and strengthened human capital with more **entrepreneurial and well-trained researchers** in Widening countries
- Institutional reforms in research institutions and national R&I systems
- Enhanced research capacity, competitiveness, and economic growth

At organisation level:
- Strengthened research excellence in ERA Chair fields
- Increased attractiveness to top international researchers
- Establishment of a lasting, high-performing research group with institutional benefits;
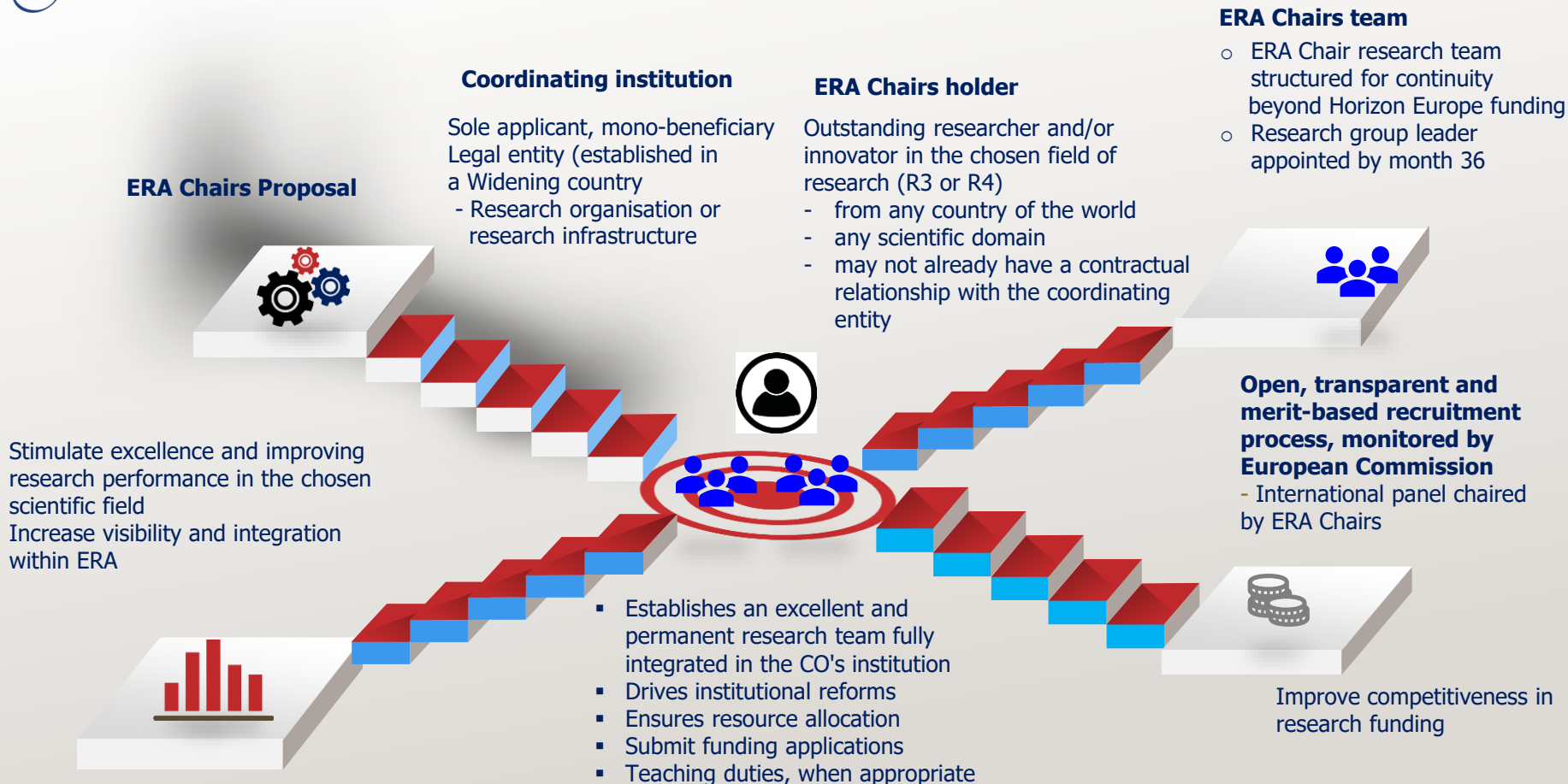- Improved success in EU and global competitive funding.

quantify in the proposal expected impacts through, incl. new research partnerships, institutional changes, increased research output enhanced, research knowledge and practice, innovative research.

Commitment letters

✓ a letter signed by the prospective ERA Chair holder confirming:
  - ❑ commitment of at least 50% FTE to the proposal until the permanent appointment of a research group leader by M36
  - ❑ acceptance all related tasks, obligations and agreed contractual arrangements (including salary and on-site presence at the host institution)
  - ❑ continued commitment (at least 20%) after recruitment of the research leader for the remaining duration
  - ❑ support to the research leader to ensure efficient reforms and improved research performance.

✓ a letter signed by the head of the coordinator institution confirming:
  - ❑ commitment to the proposal
  - ❑ adequate support for the ERA Chairs holder s duties, including, research facilities access, researchers supervision, teaching duties (if any) and freedom to apply for funding

Curriculum Vitae (CV) in Europass format

- Details also scientific and technical contributions to the coordinating institution
- Annex to the proposal

ERA Chairs team

o ERA Chair research team structured for continuity beyond Horizon Europe funding
o Research group leader appointed by month 36

Coordinating institution

Sole applicant, mono-beneficiary Legal entity (established in a Widening country
  - Research organisation or research infrastructure

ERA Chairs holder

Outstanding researcher and/or innovator in the chosen field of research (R3 or R4)
- from any country of the world
- any scientific domain
- may not already have a contractual relationship with the coordinating entity

ERA Chairs Proposal

Stimulate excellence and improving research performance in the chosen scientific field
Increase visibility and integration within ERA

Open, transparent and merit-based recruitment process, monitored by European Commission
  - International panel chaired by ERA Chairs

▪ Establishes an excellent and permanent research team fully integrated in the CO's institution
▪ Drives institutional reforms
▪ Ensures resource allocation
▪ Submit funding applications
▪ Teaching duties, when appropriate

Improve competitiveness in research funding

WIDENING 2026-2027: Advancing Research Excellence, Talent and Institutional Capacity, 29 January 2026

NCP@UEFISCDI
Horizon Europe National Contact Points

ERA CHAIRS PROPOSALS

Describe ERA Chair holder
Contractual arrangements

- time commitment (relocate
  temporarily or permanently)
- timeline of on-site presence
  at the coordinating institution
- salary (gross amount), travel and
  daily allowances and/or other benefits
- contractual details, if employment is
  the chosen option

Describe transition phase between
the ERA Chair holder and the
research group leader incl.
definition each person's share of
tasks and roles for the remaining
project years

Describe Research team/ERA Chair team

- profiles of team members and
  researchers levels
- salaries and recruitment timelines
- names of the newly researchers
  not required at the proposal stage

- in addition to the research group leader,
  at least 20% of the newly appointed
  research group members should have
  permanent positions and no more than 50%
  should have any prior contractual links to the
  host institution

- How R&I investments in research projects,
  facilities and infrastructures will be
  implemented
- How the installed research capacity will be
  optimally utilised
- Existing or foreseen arrangements
  for compliance with ERA priorities

- Outline the proposed structural reforms:
  o Improvements in working conditions
  o Career prospects
  o HR policies
  o Research governance
  o Grant management
  o Knowledge transfer
  o Gender equality

ERA RESEARCH MANAGERS

HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-02-WIDENING-02

ERA Research Managers

Need: Excellent research management capacities are essential for Europe to capitalize on excellence
RM capacities are crucial for RPO

To attract experienced research managers to universities, research organisations or research infrastructures in Widening countries, establishing/ upgrading RM institutional capacities to foster excellent research management aligned with ERA priorities

Brain circulation/Brain gain/Creation of pockets of excellence

→ Improved institutional culture and performance

- 6 April 2027/14 Sep 2027
- CSA
- 1.50 … 2.50 mil.EUR/ project
- 30 funded projects
- Horizon-AG
- 5 years

- Mono-beneficiary
- Legal entity (established in a Widening country
- **ERA Research Manager and team operate at institutional level**
- **1 proposal per legal entity**
- Grant: salaries, recruitment, travel and equipment, administrative expenses

Commitment letters

✓ a letter signed by the prospective ERA Research Manager confirming, their:

- ❑ commitment of at least 50% FTE to the proposal until the permanent appointment of a research manager leader by M36
- ❑ acceptance all related tasks, obligations and agreed contractual arrangements (including salary and on-site presence at the host institution)

Curriculum Vitae (CV) in Europass format

- Details also proposed managerial and technical contributions to the CO
- Annex to the proposal

✓ a letter signed by the head of the coordinator institution confirming:

- ❑ commitment to the proposal
- ❑ adequate support for the ERA Research Manager holders duties

- OUTCOMES – see call text!

At system level (i.e):

- Increased **international mobility of RM talents** towards Widening countries and strengthened human capital with more **entrepreneurial and well-trained research managers** in Widening countries
- Institutional reforms in research institutions and national R&I systems
- Better communication of R&I results to the society
- Enhanced research capacity, competitiveness, and economic growth

At organisation level:

- Strengthened research management capacities
- Increased attractiveness to top international research managers, and subsequently researchers
- Establishment of a lasting, high-performing research group with institutional benefits
- Improved success in EU and global competitive funding

ERA Research Manager

- excellent research managers with international experience (advanced or expert level of research managers)
- from any country of the world
- do not have already a contractual relationship with the CO

Establishes/expands a RM team fully integrated in the CO's institution

- To significantly improve its overall performance in RM and R&I
- Boost excellence, visibility and promote integration within ERA
- Improves competitiveness in research funding, resource allocation
- Promote institutional reforms aligned with ERA priorities

Coordinating institution

Sole applicant, mono-beneficiary Legal entity (established in a Widening country
- Research organisation or research infrastructure

ERA Research Manager team

ERA Research Manager team structured for continuity beyond Horizon Europe funding

Research manager leader appointed by month 36

No more than 50% of the team should have prior contractual links to the institution

Open, transparent and merit-based recruitment process, monitored by European Commission
- ERA Research Manager can apply

PROPOSALS

- Include self-assessment of the BEN's existing institutional capacities and RMA needs

- Design adaptive, realistic and feasible implementation strategy within project duration incl. necessary measures to introduce institutional changes in RM

- Describe any alternative/ additional/ other relevant investments in RM capacity building, projects, staffing,

  facilities and infrastructures

Describe contractual arrangements - ERA Research Manager
- time commitment (relocate temporarily or permanently)
- timeline of on-site presence at the CO
- salary (gross amount), travel and daily allowances and/or other benefits
- contractual details, if employment is the chosen option

Describe transition phase between the ERA Research Manager and the research manager leader incl. definition each person"s share of tasks and role for the remaining project years

Detail team composition, research management levels, salaries, recruitment timelines.

Outline structural reforms to be driven by the ERA Research Manager
- improving working conditions,
- career prospects,
- HR policies,
- research governance,
- grant management,
- knowledge transfer,
- IPR.
- Gender equality

Quantify expected impacts:
-institutional changes
- Increased research output (publications, IPR protection, knowledge valorisation)
- improved research management
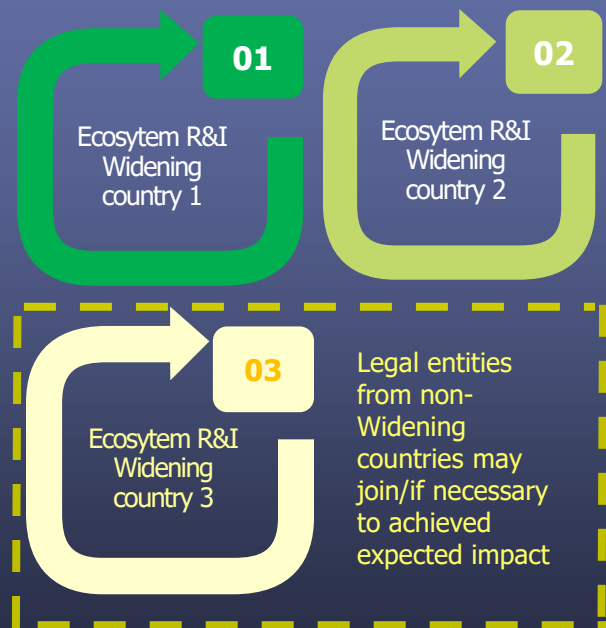- other indicators

EXCELLENCE HUBS
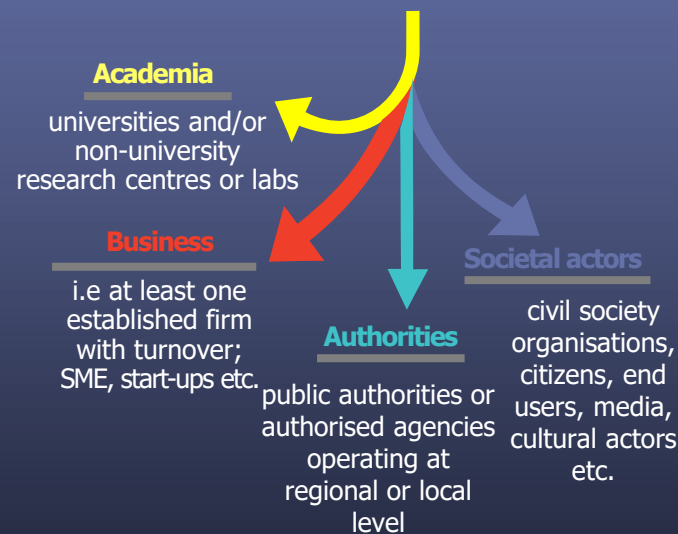
HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-04-WIDENING-01

Excellence Hubs

❖ Networks of innovation ecosystems in Widening countries/larger communities

❖ Innovation ecosystems in Widening countries and beyond, team up and create better linkages between academia, business, government and society

❖ Foster a regional innovation culture in Widening countries based on a strategic agenda aligned with smart specialisation strategy and European priorities, and delivering **tangible economic and societal impact**.

❖ Regions: key R&I actors driving innovation ecosystems and EU strategic value chains

➢ 2 Sep 2026/04 Mar 2027
➢ CSA
➢ 1.50 … 4.50 million EUR/project
➢ 30 funded projects
➢ Duration: up to 5 years

➢ Funding rate:
  ▪ 70 % of the eligible costs
  ▪ 30% of the eligible costs secured and shared among the beneficiaries
  ▪ FSTP, grants, each third party is EUR 60000/SMEs and start-ups

Excellence Hubs - **At least two fully fledged R&I ecosystems from two different Widening countries**
☐ **Coordinator from Widening country**

01
Ecosytem R&I Widening country 1

02
Ecosytem R&I Widening country 2

03
Ecosytem R&I Widening country 3

Legal entities from non-Widening countries may join/if necessary to achieved expected impact

Widening country R&I ecosystem

Academia
universities and/or non-university research centres or labs

Business
i.e at least one established firm with turnover; SME, start-ups etc.

Authorities
public authorities or authorised agencies operating at regional or local level

Societal actors
civil society organisations, citizens, end users, media, cultural actors etc.

- OUTCOMES (summary) — See call text!

- Excellent and sustainable regional R&I ecosystems in cutting-edge science and innovation

- Long term joint R&I strategies with European relevant action plans

- Coordinated R&I investments using public and private funds

- R&I pilot projects aligned with regional and national strategies

- New competencies and skills for researchers, entrepreneurs and R&I professionals

- Strengthened linkages between science, businesses and society

- New business opportunities for SMEs, university spin-offs and start-ups, especially in deep tech

— illustrate the expected impact of the project, including —
- new local and international partnerships
- institutional changes
- increased R&I intensity
- other relevant indicators

HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ACCESS-04-01 - Excellence Hubs Funded projects

- ACTIVITIES -

Design and implementation of cross-border joint R&I strategy

Development action and investment plans for the implementation of the strategy, leveraging different funds

Joint R&I projects consolidating academia business linkages, advancing science and technology with market potential (Research component - distinct WP, not dominant, incl. long-term vision beyond SoTA in the chosen R&I domain)

Conceptual design and pre-planning for pilots and demonstrators (if applicable)

Complementary activities (knowledge transfer, visibility, development of human resources, transferable skills, brain circulation, engagement with stakeholders

- PROPOSAL -

Credible evidence that the proposal will generate economic and societal benefits, besides scientific and innovation outputs

Collaboration with existing initiatives (EIE, EIC Pathfinder, KICs of EIT in particular EIT Community Hubs established in Widening countries, JRC's 'Partnerships for Regional Innovation", Dissemination and Exploitation Strategy), and avoid overlaps of activities.

Project Title	Project Acronym	Project Number
MetaCities Excellence Hub in South-Eastern Europe	METACITIES	101087257
A Greek-Turkish Solar Energy Excellence Hub to Advance the European Green Deal	SolarHub	101086110
Blue Culture Technology Excellence Hubs in EU Widening Member States	BCThubs	101087146
Strengthening the capacity for excellence of Slovenian and Croatian innovation ecosystems to support the digital and green transitions of maritime regions	INNO2MARE	101087348
VELES Excellence Hub - Strengthening the South-East Europe Smart Health Regional Excellence and Boosting the Innovation Potential	VELES	101087483
Promoting Innovation Excellence in Transformation of Coal Regions to Climate-Neutral, Thriving Economies	COALition	101087022
Croatia-Cyprus Excellence Hub on Eco-Innovative Technologies for Healthy and Productive Seas	SeaTecHub	101087162
Glass-ceramic innovation ecosystem for implementation of new research directions in applications	GlaCerHub	101087154
Carbon Initiative for Climate-resilient Agriculture	CARBONICA	101087233
Excellence hub in green technologies: Introducing innovation ecosystems in the Mediterranean food value chain	EXCEL4MED	101087147
Cyber-security Excellence Hub in Estonia and South Moravia	CHESS	101087529
Alzheimer's Disease Diagnostics Innovation and Translation to Clinical Practice in Central Europe	ADDIT-CE	101087124
Connected Hubs in Ageing: Healthy Living to Protect Cerebrovascular Function	CHAngeing	101087071
Energy Communities excellence Hubs: catalyzing energy innOvation ecosystems	ECHO	101185725
Innovative Facility for Isotope GENeration with Efficient Ion Accelerator	IFIGENEIA	101186921
EXCELLENCE HUB FOR A SMART AGRICULTURE AND CIRCULAR BIOECONOMY TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE AGRIFOOD SECTOR IN WIDENING COUNTRIES (AND BEYOND)	AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB	101186869
THE WATERWISE HUB: AN EXCELLENCE HUB ON WATER IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY	WaterWise Hub	101184151
Excellent Laser Technologies for the Sustainable Prosperity of Europe	LASER-PRO	101186838
Strengthening the Capacity of Excellence Hubs of Türkiye, Greece, and Ukraine to Support Innovation Ecosystem of Novel Foods Based on Plant Proteins	Excel4Pro	101186662
Connecting Greek and Portuguese Innovation Ecosystems to Develop a Hub for Infectious Diseases Diagnostic Solutions at the Point-of Care – Tackling Cross-border Threats	DxHub	101186531
Enabling Autonomous Aerial Systems through Operational Methods and Technological Enhancements	EUSOME	101187121
Cultural heritage and immersive technologies for innovation forge	HERIFORGE	101186573
MarTe: Marine technology excellence hub for sustainable blue economy in Baltics	MarTe	101186498
Innovating Thyroid Health with Genomics and Predictive Algorithms through Collaborative Excellence	InnoThyroGen	101187880
Excellence Hub for Advancing Innovation in Gene Therapy	GeneH	101186939

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-01-WIDENING-01

TEAMING SYNERGIES

The call topic aims at fostering collaboration among Teaming Centres of Excellence, both existing ones and those resulting from ongoing or future calls, in view of supporting their efforts towards sustainability and increased impact at the regional, national and European level.

A core of the consortium should be able to demonstrate successful implementation of sustainability strategies of a Teaming CoE.

Complementary members of the consortium can provide specific expertise on e.g. communication, training, knowledge valorisation and IPR issues.

The consortium should to demonstrate a **geographical coverage of its activities that is able to reach all past, existing and future Teaming CoEs** that wish to participate in the activities and benefit from the services offered by the consortium

At 27 January 2026, Romania has two (2) Teaming proposals under evaluation.

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-05-WIDENING-01

HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-03-WIDENING-01

ERA FELLOWSHIPS

- **Builds on the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2026 action (HORIZON-MSCA-PF-2026**). The target group are host organisations located in Widening countries.
- Fellowships should be provided to excellent researchers, undertaking cross-border mobility. Applications must be made jointly by the researcher together with a legal entity in the academic or non-academic sector located in a Widening country.
- ERA Fellowships should take place in a Widening country. Fellowships are open to researchers of any nationality who wish to engage in R&I projects by either coming to the EU from any country in the world or moving within the EU to a Widening country.

 Further detail: see <u>call text </u>and EC Info-day.

HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-01-WIDENING-01

EIC Pre-accelerator - Widening

Further details on the call will be provided in an separate informative event for SMEs.

- To boost competitiveness early-stage deep-tech startups in widening countries/overall competitiveness of the respective country
- Increased innovation potential of deep-tech startups/widening countries/ better attract private investments and scale up

early-stage deep-tech startups which
- have high-impact innovation technology, product, service, or business model that could create new markets or disrupt existing ones (technology validated in the lab – at least TRL 4 at the proposal stage to 6 at the end of the project).
- possess the necessary IPR to ensure freedom to operate and adequate protection of the idea.
- have a clear vision on the intended pathway to market.
- have the ambition and commitments to scale up.

- 5 May 2027/18 Nov 2027
- CSA
- Lump sums
- 0.50 … 1.00 million EUR/project
- Duration: 2 years

Mono-Beneficiaries:
SMEs established in a Widening country
70% funding rate

Deep tech innovation based on scientific breakthroughs and requiring significant R&D cycles

CLUSTER 1 - Health

Key characteristics
- **~38 topics** distributed across **6 Destinations** (**2026–2027)**
- Focus on **RIAs**, **IAs, CSAs, PCP & PPI** actions
- **Single stage topics in 2026** (lump-sum and budget-based grants)
- **Chinese entities are not eligible** under RIAs and IAs across all Destinations
- **US organisations remain eligible** to receive EU funding
- Overall budget of approximately **€1,235.4 million** for the **2026–2027** period

Key synergies with Cluster 4
- **AI-driven and digital solutions in healthcare** (e.g. GenAI, health data platforms)
- **Manufacturing of medical devices** & conformity with digital processes
- Integration of **space-based technologies** (Copernicus, Galileo) to support **health monitoring**

Key synergies with Cluster 5
- Addressing the **health impacts of pollution and climate change** (air quality, plastic-related exposure)
- Alignment with the objectives of the **European Green Deal** and the **Zero Pollution Action Plan**
- Emphasis on **health-supportive environments** and strengthened **climate resilience**

mERCury: Maximising Excellence in Research Upskilling NCPs and Raising the Quality of their Support to ERC Applicants
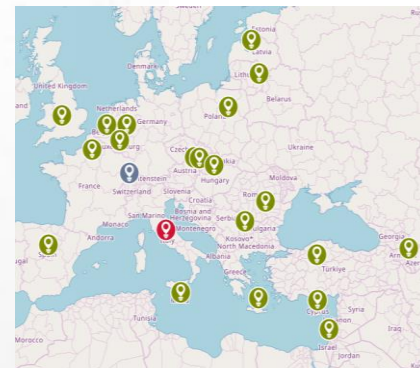
mERCury Project:

- **Main goal:** To enhance and harmonise ERC NCP services across Europe, contributing to better prepared applicants, higher-quality proposals and increased participation of Widening Countries in **European Research Council** calls.
- The project brings together **23 partner organisations** from across Europe, combining diverse levels of experience within the ERC NCP network.

  - **Core focus:** upskilling ERC NCPs, peer learning, exchange of good practices and strategic cooperation.
  - **Objective:** more consistent, effective and high-quality support for ERC applicants, leading to stronger proposals and increased participation from Widening Countries.

    More details: *https://uefiscdi.gov.ro/maximising-excellence-in-research-upskilling-ncps-and-raising-the-quality-of-their-support-to-erc-applicants-mercury*

Contact: Dr. Laura Chirilă, NCP Horizon Europe ERC, laura.chirila@uefiscdi.ro

EIT-BEST: NCP EIT Training, Networking and Best Practices Initiative

EIT-BEST Project Essentials:
- A capacity-building project involving 24 partners from 22 countries.
- Funded by the European Union through the Horizon Europe program.
- **Main Goal:** To make the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT) and it's Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) more visible and accessible by improving the support services offered by National Contact Points (NCPs).

Direct Support for Romanian Applicants:
- ❑ **Training & Workshops**: Dedicated sessions to help you understand how to participate in EIT programs.
- ❑ **Information Hub**: Clear and updated information about funding calls, prizes, and acceleration opportunities.
- ❑ **Strategic Networking**: Connection to a European network for sharing best practices and finding partners.

Key Objective: "To provide clear and easy-to-access guidance for startups, researchers, students, universities, and companies interested in EIT opportunities."

More details:
https://uefiscdi.gov.ro/ncp-eit-training-networking-and-best-practices-initiative-eit-best

Contact: MSc. Adina-Maria Stănculea, NCP Horizon Europe Cluster 2, NCP EIT, adina.stanculea@uefiscdi.ro

TRANSNATIONAL NETWORK OF NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS (NCPS) FOR WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND STRENGTHENING THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA

Acronym: **NCP_WIDERA.NET**
Coordinator: NARODOWE CENTRUM BADAN I ROZWOJU
Program: HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-NCP-IBA - NCP Network including proposal pre-check
Implementation: 01/04/2022 – **31/03/2027**

WP8 "Advancing Europe Package support" focusses on the implementation of the Advancing Europe Package (AEP) elements i.e. proposal pre-check service and matchmaking.

UEFISCDI – FST partner

Do not miss your chance to apply:

https://wideraexperts.eu/ (Pre-screenings)

https://www.ncp.uefiscdi.ro/travel-grants

Contact: Dr. Daniela Dragomir, NCP Horizon Europe Widening&ERA, dana.dragomir@uefiscdi.ro

THANK YOU!!

Info-day

HORIZON EUROPE

**WIDENING 2026-2027: Advancing Research
Excellence, Talent and Institutional Capacity**

29th of January 2026, 09.00-15:30 (Bucharest time)
Hybrid event

Dr. Daniela Dragomir, NCP Horizon Europe Widening&ERA