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Horizon Europe ERC Starting Grant; Deadline Proposal: 14.10.2025

The European Research Council (ERC) was set up to support excellence in research through grants that tackle issues at the frontiers of existing knowledge. It provides flexible longer-term, portable funding, and independence for researchers and their teams to pursue ambitious and high-risk research. The ERC strives to achieve the following objectives:

- to promote scientific excellence in research by funding ground-breaking, high-risk, and ambitious frontier research;
- to attract the best talent and skill to Europe, to support early-career researchers, and to promote exchange of ideas and knowledge;
- to increase Europe's competitiveness in the international research arena

The Starting Grant supports excellent Principal Investigators starting or having recently started their own independent research team or programme. A Starting Grant Principal Investigator should have already shown evidence of the potential for research independence, for example, by having produced at least one important publication as its main author or a publication without the participation of their PhD supervisor.

The Principal Investigators shall have successfully defended their first PhD at least 2 and up to 7 years prior to 1 January 2026. Cut-off dates: Successful defence of PhD between 1 January 2019 and 31 December 2023 (inclusive). The eligibility period can be extended beyond 7 years in certain properly documented circumstances.

Starting Grants may be awarded up to a maximum of EUR 1 500 000 for a period of 5 years. The maximum size of the grants is reduced pro rata temporis for proposals of shorter duration. Additional funding up to EUR 1 000 000 can be requested to cover further eligible costs (e.g. start-up costs, major equipment, access to large facilities, major experimental and field work costs) when these are necessary to carry out the proposed work. The requests for additional funding must be duly justified in the proposal.

Proposals are evaluated by selected international peer reviewers who evaluate proposals on the basis of excellence as the sole criterion. The panels will primarily evaluate: the ground-breaking nature and ambition of the research project and, at the same time, the intellectual capacity and creativity of the Principal Investigator, with a focus on the extent to which the PI has the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project. The detailed evaluation elements applying to the excellence of the research project and the Principal Investigator are set out in the ERC Work Programme 2026.

Deadline date: 14 October 2025 - 17.00 Brussels time

Further information:

<https://erc.europa.eu/apply-grant/starting-grant>

Horizon Europe 2025 EIC Pathfinder Challenges; Deadline Proposal: 29.10.2025

EIC Pathfinder Challenges aim to build on new, cutting-edge directions in science and technology to disrupt a field and a market or create new opportunities by realising innovative technological solutions grounded in high-risk/high-gain research and development.

With each specific Challenge, a portfolio of projects will be established that explore different perspectives, competing approaches or complementary aspects of the Challenge. The complexity and high-risk nature of this research will require multi-disciplinary collaborations. Projects in a Challenge portfolio are expected to interact and exchange, remaining flexible and reactive in the light of developments within the portfolio or in the relevant global scientific or industrial community. They will progress together towards common goals and create new opportunities for radical innovation.

The EIC Pathfinder Challenges support collaborative or individual research and innovation from consortia or from sin-

gle legal entities established in a Member State or an Associated Country (unless stated otherwise in the specific Challenge chapter). In case of a consortium your proposal must be submitted by the coordinator on behalf of the consortium. Consortia of two entities must be comprised of independent legal entities from two different Member States or Associated Countries. Consortia of three or more entities must include as beneficiaries at least three legal entities, independent from each other and each established in a different country as follows:

- at least one legal entity established in a Member State; and
- at least two other independent legal entities, each established in different Member States or Associated Countries.

Open challenges:

- Biotech for Climate Resilient Crops and Plant-Based Biomanufacturing

This Pathfinder Challenge aims to support projects that enhance adaptation pathways for the production of climate-resilient crops and develop alternative pathways to produce high value ingredients in plants by increasing nutrient profile of crops based on plant native and/or non-native ingredients. Innovative ideas put forward under this Challenge must go beyond incremental changes to the state-of-the-art and result in novel production processes that must deliver energy- and resource-efficient, low emission foods that maintain or increase biodiversity and are integral to a healthy diet.

- Generative-AI based Agents to Revolutionize Medical Diagnosis and Treatment of Cancer

The goal of this Pathfinder Challenge is to create interactive GenAI autonomous agents and/or a combination of them (super-agent) that provide clinicians with a holistic end to end perspective of patient care, throughout the entire clinical pathway. These agents aim to enhance pattern identification, reduce inconsistencies and errors in diagnoses as well as improve cancer treatment. While the focus is on GenAI, we also encourage the integration of other advanced AI technologies, such as topological and geometric deep learning, neural fields, graph neural networks, etc., which can complement and enhance the robustness and effectiveness of GenAI-based solutions in addressing the challenges of cancer diagnosis and therapy.

- Towards autonomous robot collectives delivering collaborative tasks in dynamic unstructured construction environments

This Pathfinder Challenge aims to address all construction tasks typically required for site preparation, substructure, and superstructure, as well as the coordination between these tasks to support a transition towards building with autonomous electrified construction equipment. It includes the role of human agents in construction processes, as even high degrees of multi-robotic autonomy with low degrees of supervision will require a collaborative connection between human and robotic agents, ensuring they can safely collaborate and share the same workspace.

- Waste-to-value devices: Circular production of renewable fuels, chemicals and materials

This Pathfinder Challenge focuses on the development of next generation technologies that turn today's problematic waste streams into essential building blocks of a future circular economy. Furthermore, it specifically focusses on currently non- or hard-to-recycle types of synthetic polymer materials (including among other mixtures of different types of plastics, polymeric composite materials, micro-/nanoplastics, untreated plastic waste, diapers, rubber, etc.), flue gases, wastewater and seawater desalination brines. Proposals must target real-life industrial and household waste streams where current recycling methods face insurmountable barriers e.g., due to impurities, the presence of noxious additives, inseparable material mixtures or non-biodegradable materials. An important side effect is the remediation of waste streams with respect to micro-/nanoplastics, trace metals and noxious substances. These novel technologies should be scalable, easily applicable and deliver products with higher economic value as compared to waste destruction.

For this call, the EIC considers proposals with an EU contribution of up to EUR 4 million as appropriate. Nonetheless, this does not preclude you to request larger amounts, if duly justified or stated otherwise in the specific Challenge.

In addition to funding, successful applicants will receive tailor-made access to a wide range of Business Acceleration Services and interactions with EIC Programme Managers and other actions in the portfolio of projects selected. Projects funded through EIC Pathfinder (including grants resulting from certain EIC pilot Pathfinder, FET-Open and Proactive calls) may be eligible:

- to receive Booster grants of a fixed amount not exceeding EUR 50 000 to undertake complementary activities to explore potential pathways to commercialisation or for portfolio activities;
- to submit an EIC Transition proposal;
- to submit an EIC Accelerator proposal via the Fast Track scheme;
- to participate in the 'Next Generation Innovation Talents' scheme (described in the glossary). The personnel costs of researchers participating in this scheme are eligible under your EIC Pathfinder grant agreements.

The call deadline for submitting your proposal is 29/10/2025 at 17h00 Brussels local time.

Further information:

https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-funding-opportunities/eic-pathfinder/eic-pathfinder-challenges-2025_en

Horizon Europe CONNECT – Interconnected Innovation Ecosystems; Deadline Proposal: 15.10.2025

Proposals for topics under this destination should set out a credible pathway to strengthening robust interconnected innovation ecosystems and creating a favourable environment to promote the scalability potential of businesses, including in the deep tech sector, and more specifically to one or several of the following impacts:

- Interconnected, inclusive, and more efficient innovation ecosystems across the EU that draw on the existing strengths of European, national, regional, and local ecosystems and engage new, less well-represented stakeholders and less advanced innovation territories, including rural areas, to set, undertake, and achieve collective ambitions tackling challenges for the benefit of society, including green, digital, and social transitions, and advancing the European Research Area and the New European Innovation Agenda;
- Enhanced cross-border network connectivity and inter-regional collaboration for better innovation performance in the EU with reinforced connections between more and less innovative regions building on strategic areas of regional strength and specialization to create and renew European value chains in areas most relevant for the sustainable green and digital transition and the EU's open strategic autonomy, including the five "burning challenges" as defined in the New European Innovation Agenda;
- Enhanced capacity building, experience sharing and cooperation fostering wider implementation of innovation procurement, to shorten the time-to-market for innovative solutions that respond to concrete procurement needs and societal challenges.
- Increase innovation co-investments, fostering synergies and other funding leverages;
- Improved innovation policy coordination and networking activities of the Member States and Associated Countries through the EIC Forum.

CONNECT-01: Preparatory action for setting up joint programmes among innovation ecosystems actors

The topic will allow national, regional and/or local authorities in charge of innovation policies and programmes from Member States, Associated Countries and/or their regions, and other research and innovation actors, to prepare joint multi-annual programmes of activities and action plans with the aim of strengthening the performance and capacity of their innovation ecosystems, their efficient interconnection and their alignment towards EU-level priorities, in line with the New European Innovation Agenda, to jointly tackle challenges at EU, national, regional, and local level.

The proposals for the development of a joint long-term action plan may include the following two phases:

1) A first phase to foster close dialogue among key stakeholders for strategy/partnership building, mapping, and analysis of existing national and/or regional and/or local innovation agendas/strategies/policies/plans/activities. Proposals are welcome to cover a diverse range of innovation actors that are relevant for the fulfilment of their goals and to foresee ways to motivate their inclusion. Activities are encouraged to consider existing tools, knowledge and expertise, including the methodology and governance tools tested and developed in the context of the Regional Innovation Valleys or the knowledge and expertise of the EIT KICs with place-based approaches to innovation;

2) A second phase dedicated to the concretising, setting up, and finalising the joint action plan(s) and allocation of the activities over a period of the proposed action plans.

The applicants are encouraged to consider a project duration of 12 to 18 months.

The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 1.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

CONNECT-02: Implementing co-funded action plans for connected regional innovation valleys

In line with the New European Innovation Agenda's flagship on accelerating and strengthening innovation in European Innovation Ecosystems across the EU and addressing the innovation divide, this action is intended to create connected regional innovation valleys across the European Union (EU), involving regions with lower innovation performances, by building on strategic areas of regional strength and specialisation (defined in their smart specialisation strategies), in support of key EU priorities. Regions represented by successful applicant national or regional authorities under this call will be recognised as "regional innovation valleys".

The aim of this topic is to foster the creation of efficient, open, inclusive and interconnected European innovation ecosystems in line with the New European Innovation Agenda, notably in thematic/technological areas (including deep tech) that will be critical for EU value chains.

It will also contribute to the twin green and digital transition and a resilient society, and to the net-zero objective, particularly in the areas of reducing reliance on the fossil fuels, increasing global food security, mastering the digital transformation (including cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence), improving healthcare, and achieving circularity.

The topic will support strategically oriented long-term programmes of activities (Annual Work Programmes) to enable authorities in charge of public national or regional innovation policies or programmes with the participation of the private sector and research and innovation actors, to implement joint activities towards innovation development and deployment, possibly including innovation procurement, aimed at tackling challenges at EU, national and regional level.

The applicants are encouraged to consider a project duration of three to five (3-5) years.

The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 5.00 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.

Further information:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2025/wp-10-european-innovation-ecosystems_horizon-2025_en.pdf

Horizon Europe Co-Funded European Partnership for Resilient Cultural Heritage; Deadline Proposal: 15.10.2025

The challenge of cultural heritage lies in preserving and safeguarding a society's rich history, traditions, artefacts, and knowledge. This involves addressing issues such as deterioration, damage, theft, conflict, changing societal values and new challenges such as the climate change. In addition, it is essential to strike a balance between accessibility for future generations and respect for cultural sensitivities.

Proposals for the co-funded partnership on resilient cultural heritage must aim to enhance efforts to better understand and mitigate the effects of the triple planetary crisis (climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss), with focus on the impact of climate change on tangible and intangible cultural heritage, in line with the EU's cultural and environmental policies, embodied in the Creative Europe programme and the European Green Deal.

The partnership will focus on resilience as the individual and collective capacity to anticipate, respond and adapt to situations where the protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage becomes more challenging due to increased risks of loss and damage. At the same time, the potential of cultural heritage to support resilience needs to be harnessed, as cultural heritage has a strong societal, environmental, economic, psychological and well-being dimension and contributes to the construction and preservation of individual and collective identity and acceptance of incoming changes.

Through its ability to bring together different stakeholders (e.g. research funders, cultural heritage authorities and professionals, citizens, innovators, policy-makers), the partnership will create a critical mass of resources to implement a long-term Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA), building on the work of the Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) Cultural Heritage and the ARCHE Coordination and Support Action funded under Horizon Europe 2021 call for proposals in Cluster 2. Proposals should build on existing knowledge, activities and networks, notably the ones funded by the European Union, to the extent appropriate. The input of other ERA entities such as HERA, CHANSE, the JPI Climate may be considered.

Proposals should in addition take into account the findings of the first-ever European Climate Risk Assessment (EUCRA) report, which calls for decisive evidence-based actions to prevent lock-in in maladaptive pathways to address climate-related risks, such as in land-use planning and long-lived infrastructure. The partnership is expected to contribute to the Communication Managing climate risks - protecting people and prosperity, which requires improving the science base for future adaptation actions and aims to foster innovation and build resilience. The partnership should also develop its activities considering the 8th Environment Action Programme Mid-Term Review as published in March 2024.

The partnership should be implemented through a joint programme of activities ranging from coordinating transnational research efforts to other activities such as improving access to data and services, optimising the use of and services provided by research infrastructures, as well as networking, capacity building, training and dissemination activities.

The total indicative budget for the partnership is up to EUR 60 million and subject to the effective implementation of the financial commitments made by the members of the consortium. The expected duration of the partnership is seven to ten years

Deadline date: 15 October 2025 - 17.00 Brussels time

Further information:

https://cordis.europa.eu/programme/id/HORIZON_HORIZON-CL2-2025-03-HERITAGE-01

BMFTR German-Japanese Academia-Industry International Collaboration Program on Sustainable Hydrogen Society; Deadline Proposal: 07.01.2025

Both Japan and Germany are transforming their energy systems and are leaders in innovation-oriented research and development in this area. In view of concerns about climate change as well as developing industry, both countries recognize the need to both develop and utilize hydrogen technology in order to create a sustainable society.

Recognizing these needs, this call for proposals aims to support research which expands and contributes to knowledge necessary for an integration of hydrogen into various sectors as a part of a transition to a hydrogen society. To achieve this, this call seeks to support collaboration which goes beyond purely academic work to involve industry actors, such as private sector enterprises. To usher in a hydrogen society within a cross-sectoral framework comprising a diversity of stakeholders, the cooperation of academia and industry allows to devise more realistic approaches to transforming the energy sector.

Funding will be provided for research projects in the field of hydrogen technologies that involve international collaboration between researchers in Germany and Japan and address the following topics in line with the funding purpose described above. Research, including analyses, modelling and simulations, and other approaches, supporting the development of a hydrogen society based on CO₂-free hydrogen in particular from renewable sources, for example including but not limited to:

- Smart energy systems, such as synergistic sector coupling design for systems highly reliant on renewable energies and

multi-energy systems

- Hydrogen or synthetic fuels or synthetic NH₃ applications to hard-to-abate sectors that are difficult to electrify, such as for steel, chemical and ceramics production
- Techno-economic analyses of hydrogen technologies and analysis of social acceptability of hydrogen technology use
- Scenarios for effective development of the transition to a hydrogen society
- Life cycle assessments of technologies for smart energy systems including hydrogen production, synthesis, storage, and utilization toward sustainability

The benefits for Germany and Japan should be clearly identifiable and strategies for implementing the research findings in industry and society should be set out. Furthermore, the projects should contribute to achieving the following cooperation objectives:

- International networking and intensification of German-Japanese cooperation in the stated priority areas
- Preparation of follow-up activities, e.g. application for funding under specialist BMFTR programmes, DFG, Horizon Europe and similar programmes for the German side, JST programmes and similar programmes for the Japanese side.

On the German side, funding will be awarded as project grants usually amounting to 600,000 euros per collaborative project for a maximum period of 36 months.

In the first step, project outlines must be submitted to the project management agency in written and/or electronic form by January 7th 2026 at the latest using the 'easy-Online' electronic tool.

Contact Persons DLR Project Management Agency:

Science: Dr. Nicola Hartlieb, Phone: +49 228/38 21-1409, Mail: nicola.hartlieb@dlr.de

Science: Dr. Sabine Puch, Phone: 49 2 28/38 21-1423, Mail: sabine.puch@dlr.de

Administration: Birgit Ehrenberg, Phone: +49 228/38 21-1471, Mail: Birgit.Ehrenberg@dlr.de

Further information:

https://www.jst.go.jp/inter/sicorp/download/ge/hydrotech2/guideline_en.pdf

BMWE Förderaufruf für internationale Wasserstoffprojekte; Deadline Proposal: 18.12.2025

Gefördert werden der Aufbau von industriellen Produktionsanlagen für erneuerbaren Wasserstoff und dessen Derivate in Ländern außerhalb des Europäischen Wirtschaftsraums und der Schweiz sowie begleitende wissenschaftliche Analysen und Studien. Damit unterstützt die Förderrichtlinie deutsche Unternehmen bei ihrem Beitrag zur Vorbereitung und zum Aufbau von verlässlichen und nachhaltigen Importstrukturen für erneuerbaren Wasserstoff.

Folgende drei Förderziele sollen erreicht werden:

- der zeitnahe und zielgerichtete Aufbau eines globalen Marktes für erneuerbaren Wasserstoff und seine Derivate und die hierdurch bewirkte Preissenkung durch Skalierung und Innovation,
- die Förderung des Einsatzes und der Anwendung von Technologien zur Erzeugung von erneuerbarem Wasserstoff und seinen Derivaten von Unternehmen mit Niederlassung oder Betriebsstätte in Deutschland,
- die Vorbereitung und Umsetzung von Importrouten nach Deutschland

Das BMWF unterstützt in Modul 1 den Aufbau von Erzeugungsanlagen für erneuerbaren Wasserstoff und seine Derivate sowie begleitende beziehungsweise vorbereitende wissenschaftliche Analysen und Studien (bspw. Machbarkeitsstudien). Die Förderung von lokalen Speicherinfrastrukturen und Transport von erneuerbarem Wasserstoff sind künftig keine eigenständigen Schwerpunkte mehr, sondern nur noch im Rahmen von Erzeugungsprojekten vorgesehen.

Im Modul 2 unterstützt das BMFTR begleitende Forschungsvorhaben im TRL-Bereich 1-3 sowie vorbereitende bzw. begleitende wissenschaftliche Analysen und Studien, den Aufbau von relevanten Forschungsinfrastrukturen und die Entwicklung von Betreibermodellen, die ein Vorhaben im Modul 1 begleiten. Die Ausbildung des wissenschaftlichen und wirtschaftlichen Nachwuchses können Bestandteil von Vorhaben sein. Damit setzt die Förderrichtlinie für internationale Wasserstoffprojekte

die im Jahre 2023 fortgeschriebene Nationale Wasserstoffstrategie um und trägt der Wasserstoffimportstrategie vom Juli 2024 Rechnung.

Von der Förderung profitieren können Projekte mit einem Umsetzungsstandort außerhalb des europäischen Wirtschaftsraums und der Schweiz mit Beteiligung deutscher Unternehmen. Hochschulen und Forschungseinrichtungen können eine Förderung für begleitende Forschungsarbeiten erhalten.

Am 13. Oktober 2025 haben interessierte Zuwendungsempfänger die Gelegenheit sich im Rahmen einer Informationsveranstaltung über die Förderrichtlinie und entsprechende Fördermöglichkeiten zu informieren sowie Fragen zu stellen. Eine Registrierung ist über folgenden Link möglich: https://formulare.ptj.de/infoveranstaltung_zum_foerderaufruf_internationale_wasserstoffprojekte

Frist für Skizzeneinreichung: 18.12.2025

Ansprechpersonen Projektträger Jülich:

Modul 1: Herr Dr. Busche, Telefon: +492461611999, E-Mail: ptj-modul1-h2int@fz-juelich.de

Modul 2: Herr Dr. Wiesenmayer, Telefon: +492461611663, E-Mail: ptj-ewf-h2int@fz-juelich.de

Further information:

<https://www.ptj.de/foerdermoeglichkeiten/internationale-wasserstoffprojekte-bmwe-modul-1>

EU-Hochschulnetzwerk Informationsveranstaltung zu den ERC Grants; Deadline Registration: 08.10.2025

09.10.2025, 10:00 – 12.00 Uhr: Campus Welcome Center OVGU Magdeburg

Über die Anforderungen an die Bewerbung um einen ERC Grant informiert Herr Dr. Andreas Keil von der ERC Exekutiv Agentur Brüssel. Als Gast steht Herr Professor Dr. Julian Thiele, ERC Starting Grant Inhaber sowie Frau Professor Dr. Inna Lavrik (beide tbc) für Fragen zur Verfügung.

Die Veranstaltung bietet Erfahrungsberichte erfolgreicher Antragstellerinnen und Antragsteller und ermöglicht die Klärung individueller Fragen. Darüber hinaus erhalten die Teilnehmenden einen Überblick über die Förderberatung und Rahmenbedingungen an der OVGU. Abgerundet wird die Veranstaltung durch Networking bei einem Imbiss und Kaffee mit Expertinnen und Experten.

Eine Teilnahme an der Veranstaltung ist kostenlos, die vorherige Anmeldung über den folgenden Link allerdings erforderlich: https://eveno.com/ovgu_erc

Further information:

<https://www.euhochschulnetz-sachsen-anhalt.de/Veranstaltungen.html>

Other EU Academic Network of Saxony-Anhalt (nEUTzwerk)

The universities in the state of Saxony-Anhalt founded the "EU Academic Network of Saxony-Anhalt" at the beginning of 2011 in order to support researchers at all universities in the acquisition and use of EU funding for research and innovation by providing information, application advice and project management. By strengthening and networking the administrative and advisory skills of the universities, the aim is to increase the acquisition of EU funding for research and innovation and technology transfer.

You may contact the EU Academic Network of Saxony-Anhalt via the information provided online:

https://www.euhochschulnetz-sachsen-anhalt.de/eu_hsnetz/en/

Other Contact Research Funding Advisory Service at Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg

If you have any questions about funding opportunities, specific calls for proposals, help with submitting applications and project support, please contact the Research Funding Advisory Service/EU University Network at Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg.

Information about current event, funding structures and contact details online at:

<https://www.ovgu.de/en/ContactResearchFundingAdvice.html>

<https://www.euhochschulnetz-sachsen-anhalt.de/en/>