

## HORIZON EUROPE Excellence Hubs

### TOPIC ID: HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-07-01

#### Scope:

Excellence hubs are part of the European Excellence Initiative and complement the science-oriented schemes Teaming, Twinning, ERA Chairs and the European Excellence Initiative for universities by a dedicated innovation component.

Excellence hubs will focus on innovation by allowing innovation ecosystems in Widening countries and beyond, to team up and create better linkages between academia, business, government and society.

This will foster a real place-based innovation culture in Widening countries based on a strategic agenda aligned with regional or national smart specialisation strategies.

In this context, synergies will be sought with the programme parts on European Innovation Ecosystems, EIC pathfinder and the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) as well as the initiative 'Partnerships for Regional Innovation' run by the JRC.

The excellence hubs will be the basis in Widening countries of the pan-European Innovation Ecosystem of the new Innovation Agenda for Europe. The proposal should also demonstrate the win-win effects of the partnership established by the consortium and the benefits for employment and post crisis recovery.

Unlike Teaming projects that are centred around a single beneficiary Excellence Hubs are networks of place-based innovation ecosystems in Widening countries involving larger communities of actors in a regional context based on the quadruple helix Principle.

#### Core components of the project:

- **Cross-border joint R&I strategy** aligned with regional smart specialisation strategies and/or European policy priorities such as the green and digital transition;
- **R&I project consolidating academia business linkages** and Providing evidence for strategy building and investment: The research Component should be developed by joint pilot research projects in a domain

covered by the joint strategy that should facilitate long-term cross border and inter-sectoral collaborative links between partners notably academia and business and advancement in science and technology development with market potential.

In particular R&I projects should serve the purpose to close knowledge gaps and develop evidence to underpin the development of the strategy and the investment plans;

- **Action and investment plans for the implementation of the strategy** including the development of business models for innovative products, service and processes to ensure the sustainability of the action beyond the project's life time, leveraging national, regional and European funds as well as private (venture) capital;
- **Conceptual design and pre-planning for pilots and demonstrators** (if applicable) in line with the strategy and if applicable based on the outcome of the R&I component. However, the realisation of such pilots and demonstrators must be Financed by other sources in particular programmes co-financed by the ERDF, INTERREG, IPA or similar;
- **Accompanying measures** are complementary activities that may promote knowledge and technology transfer, visibility, mutual learning and skills development especially in research and innovation management and entrepreneurship for creation of start-ups as well as citizen engagement;
- **Optional:** Mentoring of an emerging place-based innovation ecosystem established in rural areas, Western Balkans or Eastern Partnership Countries including Ukraine. Legal entities from such countries and regions are encouraged to join the project as participants in order to benefit from mentoring, training, knowledge transfer even if their ecosystems are not yet developed to a full quadruple helix structure.

#### Eligibility conditions

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium.

Proposals must involve at least two Widening Country R&I ecosystems.

Each Widening Country R&I ecosystem must comprise four different categories of actors i.e.

- a) academic institutions (universities and/or non-university research centres or labs),
- b) business entities (active established firms with relevant revenues),
- c) public authorities or authorised agencies operating at regional or local level and
- d) societal actors (civil society organisations, associations, citizens, end users, media, cultural actors etc.).

## *Serviciul pentru Managementul Activităților de Cercetare Științifică*

**Duration:** The expected duration of the project is up to 4 years.

**Budget**

between EUR 2.00 and 6.00 million/project  
Total Budget for the topic: 60.00 million EUR.

**Planned opening date:**

**28 September 2023**

**Deadline date:**

**07 March 2024 17:00:00 Brussels time**

**Documents:**

[HE Main Work Programme 2023–2024 – 11. Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area](#)

[Standard application form \(HE CSA\)](#)

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