



EU Missions

Frequently Asked Questions

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*Research and
Innovation*

Note: this document is for background information and may be used for communication purposes in relation to EU missions, although the statements it contains do not represent official policy of the European Commission.

1. What are EU missions?

EU missions are ambitious and bold commitments to find solutions to major societal challenges, through leveraging the power of research and innovation together with policy and resources from across the EU. This work is taking place in five areas: cancer; adaptation to climate change; healthy ocean, seas and waters; climate-neutral and smart cities; soil health and food.

EU missions are a new instrument of Horizon Europe, the EU research and innovation programme for the years 2021-27. They will operate as portfolios of actions – including research projects, legislative initiatives or policy measures – to achieve measurable goals. The Horizon Europe legislation¹ lists the criteria used to identify the missions. See below the annex on Horizon Europe legislation on EU missions.

Each mission will have a specific timeframe and budget determined by the size of the challenge.

2. How will these missions contribute to EU priorities?

EU missions will support Europe's transformation into a greener, healthier, more resilient continent. They are designed to contribute to the Commission's key policy objectives such as the European Green Deal. For example, Mission Climate is already a concrete element of the new Climate Adaptation Strategy, and Mission Cancer of the Beating Cancer Plan. They aim to bring tangible benefits to people in Europe and engage Europeans in their design, implementation and monitoring.

3. Possible EU missions

With the advice provided by Mission Boards (see section 7), high level groups of experts appointed by the European Commission, five missions have been put forward:

1. Mission on Cancer: saving more than 3 million lives by 2030, and for those affected by cancer, to live longer and better.
2. Mission on Climate adaptation: to support European regions and communities on their transformative journey to climate resilience, and reach, by 2030, at least 150 European regions and communities.
3. Mission on Ocean, Seas and Waters: restore the health of our ocean and waters by 2030.
4. Mission on Climate-neutral and smart cities: 100 climate neutral cities by 2030 - by and for the citizens.

¹<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0695&from=EN>

5. Mission on Soil Health and Food: a pathway towards ensuring that 75% of soils in the EU are healthy by 2030 for food, people, planet and climate.

4. When will the missions be launched?

Over the last year, the Commission has prepared a detailed implementation plan for each mission. The plans include objectives, an intervention logic and key actions to be supported, investment strategy and indicators. At the end of this preparatory phase, the mission implementation plans were assessed against a set of robust criteria including added value and the effectiveness of the approach as a policy tool.

On the basis of these solid implementation plans, a Project Group of Commissioners discussed the implementation plans in June 2021. They gave broad support and instructed to move forward for all 5 missions with the concrete preparation of the implementation phase, which remains subject to a final decision on its launch in September.

This final decision will be taken on the basis of:

1. The slightly adjusted implementation plans to be finalised in July and August to take into account of the comments made by Commissioners (e.g. reinforce the R&I contents).
2. DG-level agreement on details regarding the funding of the Missions in Horizon.

In parallel, services will put together an amendment to the Work Programme with the actions implementing the five missions in 2021-22 and will discuss them with Member States over the summer. The objective is to adopt the Work Programme amendment by end 2021 to launch the actions in 2022 on the ground.

5. How long will a mission last?

A mission should last as long as is needed to accomplish its objectives. There is no fixed duration, but they should deliver a stream of benefits with final results expected to be achieved around 2030, given the likely ambition and scale of EU missions.

6. How can Europeans participate and contribute to these missions?

The proposed missions were developed through the results of a dialogue with citizens throughout Europe that were integrated in the work done by Mission Boards.

The Commission will continue throughout the life of missions to engage with citizens to design, monitor and assess the missions (see also section 14). This covers consultation, as well as active participation in the implementation of the missions.

7. What are Mission Boards and how were they selected?

Mission Boards were set up by the European Commission to provide advice on the identification of missions and their implementation. They are groups of up to 15 independent experts with a broad mix of profiles including innovation, research, policy making, civil society and practitioner organisations. Across all Boards, there is a minimum of one Mission Board member from each Member State. There are 45% women and 55% men on the Mission Boards. More information on [Mission Boards is available at this link](#).

The Mission Board members are remunerated according to the standard rules applicable to the [Commission expert groups](#). Specifically, they receive a

reimbursement for the travel expenses incurred to attend the Board meetings and an honorarium according to normal Commission rules for experts of €450/day.

The new call for expressions of interest to create new Mission Board members, is planned to be launched in Autumn 2021. The new Mission Boards will bring the relevant expertise needed for the implementation of the Missions, building on the work of the first phase Mission Boards.

8. How will missions be implemented?

The EU missions will involve projects and policy actions in Horizon Europe and other EU or national funding programmes, which will operate as a portfolio.

9. What is the role of Mission Managers?

Mission Managers and Deputy Mission Managers are very senior Commission officials who lead the missions and are their public faces. They ensure a combined approach linking across the different services of the Commission. They are supported by mission secretariats. Most of the [Mission Managers](#) are based outside DG Research and Innovation, showing that missions have wide spread support beyond R&I in the European Commission.

10. What is the budget for missions?

There is no fixed budget for each mission. During the current preparatory phase each mission developed a limited number of actions, with a total budget for each up to €5 million, in the first Horizon Europe Work Programme. These actions will lay the foundations for the missions, addressing urgent priorities and enhancing the potential for rapid scaling up of the investments after the conclusion of the preparatory phase.

Concerning the R&I component, the Horizon Europe legislation¹ stipulates that during the first 3 years of the programme, a maximum of 10% of the annual budget of Pillar II (Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness) shall be programmed through specific calls for implementing the missions. For the remaining part of the programme, and only after a positive assessment of the mission selection and management process, this percentage may be increased. Most importantly, the missions will receive support over and beyond Horizon Europe funding. For missions to be successful, support and alignment from other European and national programmes will also be essential.

11. How are missions relevant to innovation and growth?

The EU missions by their very nature support innovation and change. In particular, concerning technological innovation, they will encompass activities from a broad range of Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) with other forms of complementary measures such as adopting new standards or regulations, or developing new policy instruments to correct market failures. EU missions will crowd-in funding and private investments towards existing innovative markets, but also will spark the creation of new markets for European sustainable growth, improving the daily lives of Europeans.

12. How will missions be monitored?

Key Performance Indicators will be defined to monitor the progress of the missions towards short, medium and long-term targets.

An assessment of missions shall take place no later than 2023, before any decision is taken on creating new missions, continuing, terminating or redirecting ongoing missions. The assessment's results shall be made public and shall include the

analysis of their selection process and of their governance, budget, focus and progress to date. The Commission will present a report on the main findings to the Council and the European Parliament.

13. What is the difference between EU missions and European partnerships?

European Partnerships and EU missions are both instruments of the Horizon Europe framework programme, hence they share some features and goals. However, EU missions aim to foster solutions through a more bottom-up approach that is by mobilising citizens and stakeholders, as well as by mobilising actors well beyond science and innovation domain. European Partnerships are set up on the basis memorandum of understanding or contractual arrangements between the Commission and the partners, and require ownership and long-term financial commitments from the partners. In principle, some partnerships may contribute to the achievement of some missions, for example by aligning parts of the partnerships' annual plans to relevant mission goals.

14. What is the role of citizens in EU Missions?

EU missions bring in new forms of governance and this includes close involvement of citizens. Commissioner Gabriel has placed citizen engagement at the heart of the missions. Citizens have been involved in the co-design of missions, and the Commission is committed to engage them throughout the missions' lifecycle, such as participating in projects and assessing the missions' results. This co-creation is not only consultation, but also building close relations through listening, giving feedback and taking action.

Annex: Mission references in the Horizon Europe legislation

Article 2(5) of the Horizon Europe Regulation

'mission' means a portfolio of actions intended to achieve a measurable goal within a set timeframe, and impact for science and technology and/or society and citizens that could not be achieved through individual actions;

Article 8 of the Horizon Europe Regulation

1. Missions shall be programmed within the pillar 'Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness', but may also benefit from actions carried out within other parts of the Programme as well as complementary actions carried out under other Union programmes. Missions shall allow for competing solutions, resulting in pan-European added value and impact.

2. Missions shall be defined and implemented in accordance with this Regulation and the specific programme, ensuring the active and early involvement of the Member States and extensive exchanges with the European Parliament. The missions, their objectives, budget, targets, scope, indicators and milestones shall be identified in strategic R&I plans or the work programmes as appropriate. Evaluations of proposals under the missions shall be carried out in accordance with Article 29.

3. During the first three years of the Programme, a maximum of 10 % of the annual budget of Pillar II shall be programmed through specific calls for proposals for implementing the missions. For the remaining years of the Programme that percentage may be increased subject to a positive assessment of the mission selection and of the management process. The Commission shall communicate the total budgetary share of each work programme dedicated to missions.

3. Missions shall:

(a) using SDGs as sources for their design and implementation, have a clear R&I content and Union added value, and contribute to reaching Union priorities and commitments and the Programme objectives referred to in Article 3;

(b) cover areas of common European relevance, be inclusive, encourage broad engagement and active participation from various types of stakeholders from the public and private sector, including citizens and end-users, and deliver R&I results that could benefit all Member States;

(c) be bold and inspirational, hence have wide, scientific, technological, societal, economic, environmental or policy relevance and impact;

(d) indicate a clear direction and clear objectives, be targeted, measurable and time-bound and have a clear budgetary envelope;

(e) be selected in a transparent manner and be centred on ambitious, excellence-based and impact-driven, but realistic goals and on research, development and innovation activities;

(f) have the necessary scope, scale and mobilisation of the resources and leverage of additional public and private funds required to deliver their outcome;

(g) stimulate activities across disciplines (including SSH) and encompass activities from a broad range of TRLs, including lower TRLs;

(h) be open to multiple, bottom-up approaches and solutions which take into account human and societal needs and benefits and recognise the importance of diverse contributions to their achievement;

(i) benefit from synergies with other Union programmes in a transparent manner as well as with national and, where relevant, regional innovation ecosystems.

5. The Commission shall monitor and evaluate each mission in accordance with Articles 50 and 52 and Annex V, including progress towards short, medium and long-term targets, covering the implementation, monitoring and phasing out of the missions. An assessment of the first missions established under the Programme shall take place no later than 2023 and before any decision is taken on creating new missions, or on continuing, terminating or redirecting ongoing missions. The results of that assessment shall be made public and shall include, but not be limited to, an analysis of their selection process and of their governance, budget, focus and progress to date.

Areas for possible missions as defined in the ANNEX VI of the Horizon Europe Regulation:

Areas for possible missions:

- Missions Area 1: Adaptation to Climate Change, including Societal Transformation. —
- Mission Area 2: Cancer.
- Mission Area 3: Healthy Oceans, Seas, Coastal and Inland Waters.
- Mission Area 4: Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities.
- Mission Area 5: Soil Health and Food.

Each mission follows the principles set out in Article 8(4) of this Regulation

Article 7 of Horizon Europe Specific Programme

Missions

1. R&I missions may be established in the mission areas identified in Annex VI of Regulation (EU) 2021/695.

2. A mission board shall be established for each mission area, unless existing advisory structures can be used, in which case the Programme Committee referred to in Article 14 shall be informed in advance.

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Each mission board shall be composed of a maximum of 15 independent high-level individuals with broad expertise, including where appropriate SSH experts, from across Europe and beyond, including relevant end-users' representatives. The mission board members shall be appointed by the Commission, following a transparent identification procedure which shall include an open call for expressions of interest. The Programme Committee shall be consulted in a timely manner on the identification and selection procedures, including the criteria used. The term of office of mission board members shall be up to five years, renewable once.

3. Mission boards shall not have decision-making powers. They shall advise the Commission on the following:

(a) the identification and design of one or more missions in the respective mission area according to the provisions and criteria set out in Article 8 of Regulation (EU) 2021/695;

(b) the content of work programmes and their revision as needed for achieving the mission objectives, with input from stakeholders and, where relevant, the general public;

(c) the characteristics of project portfolios for missions;

(d) adjustment actions, or termination, if appropriate, based on implementation assessments according to the defined objectives of the mission;

(e) the selection of independent external experts in accordance with Article 49 of Regulation (EU) 2021/695, briefing of these independent external experts and evaluation criteria and their weighting;

(f) framework conditions which help achieve the objectives of the mission;

(g) communication, including on the performance and the achievements of the mission;

(h) policy coordination between relevant actors at different levels, in particular regarding synergies with other Union policies;

(i) key performance indicators.

The advice of the mission boards shall be made public.

4. For each Mission Area, the Programme Committee shall be involved in the preparation and life cycle of the missions, taking into account relevant issues from the national context and opportunities to enhance alignment with activities on national level. Interactions with the mission boards shall take place in a timely and comprehensive manner.

5. The work programme provided for in Article 13 shall include for each mission identified in the Strategic Plan, the design, the characteristics of their project portfolios and specific provisions to enable an efficient portfolio approach.