

Horizon Europe – Cluster 3: Civil Security for Society

What is Horizon Europe?

Horizon Europe is the EU’s key funding programme for research and innovation with a budget of €95.5 billion for the period 2021-2027. It tackles climate change, helps to achieve the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and boosts Europe’s competitiveness and growth.

The programme facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing EU policies while tackling global challenges. It supports the creation and better sharing of knowledge and technologies.

It also creates jobs, fully engages Europe’s talent pool, boosts economic growth, promotes industrial competitiveness and optimises investment impact within a strengthened European Research Area.

For information on UK participation in the programme see UKRO’s [dedicated factsheet](#).

What are clusters in Horizon Europe?

The ‘Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness’ pillar of Horizon Europe will take forward the current societal challenges and industrial technologies in a more ‘top-down’ approach, addressing EU and global policy challenges. These challenges and opportunities will be integrated into six clusters - each with a number of specific intervention areas - designed to incentivise cross-disciplinary, cross-sectoral, cross-policy and international collaboration. In terms of addressing global political priorities, each cluster will contribute towards several Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and many SDGs will be supported by more than one cluster.

The clusters and their intervention areas are expected to achieve greater impact when compared to the societal challenges of Horizon 2020 since they will cut across classical boundaries between disciplines and address different types of challenges. The integrated clusters of activities will derive from the [First Strategic Plan for Horizon Europe 2021-24](#) and [Second Strategic Plan for Horizon Europe 2025-27](#) and will form the basis for support to collaborative research and innovation projects under the ‘Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness’ pillar.

What is funded under Cluster 3?

Cluster 3 has an overall budget of €1.596 billion and aims to support four impact areas of the Horizon Europe Strategic Plan:



This cluster will focus on activities in support of the implementation of EU policy priorities relating to security, including cybersecurity, and disaster risk management. Research and innovation activities will help to put into practice the EU Maritime Security Strategy and, as concerns EU maritime borders, take in role in developing integrated border management.

Alongside supporting EU policy responses to security challenges, research and innovation within this cluster will boost the competitiveness of companies and research organisations in the EU civil security sector.

The specific areas of intervention in Cluster 3 include the following six destinations:

Destination 1 - Better Protect the EU and its Citizens Against Crime and Terrorism

- This Destination includes research topics aimed at fighting crime and terrorism more effectively, particularly through better prevention of crime and enhanced investigation capabilities concerning both traditional crime and cybercrime, as well as at better protection of citizens from violent attacks in public spaces, through more effective prevention, preparedness and response while preserving the open nature of such spaces.

Destination 2 - Effective management of EU external borders

- This Destination aims to ensure strong European land, air and sea external borders. This includes developing strong capabilities for checks at external borders, consider how future management of borders can develop protection of human rights, and how it can facilitate protection of refugees, enable better security and management of EU maritime borders, maritime critical infrastructures, maritime activities and transport, contributing as well to a better performance and cooperation on coast guard functions, should contribute to capabilities for detecting illegal activities both at external border crossing points and through the supply chain.

Destination 3 - Resilient Infrastructure

- Aimed at supporting the resilience of European infrastructures with relevant projects, enabling public and private actors to meet current and emerging challenges. Technologically complex applications offer the possibility for better prevention and preparedness, can enable efficient response to different threats and faster recovery. Infrastructure also include in the cyber-domain and hybrid threats, with a combination of cyber and physical attacks.

Destination 4 - Increased Cybersecurity

- Cybersecurity research and innovation activities will support a Europe fit for the digital age, enabling and supporting digital innovation while highly preserving privacy, security, safety and ethical standards. They will contribute to the implementation of the digital and privacy policy of the Union.

Destination 5 - A Disaster-Resilient Society for Europe

- This Destination supports the implementation of international policy initiatives and policies tackling natural and man-made threats (either accidental or intentional), which requires crossborder and cross-sectoral cooperation as well as enhanced collaboration among different actors and strengthened knowledge covering the whole disaster management cycle, from prevention and preparedness to response and recovery (and learning). Understanding and exploiting the existing linkages and synergies among policy initiatives represents a global priority for future research and innovation actions in the field of natural hazards and man-made disasters.

Destination 6 - Strengthened Security Research and Innovation

- This Destination has been designed with to serve all the expected impacts of Cluster 3. Research applied in this domain will contribute to increasing the impact of the work carried out in the EU security Research and Innovation ecosystem as a whole and to contribute to its core values, namely:
 - i) Ensuring that security R&I maintains the focus on the potential final use of its outcomes;
 - ii) Contributing to a forward-looking planning of EU security capabilities;
 - iii) Ensuring the development of security technologies that are socially acceptable;
 - iv) Paving the way to the industrialisation, commercialisation, acquisition and deployment of successful R&I outcomes; and
 - v) Safeguarding EU autonomy and technological sovereignty in critical security areas by contributing to a more competitive and resilient EU security technology and industrial base.

Call timings and budgets

The 2023 calls are now closed.

The deadline for 2024 calls is 20 November 2024.

Please note that some topics have specific eligibility criteria, listed under eligibility and admissibility conditions, such as the obligation to include legal entities established in the target country/region. Applicants are advised to check the work programme for details relating to their topics of interest.

Relevant EU policy areas and developments

The Cluster 3 Work Programme will support the implementation of the [EU Security Union Strategy](#), the [Counter-Terrorism Agenda](#), the border management and security dimensions of the [New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#), the [EU Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy](#), the new [EU Climate Adaptation Strategy](#), [EU Maritime Security Strategy](#) and the [Future EU Cybersecurity Strategy](#).

Restrictions on participation

While the collaborative calls for proposals in Horizon Europe are characterised by general openness (allowing, in principle, organisations from any country to participate), there will be some new restrictions on participation, stemming from the programme's legal basis. These restrictions will be particularly important for calls for proposals launched under Cluster 3:

- **Restrictions on the participation of organisations based in certain Associated Countries** - the legal basis of Horizon Europe allows the Commission to exclude organisations based in the Associated Countries from certain calls for proposals to protect the Union's strategic assets, interests, autonomy or security. This is exceptional and allowed only in duly justified cases.
- **Restrictions on the participation of organisations based in EU Member States/ Associated Countries but controlled by other countries** - to protect the Union's strategic assets, interests, autonomy or security, the Work Programme may also exclude from individual calls for proposals organisations based in EU Member States or in Associated Countries if they are directly or indirectly controlled by third countries or by legal entities from such third countries.

Such restrictions will be explicitly mentioned in the “Topic conditions and documents” section.

More information

- [Horizon Europe website and Cluster 3 website](#)
- [2023-25 Work Programme for Cluster 3](#)

Horizon Europe's legal basis:

- [Regulation establishing Horizon Europe](#)
- [Decision establishing the Specific Programme of Horizon Europe](#)
- [First Strategic Plan for Horizon Europe \(2021-2024\)](#)
- [Second Strategic Plan for Horizon Europe \(2025-2027\)](#)

UKRO Portal

- [UKRO Portal](#) (subscriber access required)

Other websites and resources

- [EU Security Union Strategy](#)
- [New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#)
- [EU Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy](#)
- [EU Maritime Security Strategy](#)
- [Future EU Cybersecurity Strategy](#)