

Horizon Europe – Cluster 2: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive 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 will form the basis for support to collaborative research and innovation projects under the 'Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness' pillar.

What will be funded under Cluster 2?

Cluster 2 will back up the following impact areas of the Horizon Europe Strategic Plan:

- Supporting policy action for democracy; tackling political extremism and polarisation
- Protecting the cultural heritage (broad scope) and R&I in culture and creative sectors
- Supporting EU migration and mobility policies, both internal and external
- Reversing inequalities and their causes and promoting gender equality
- Analysing drivers of societal change (technology, globalisation, demographics)

Funding will help the EU promote a model of inclusive and sustainable growth while reaping the benefits of technological advancements. Furthermore, it will help to enhance trust in and promote innovation of democratic governance, as well as combat inequalities, unemployment, marginalisation, discrimination and radicalisation. The Cluster 2 projects will help to guarantee human rights, foster cultural diversity and European cultural heritage, as well as empower citizens through social innovation. The management of migration and the integration of migrants into European societies will also continue to be priority issues. In 2023-2024, the calls also address the societal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Furthermore, through the dedicated budget, the work programme will support the establishment of a digital European cultural heritage collaborative space.

Areas of intervention

More specifically, Cluster 2 contributes to six expected impacts as set out by the strategic plan for 2021-2024, which are the three destinations of the work programme 2023-2024 described below.



Destination 1 - Innovative Research on Democracy and Governance

- Focuses on declining levels of trust in the political institutions of democracy and the crisis of democracies across the globe, including in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.
- Funded research on the present challenges and tensions in democracy will help to better understand and strengthen democracy, its resilience and stability. The aim is to develop evidence-based innovations, policies and policy recommendations, as well as institutional frameworks that expand political participation, social dialogue, civic engagement, gender equality and inclusiveness.



Destination 2 - Innovative Research on the European Cultural Heritage and the Cultural and Creative Industries

- Addresses challenges for tangible and intangible cultural heritage: deterioration due to climate change, pollution, disasters, trafficking, lack of finance, as well as on the Europe's cultural production (in particular film and music) and its international competitiveness.
- Funded research will underpin the EU's leading role in protecting and enhancing Europe's cultural heritage and scale-up the competitiveness of its cultural and creative industries, while promoting use of digital and cutting-edge technologies and an active and sustainable engagement of citizens. Dedicated calls will support the new European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage.



Destination 3 - Innovative Research on Social and Economic Transformations

- Focuses on complex changes that have impact on the livelihoods and wellbeing of EU citizens (demographic changes, migration, digitalisation, automation, environmental degradation and globalisation), often increasing inequalities poverty and social exclusion.
- Funded research will contribute to a comprehensive and reflective European strategy for inclusive growth, including social, economic, ecological and historical dimensions. It will also support EU's resilience in situations of crisis, such as in the case of Covid-19 and EU's governance of migration and mobility policies, both internal and external.

Call timings and budgets

Under the 2023-2024 work programme, Cluster 2 has a total budget of €545 million.

The 2023 calls are now closed, except for two call topics linked to the new "A European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage" initiative, which opened on 10 January and will close on 21 September.

The 2024 calls open on 4 October 2023 and close on 7 February 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. For twelve 2023-2024 topics, the Commission will use the lump sum funding model.

Relevant EU policy areas and developments

The call topics under each destination are closely connected to the current political and R&I agendas.

A new push for European democracy is among the six main priorities of the European Commission for 2019-2024. Its aim is to protect European democracy from external interference such as disinformation and online hate messages and it is underpinned by the **European Democracy Action Plan**. The recent **Conference on the Future of Europe** process has been the Commission's tool for enabling participatory democracy in the European Union's policy and law-making.

Promoting and protecting human rights, democracy and the rule of law is at the heart of EU activities, both internally and in the Union's external relations. The current trends and challenges and the necessary response are outlined in the **EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024**.

Cluster 2 is equally linked to the Commission's agenda on **Promoting our European way of life** and multiple initiatives around justice, rule of law and inclusion through which the Commission supports collaboration among Member States in the area of **Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion** policies. The **New Pact on Migration and Asylum** is a proposal for a new common approach to EU migration and mobility policies, both internal and external, while the **Gender Equality Strategy** presents policy objectives and actions to make significant progress by 2025 towards a gender-equal Europe.

The specific intervention area in Cluster 2 dedicated to the EU's commitment to safeguarding and enhancing Europe's cultural heritage, derives from the **European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage**. By focusing on the competitiveness of cultural heritage, arts and cultural and creative sectors, the Work programme contributes to the **European Agenda for Culture's** goal of supporting culture-based creativity in education and innovation, for jobs and growth.

Several topics address the objectives of the EU flagship **European Green Deal**, namely by providing sustainable solutions for cultural heritage conservation and restoration; looking at a translation of the green transition objectives into tangible applications, and inclusive and accessible experiences for citizens, as well as by contributing to the **New European Bauhaus initiative**.

Furthermore, the Work Programme relates to the **EU's Digital Strategy**, in particular to its **Open, democratic and sustainable digital society** component, which focuses on the European way to digital transformation enhancing democratic values and respecting EU fundamental rights. Some topics are expected to bring research-based frameworks to inform data governance and regulate the use of AI and big data, as described in the recent **Communication on Fostering a European Approach to Artificial Intelligence**. To contribute to the wider **European Strategy for Data** and the latest Commission's proposal on a common **European data space for cultural heritage**, the Cluster 2 budget will support the creation of a new **European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage**.

In line with the global approach to research and innovation, as presented in **Europe's Strategy for International Cooperation in R&I**, the Work Programme 2023-24 supports the EU's ambition to have a positive influence in the world and confirms its commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and collaborations with international frameworks (UNESCO, OECD, etc). This is also valid for the topics looking at the multilevel political impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, including governance responses and international solidarity.

Furthermore, the effective **integration of Social Sciences and Humanities in all clusters**, including all missions and partnerships, is a principle through the Horizon Europe programme cycle. This means that SSH can make their contribution where they are most needed. Integrating the socio-economic dimension into the design, development and implementation of research itself, and of new technologies can help find solutions to societal issues.

This cross-cutting priority is reflected by flagging specific topics and/or requesting an assessment of their societal impact. For these topics, SSH should be integrated from the drafting of the topic to the selection and evaluation of projects by evaluators with demonstrable SSH expertise. In addition, the expected societal impact must be explicitly set out in the topics, projects, deliverables and outputs.

More information

- [Horizon Europe website](#) and [Cluster 2 website](#)
- [2023-24 Work Programme for Cluster 2](#)
- [REA Cluster 2 website](#)

Horizon Europe's legal basis:

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

UKRO Portal

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

Other websites and resources

- [EU website on Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities research](#)
- [EU's Coronavirus response](#)
- [European Commission's Political Guidelines for 2019-2024](#)
- [European Democracy Action Plan](#) and [European Agenda on Migration](#)
- [EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024](#)
- [Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion policies](#)
- [Justice and fundamental rights policies](#)
- [The EU Gender Equality Strategy](#)
- [Research and innovation strategy 2020-2024](#)
- [Europe's Strategy for International Cooperation in R&I](#)
- [European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage](#)
- [EU Policy for Culture and Creativity](#)
- [Green Paper 'Unlocking the Potential of Cultural and Creative Industries'](#)
- [Report on a European collaborative cloud for cultural heritage](#) and [EC factsheet](#)
- [European Industrial Strategy](#) and [new European Innovation Agenda factsheet](#)
- [The EU's Cybersecurity Strategy](#)
- [Excellence and trust in artificial intelligence – EU and AI](#)
- [European Green Deal website](#)
- [New European Bauhaus initiative](#)
- [EU's Digital Strategy](#) and [Shaping Europe's digital heritage future page](#)
- [Fostering a European approach to Artificial Intelligence website](#)
- [Joint Programming Initiative \(JPI\) on Cultural Heritage](#)
- [HERA - Humanities in the European Research Area Network](#)
- [NORFACE - New Opportunities for SSH Research Funding in Europe](#)