

## Horizon Europe – Getting started

**Are you a researcher who is curious about EU funding? This is a short guide to getting started with applying for collaborative projects in the EU's thematic 'clusters' of societal challenges.**

The European Union primarily funds research through its Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, known as Horizon Europe. Horizon Europe supports Collaborative Projects between companies, universities, and other partners. These projects address global and societal challenges. Typically, these Collaborative Projects require participation from at least three partners from different EU or associated countries. The number of partners and budget in a given consortium can vary significantly depending on the project needs, however many successful projects have 5-12 partners, and a budget of 2-10 million Euros. Funding for these projects is offered within predefined themes that are published by the EU Commission on a running basis. Proposals need to match the needs of a theme to obtain funding.

### Why participate?

Participating in EU-projects gives you access to research, scholarship and innovation opportunities within a well-funded network of international partners with deep knowledge, advanced technologies, platforms, and methodologies and methodologies. You get the opportunity to create and deepen strategic relationships and networks through collaboration with international partners. You get the opportunity to take part in large research and development projects as well as contribute to solutions of global challenges and needs. As participant in these projects, the door opens to new project collaborations and future opportunities.

### Finding the right opportunities and partners for Horizon Europe

Your first step should be to familiarize yourself with how the EU presents its calls for funding and identify calls where your research could fit. The calls, known as 'topics' in Horizon Europe, can be found on the [Funding & Tenders portal](#). Start by searching for keywords related to your research!

It is not always immediately obvious what is expected of a project from the title of its topic, and your research can sometimes be a crucial part of an area that you are not immediately familiar with. Read the topic descriptions carefully to see what type of partners and competences the EU commission expects to see involved in the project.

If you are looking to plan your project applications for the future, the commission publishes 'Work Programmes' divided by theme ('clusters', in EU language) with collect call topics for the upcoming two years. These work programmes can be found in [EU's reference documents](#), or more conveniently through contact with [Research Services](#). After registering for [Research Services' thematic mailing lists](#), you will receive early drafts of work programmes before they are published officially, and will have the opportunity to provide input on the drafts. This advance knowledge can help you find suitable partners in good time.

Reading work programme and topics can sometimes be challenging. We at Research services are happy to guide you in calls, topics, work programmes and what to be specifically regarded in the proposals. [Contact the EU-team for support!](#)

### **Partner or coordinator?**

There are two ways of participating in a project, either you find a topic and initiate the forming of a consortium, or a consortium approaches you. You can participate as the coordinator of the project, or as a partner in a consortium led by someone else. Man kan delta som koordinator av projektet eller som partner i projekten. Generally, work on a proposal starts with a core group of interested partners. These partners formulate the general idea and then reach out to further partners with complementary competences and expertise as needed.

It is a good idea to always have an open mind towards participating in a project as a partner. If you are just starting your research career, or are more experienced but have not yet taken part in an EU project, it is often a very rewarding experience to participate in a project led by someone else. This can be a good way to familiarize yourself with the expectations and regulations of EU projects, and can help you decide if you would like to lead your own consortium.

If you decide to coordinate a project, it is important that you have a strong interest in the topic, as coordination requires a significant amount of time and effort. Who will coordinate a project is often decided a good way into its planning phase, after discussions with the core project group. Experience coordinating large research projects is obviously a merit for the coordinator, and it is important that you have the possibility to dedicate time to both the application and the project itself, as well as that you have the backing of your boss. It is reasonable to also ask for help and advice from a senior colleague with experience of EU projects, and note that you can be more effective if you can spread the burden of leadership across more than one person. It is a good idea to include costs for support for project management and administration in the proposal's budget. It is difficult to say exactly how much time is required to plan and coordinate a project proposal, but up to 5 months is a reasonable estimate for a full proposal.

### **Finding partners**

To start an application and fill the requirements of a given topic, a mix of partners and competences is needed. Often researchers find it difficult to know where to start the search for suitable calls and new research partners.

### ***Networking and being a project enthusiast***

Don't underestimate your personal network and relationships when it comes to finding project opportunities and collaborators. Ask your network if they know of someone considering an application to a certain topic or group of topics, and let them know that you are interested in participating. Fråga ditt nätverk om de vet någon som funderar på en ansökan, berätta att du är intresserad av att delta. People won't know what you're working on unless you talk about it, so tell others what you're working on wherever you go. However, never give out confidential information! Since all types of stakeholders are welcome in EU

projects your future collaborators shouldn't be restricted to the research community: they can belong to either the public, private, or non-profit sector.

### ***Conferences & brokerage events***

Go to conferences and make yourself and your research visible. Conferences and brokerage events (specific events to connect interested parties organized by the commission) are where researchers from around the world meet to exchange ideas and get inspired. Even if someone is unable to partner with you at the moment, they may have some colleagues or connections who might be interested. Depending on your field of research, you may find it worthwhile to look deeper into the different [European Partnerships](#).

### ***Digital search tools***

When visiting the Funding and Tenders' Portal, you'll find a Partner Search tool. This tool allows you to check the background and previous activities of organizations. You can search by keyword/geographical area/funding type, etc. Search results include complete organisation profiles with lists of funded projects and the possibility to contact representatives.

In addition, under each Topic the Partner search function allows you to publish your interest for the call and find others with similar interest. These tools can be helpful to find missing expertise for your consortium, but it can be hard to build up a core project team this way, so temper your expectations accordingly.

Use Partner Search tools and services of third parties. Several thematic networks (like networks for National Contact Points or the Enterprise Europe Network) and other entities provide partner search facilities with quality checks and a close follow-up of your request or offer. [https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/grants/applying-for-funding/find-partners\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/grants/applying-for-funding/find-partners_en.htm)

You may also take the opportunity to look into the [CORDIS project database](#) for ongoing and completed EU-projects.

At Lund University you can use the Research Portal to identify internal partners: <https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/en/>

### **Support from Research Services at Lund University**

If you have questions, don't hesitate to contact us at Research services. We are happy to guide you to different funding alternatives and answer questions regarding Horizon Europe, the calls and topics, discuss project ideas and consortium considerations, review budget as well as give feedback on both early and later draft proposals. [Contact information to us](#)

To maximise your opportunities to stay informed and get help, it is important to interact as early as possible with the Research Services (Forskningsservice). We highly recommend following the blog: [fs.blogg.lu.se](https://fs.blogg.lu.se), [newsletter](#) and specifically to sign up for [thematic information](#) regarding Horizon Europe.