



Information and Networking webinar to support cooperation with Eastern Partnership (EaP) Partner countries in Research and Innovation

“Horizon Europe Work Programme 2026–2027 and Perspectives towards FP10”

Date: 19 March 2026

Baku (Azerbaijan, UTC+4): 15:00-18:30

Tbilisi (Georgia, UTC+4): 15:00- 18:30

Yerevan (Armenia, UTC+4): 15:00- 18:30

Kyiv (Ukraine, UTC+2): 13:00-16:30

Chişinău (Moldova, UTC+2): 13:00-16:30

Brussels (Belgium, UTC+1): 12:00-15:30

Venue: online

Webex link: To be provided shortly before the event.

Organiser: Global Service Facility (GSF) of the European Commission

Concept Note

1. Background and Rationale

Horizon Europe is the European Union’s ninth Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (R&I) and the largest research and innovation funding programme ever implemented worldwide. With a total budget of €93.5 billion for the period 2021–2027, Horizon Europe is a key instrument to strengthen Europe’s scientific and technological base, boost innovation capacity and competitiveness, and address major global challenges, notably the green and digital transitions, resilience, and societal well-being.

Four Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries — Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine — benefit from associated country status to Horizon Europe, all four countries were previously associated to Horizon 2020. By virtue of their Association Agreements, R&I actors from these countries

participate on equal footing with EU Member States, with access to nearly all Horizon Europe calls and instruments. This status represents a strategic opportunity to further integrate EaP research and innovation communities into the European Research Area (ERA).

In parallel, the European Union has reinforced its geopolitical and strategic engagement with the EaP region, including targeted support for Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, and broader regional cooperation to address shared challenges such as energy transition, climate resilience, health, food systems, disaster risk management and digital transformation.

Against this background, the European Commission adopted, on 11 December 2025, the main Horizon Europe Work Programme 2026–2027, with an indicative budget of €14 billion. This Work Programme translates the priorities of the Horizon Europe Strategic Plan 2025–2027 into concrete funding opportunities and introduces several important novelties, including stronger cross-programme integration, simplification measures and reinforced support for widening participation.

2. Objectives of the Webinar

This webinar serves as the closing event of a European Commission–funded support action dedicated to strengthening participation in Horizon Europe in the EaP region. It aims to consolidate achievements, ensure sustainability of results, and prepare stakeholders for the final phase of Horizon Europe and for the next Framework Programme.

The specific objectives are to:

- Present the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2026–2027, with a focus on opportunities relevant for the EaP Partner countries;
- Highlight thematic areas and instruments of particular strategic importance for the region, including renewable energy, climate action, global health, environmental observation, disaster management, and fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food systems.
- Provide targeted information on measures and calls addressing widening countries, including those relevant for EaP countries associated to Horizon Europe;
- Present specific opportunities for Ukraine, including dedicated support measures and policy-driven initiatives;
- Introduce the European Innovation Council (EIC) Work Programme 2026, with emphasis on instruments accessible to widening countries;
- Offer an initial policy-oriented overview of the EU’s forthcoming 10th Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP10) and its expected orientations;
- Facilitate exchange, questions and networking among R&I stakeholders from the EaP region.

3. Horizon Europe Work Programme 2026–2027: Key Features and Opportunities for the EaP Region

The Horizon Europe Work Programme 2026–2027 places strong emphasis on research and innovation supporting the EU’s strategic priorities, including climate action, digital leadership, economic resilience

and societal preparedness. A key novelty is the introduction of horizontal calls designed to connect different parts of Horizon Europe around cross-cutting EU priorities. These include, inter alia:

- A €540 million Clean Industrial Deal call, supporting clean technologies for climate action and the decarbonisation of energy-intensive industries;
- An “AI in Science” call, with an indicative budget of around €90 million, promoting trustworthy artificial intelligence applications across areas such as advanced materials, agriculture, environment and food systems.

The Work Programme also expands Choose Europe for Science, including:

- Approximately €50 million under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions to support long-term fellowships, postdoctoral stability and relocation incentives;
- Complementary support through Research Infrastructures (€50 million) and ERA Chairs (€240 million).

In line with the EU’s commitment to simplification and broader participation, the 2026–2027 Work Programme is significantly streamlined compared with previous editions: it is 33% shorter, around 50% of the budget is implemented through lump-sum funding, and 41 topics apply a two-stage evaluation process, reducing administrative burden for applicants.

Within the thematic clusters and missions, the Work Programme offers multiple opportunities relevant to all EaP Partner countries, particularly in areas such as:

- Renewable and sustainable energy systems;
- Climate adaptation, environmental monitoring and Earth observation;
- Disaster risk reduction and crisis management;
- Global health and health systems resilience;
- Sustainable, fair and environmentally friendly food systems.

4. The European Innovation Council

A dedicated session of the event will focus on the European Innovation Council (EIC) Work Programme 2026, highlighting opportunities for innovators, startups and SMEs from widening countries, which are of particular relevance for the EaP region. Special attention will be given to the EIC Pre-Accelerator for Widening Countries, a targeted instrument designed to enhance the innovation, business and investment readiness of early-stage deep-tech companies, and to support their progression towards the EIC Accelerator.

This session will also address:

- The role of EIC Business Acceleration Services in integrating innovators from widening countries into European and global innovation ecosystems;
- Horizontal implementation and evaluation provisions promoting geographical balance and diversity, including priority mechanisms applied in cases of equally ranked proposals;
- Synergies between EIC instruments and WIDERA actions, creating structured pathways towards excellence-based funding.

This part of the event is of particular interest to startups, SMEs, researchers, innovation support organisations, public authorities and other stakeholders interested in engaging with the EIC under Horizon Europe.

5. Looking Ahead: Perspectives towards FP10

In addition to the presentation of the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2026–2027, the webinar will provide a short overview of FP10, the next EU’s Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

6. Target Audience

The webinar targets:

- Researchers and research organisations;
- Universities, research centres, as well as businesses and NGOs active in Research and Innovation;
- Innovative startups, SMEs and scale-ups;
- National contact points and innovation support organisations;
- Other R&I actors from the Eastern Partnership region.

7. Expected Outcomes

The webinar will:

- Increase awareness and understanding of the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2026–2027 funding opportunities for the EaP region;
- Provide guidance on participation in Horizon Europe funded R&I projects;
- Highlight concrete pathways for participation in EIC funded actions;

- Reinforce networking, knowledge transfer and experience-sharing on participation in Horizon Europe.
- Provide a general overview on FP10, the next Research and Innovation Framework Programme HORIZON EUROPE 2028-2034.

8. Logistics

Participation is free without limitation on the number of participants. Interested participants should register at the following link: <https://registration.dlr-pt.de/en/information-and-networking-webinar-to-support-cooperation-with-eastern-partnership/registration>, in which they can also indicate questions they would like to be tackled at the webinar, related to their past or future participation in Horizon Europe. The webex link for online attendance will be sent shortly before the webinar.

After the webinar EC staff and GSF experts will be available in breakout rooms for exchanges and networking. No booking of a breakout room is needed.

Agenda

Date of event 19 March 2026	
<p>12:00 - 12:20 Brussels (UTC +1) 13:00 -13:20 Kyiv, Chişinău (UTC+2) 15:00-15:20 Yerevan; Baku; Tbilisi (UTC+4)</p>	<p>Opening and introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening & Welcome from the European Commission <i>Silvia Bojinova, Team Leader for interinstitutional and multilateral relations, unit 0.3 “International cooperation - Europe and Americas”, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission</i> • Overview of the agenda, explanation of format of the webinar, summary of key achievements of GSF 09 and outlook to upcoming activities dedicated to EaP <i>Matthias Wurch; Global Service Facility (GSF) of the European Commission</i>
<p>12:20 -13:30 Brussels (UTC +1) 13:20 -14:30 Kyiv, Chişinău (UTC+2) 15:20 - 16:30 Yerevan; Baku; Tbilisi (UTC+4)</p>	<p>Horizon Europe Overview and Outlook to FP 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizon Europe Work Programme 2026-2027: overall structure and novelties <i>Rita PEREIRA, Policy Officer, unit G.3, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission</i> <p>Selected presentations on topics, relevant for all EaP Partner countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • „AI in Science – Empowering researchers with Artificial Intelligence for scientific discovery,” <i>Axel Leisenberg, Policy Officer, unit E.4, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission</i> • EIC Pre-Accelerator for Widening Countries <i>Ewa KOCIŃSKA-LANGE, Policy Officer, Unit A.3 “European Innovation Council”, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission</i> • Support measures for Ukraine in the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2026-2027 <i>Frederik Sondergaard, Policy Officer, unit .03, “International cooperation - Europe and Americas”, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission</i> • Outlook to FP 10 <i>Claudia De Sessa, Policy Officer, unit G.3, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission</i> • Q&A
<p>13:30 -13:45 Brussels (UTC +1) 14:30 -14:45 Kyiv, Chişinău (UTC+2) 16:30 - 16:45 Yerevan; Baku; Tbilisi (UTC+4)</p>	<p>Break</p>
<p>13:45 -14:15 Brussels (UTC +1)</p>	

<p>14:45 -15:15 Kyiv, Chişinău (UTC+2) 16:45 - 17:15 Yerevan; Baku; Tbilisi (UTC+4)</p>	<p>Horizon Europe project proposal preparation: Sources of information, key steps, bottlenecks and available support mechanisms for researchers in the EaP Partner countries GSF expert (tbc)</p>
<p>14:15 -14:30 Brussels (UTC +1) 15:15 -15:30 Kyiv, Chişinău (UTC+2) 17:15 - 17:30 Yerevan; Baku; Tbilisi (UTC+4)</p>	<p>Q&A session & Wrap up EC and the GSF team (Manfred Spiesberger, George Bonas, Matthias Wurch)</p>
<p>14:30 -15:30 Brussels (UTC +1) 15:30 -16:30 Kyiv, Chişinău (UTC+2) 17:30 - 18:30 Yerevan; Baku; Tbilisi (UTC+4)</p>	<p>Online Networking and exchanges (Break-out sessions moderated by GSF trainers) Tentatively (to be fine tuned based on input from registrations):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Matchmaking and networking b) EIC funding opportunities c) MSCA d) Rules for Participation in Horizon Europe and funding