

EU-LIFE reply | High-Level Group Consultation on HE and FP10

[EU-LIFE](#) thanks the opportunity to provide additional considerations regarding HE and FP10, structured around the four questions proposed. For more information on EU-LIFE's deeper analysis and recommendations on current and future work programmes, [please see the references provided at the end of this document](#).

1. What major challenges (scientific, social, economic, technological) should still be attempted to be addressed in the second half of HE (2025-27) and further addressed by a future FP (FP10)?

It is critical that HE/FP10 strengthen the European Research & Innovation (R&I) sector, through promotion of the European Research Area: investing in competitive research excellence, people and infrastructures for the R&I sector, advancing technological innovation, bridging R&I gaps (geographical, institutional), and implementing effective and inclusive research governance and culture.

2. Which are the major successes of the current HE (2021-2023) and which are the major "roadblock"/threats for success?

Major successes of current HE:

- The many scientific breakthroughs coming out of the ERC projects also leading to societal impact, the transnational mobility, training and networking promoted by the MSCA.

Major roadblocks / threats for success:

- Lack of opportunities for collaborative research across European and associated countries in lower TRLs and with a more research focus – excellent research groups need collaborative approaches to tackle societal challenges, but currently calls require too broad impact and the incorporation of too many stakeholders per project.
- Too much focus on implementation rather than on innovation and research (Pillar 2 and 3).
- Complex funding landscape and not enough investment in the ERC, EIC - in particular in pathfinder and transition schemes - and MSCA leading to too low success rates.
- Industrial competitiveness: At present, a large share of EU funds is used to cover investment that should ideally come from venture capital. EU funds should be reserved for innovation and research that is deemed too risky by private investors.
- Threat of an increased scope of FP10 compared to HE, without concomitant budget. The R&I frameworks are already too broad with too many expectations of delivery.

3. Which sub programmes of HE should be to be preserved and strengthened in a future FP (i.e., FP10) and which should be altered? How far a future FP (i.e., FP10) should keep/alter the current basic three-pillar architecture of HE (i.e., Pillar 1: Excellent Science; Pillar 2: Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness; Pillar 3: Innovative Europe)?

Preserved and strengthened:

- The ERC, the MSCA, the EIC pathfinder and transition, Research infrastructures in Pillar 1.

Altered:

- Need for fewer politically driven programmes especially in Pillar 2 and Widera.
- Need for more bottom-up approaches in Pillar 2; more and better opportunities for discovery-driven research to establish collaborative approaches; recognition and appreciation of the impact derived from TRLs1-3, i.e. understanding underlying mechanisms and development of new knowledge counted as impact; prioritise a portfolio approach for impact (rather than project based); reduction and flexibilization of the number and type of partners in consortia.
- Revise Missions' goals and impact and re-balance from the current strong political and implementation focus to more opportunities for the innovative research necessary to achieve the mission objectives (otherwise, remove them from HE and FP10).
- WIDERA: Fewer political calls aimed at implementing the political agenda at high level – introduce more bottom-up opportunities for research organizations to develop cross-cutting strategies and capacities, promoting more active participation of the scientific community in WIDERA; ensure that schemes are open to all institutions on equal footing (e.g. do not drive change mainly through EU universities initiatives, which are not equitably open for other organisations).

Pillar structure:

- Keep maximum number of 3 Pillars (plus transversal); do not create additional ones.
- Reduce/Restructure Pillar 2 and invest more strongly in Pillar 1 and the schemes of the Pillar 3 catalysing the innovation cycle.

4. What would be a catalyst to overcome current roadblocks of HE and be implemented in a future FP (i.e., FP10)? What should be the most important innovations to be considered in a future FP (i.e., FP10)?

Catalyst to overcome current roadblocks:

EU R&I frameworks have become too unrealistic in their promises, which backfires against R&I and that must be avoided. Therefore, FP10 should be developed in line with a realistic view to the budget: do not expand its the portfolio compared to HE and make sure that it has the adequate funding to be able not to fail expectations. In sum:

- Ring Fence FP10 budget during its whole duration.
- FP10 budget: minimum 200B Euros with current portfolio. If scope is expanded, concomitant leverage of budgets must occur beyond that.
- Increase absolute and relative budget for the ERC, MSCA and EIC; reduce/restructure Pillar 2.
- **Most important innovations to be considered in FP10:**
- Invest in competitive excellence and push the European Research Area forward: invest more in research, people and research institutions across Europe (discovery-driven research, R&I diverse careers, knowledge transfer, research infrastructure, fair & inclusive research and innovation ecosystems, and sustainable cultures).
- Accelerate rate of change for industrial competitiveness and societal solutions by investing in synergies between startups and excellent research through promoting more synergies between Pillar 1 (ERC, MSCA) and Pillar 3 (EIC), e.g. open EIC transition to all projects.
- FP10 is publicly funded and therefore must be re-focused on the high-risk part of R&I, not on the less risky part of scale up, which can be up taken by private sector.



Relevant EU-LIFE position papers and statements

Towards FP10 (Since January 2024)

[Towards FP10: EU-LIFE's guiding principles for FP10](#)

[Towards FP10: EU-LIFE's vision for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions \(MSCA\)](#)

[Towards FP10: EU-LIFE's vision for the European Innovation Council \(EIC\)](#)

Horizon Europe strategy

[EU-LIFE answer to the Public Consultation of EU R&I Programmes 2014 – 2027](#)

[EU-LIFE wants a more balanced FP9](#)

Pillar II Health Cluster

[How to ensure health safety in Europe: the vision of EU-LIFE research institutes](#)

[EU-LIFE calls for impactful collaborative research in European Biomedicine](#)

Pillar II Cancer Mission

[Reaction of EU-LIFE: Cancer Mission work programme 2021-22](#)

[EU-LIFE recommendations to the Cancer Mission draft](#)

Research Infrastructures

[Call for action on small and medium research infrastructures in Europe](#)

Horizon Europe budget

[Reaction of EU-LIFE to the next framework programme budget agreement](#)

[Europe needs Research & Innovation to address the future: EU-LIFE reaction to the EU Council deal](#)

[Open letter to the EU Council and the European Parliament to prioritise R&I by committing an appropriate budget for Horizon Europe](#)

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