

SiS.net Factsheet

SwafS areas in Horizon Europe

A NEW HORIZON FOR THE SWAFS AREAS

“Science with and for Society” (SwafS) was an integral part of the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon 2020 as a separate programme. Equipped with a budget of around 462 million euros at the beginning, its purpose was to move forward areas such as citizen science, gender equality, science education, ethics and research integrity, science communication, open science and Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI). This factsheet will outline whether and where the previous SwafS areas will continue to receive funding under the new Framework Programme Horizon Europe.¹

1. Horizon Europe

The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon Europe, will run from 2021 to 2027 with a budget of around 95.5 billion Euro (current prices). It is structured into three pillars and complemented by the additional part **“Widening Participation and Strengthening the European Research Area”**. This part consists of two components: **“Widening participation and spreading excellence”** and **“Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system”** which aim to “increase support to EU Member States in their efforts to make the most of their national research and innovation potential and promote an ERA² where researchers, scientific knowledge and technology circulate freely”³.

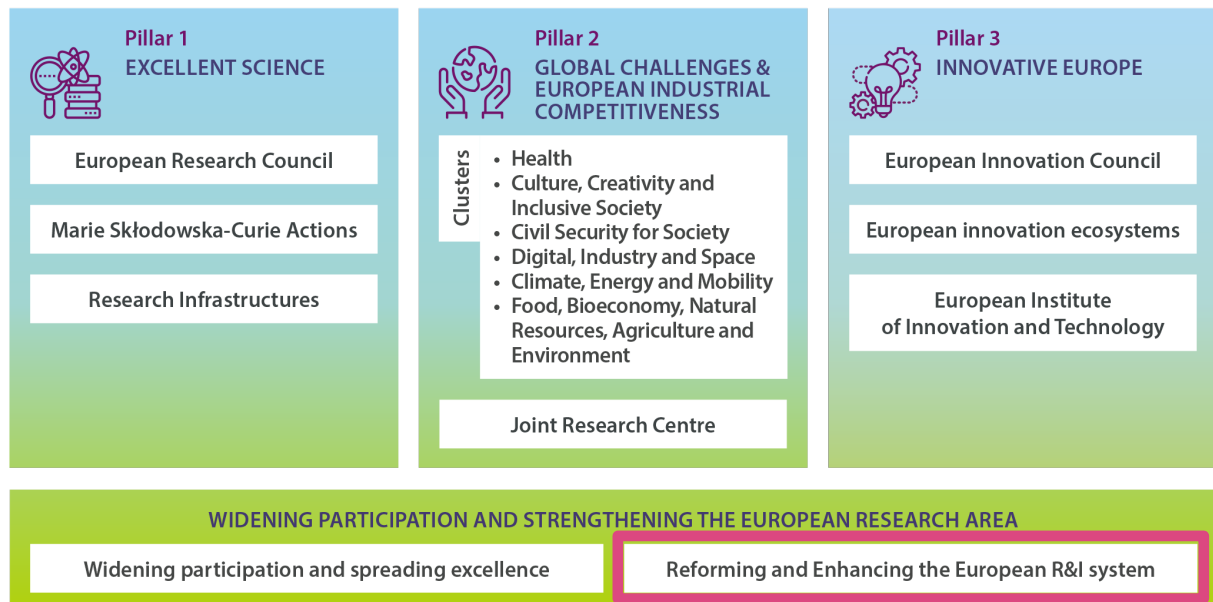


Fig.1: Structure of Horizon Europe; Source: European Commission, see footnote 3.

¹ All information provided refer to the status as of February 2021, they are non-binding and subject to change.

² ERA stands for European Research Area.

³ European Commission factsheet on Horizon Europe: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/research_and_innovation_funding/documents/ec_rtd_horizon-europe-overview.pdf

2. SwafS areas in “Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system”

The “**Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system**” part provides the **new home** for several SwafS areas in Horizon Europe. It is equipped with a budget of **438 million euros** (current prices)⁴ and covers a broad spectrum of themes which go beyond the previous SwafS areas. In the legal basis for Horizon Europe (Specific Programme), **14 broad lines** of activity are defined which determine the work programme and the calls for proposals. These are as follows (SwafS-related broad lines highlighted in pink):

1. Strengthen evidence base for R&I policy	8. Supporting and monitoring gender equality
2. Foresight activities - anticipate emerging needs and trends	9. Ethics and integrity
3. Support for policy makers, funding bodies, research performing organisations or advisory groups working on ERA	10. International cooperation
4. Accelerate the transition towards open science	11. Scientific input to other policies
5. Support to national R&I policy reform, strengthened Policy Support Facility (PSF)	12. EU R&I programme implementation
6. Provide researchers with attractive career environments, skills and competences, support the modernisation of universities	13. Support to National Contact Points
7. Citizen science, supporting formal, non-formal and informal science education, and more effective communication and engagement of citizens	14. Dissemination and exploitation of results, data and knowledge

Compared to the SwafS programme, a larger number of thematic focuses meets a lower budget which will certainly affect the funding volume for the former SwafS areas. There are **five broad lines that include SwafS areas:** namely citizen science, science communication, science education, gender equality, ethics and integrity, open science and research careers. The broad line “career environments” will not only support SwafS activities such as Euraxess, Resaver and the European Universities Initiative but shall also help to modernise universities and research organisations by incentives that promote gender equality plans, citizen engagement, RRI and institutional change in general.

For 2021 and 2022, there will be a two-year **joint work programme** for the part “*Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area*” which is divided into three destinations. **Destination 3** will implement the part “*Reforming and enhancing the EU research and innovation system*” by annual calls for proposals and “other actions” such as expert groups, prizes and public procurements. Destination 3 will be structured in strands along the four strategic objectives of the new ERA, as presented in the European Commission Communication “**A new ERA for Research and Innovation**” of September 30, 2020. These are:

1. Prioritising investment and reforms
2. Improving access to excellence
3. Translating R&I results into the economy
4. Deepening the ERA

⁴ https://sciencebusiness.net/sites/default/files/inline-files/Final%20budget%20breakdown%20Horizon%20Europe_0.pdf

According to the Communication, the first three strategic objectives will deal with new ERA priorities while **“Deepening the ERA”** comprises existing priorities such as gender equality and open science. In the work programme the SwafS-related broad lines can therefore be found in the strand “Deepening the ERA” of destination 3. It is expected that, at least in the first work programme, **around 20 topics** (mainly CSAs) will cover all aforementioned SwafS areas with an appropriate budget share.

3. Further anchoring of SwafS areas in Horizon Europe

Although the main funding opportunities for former SwafS areas in Horizon Europe lie within the *“Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system”* component, further options will probably open up across the Framework Programme given that the legal text of Horizon Europe (Specific Programme) defines promoting **responsible research and innovation**, strengthening **the gender dimension**, fostering **open science** and promoting **the involvement of citizens** and **end-users in co-design and co-creation processes** as **operational objectives**. This particularly applies to **pillar 2 “Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness”** which implements six thematic clusters and the new “mission” approach. Even though the implementation of SwafS areas as operational objectives may only lead to a more general inclusion in topics, such as “the gender dimension should also be explored”, it may also become the focus of a topic. Furthermore, the **missions** will probably hold participation opportunities for public engagement stakeholders as missions shall involve citizens in finding solutions to societal challenges. The proposed mission *“Soil Health and Food”*, e.g. has already announced that it will engage with citizens and that it will use “living labs”⁵.

In conclusion, there is a basis for the integration of SwafS areas beyond *“Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system”*, certainly also in the mainly bottom-up pillars 1 and 3. Nevertheless, the extent to which this will result in concrete funding opportunities for SwafS stakeholders will only become apparent with the adoption and publication of the work programmes.

Useful info

- The first two-year **work programme** *“Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area”* is expected to be published in April 2021.
- The first **call for proposals** is expected to open in the second quarter of 2021 and will be accessible through the [Funding and Tenders Portal](#).
- **National Contact Points** (NCPs) for *“Widening Participation and ERA”* (to support proposers) will be nominated at national level.
- More information on **Horizon Europe**: <http://ec.europa.eu/horizon-europe>
- Horizon Europe **legal texts**: *“Proposal for a regulation establishing Horizon Europe”* and *“Proposal for a decision establishing the specific programme implementing Horizon Europe”*
- **ERA communication** *“A new ERA for Research and Innovation”* and Council conclusions on the *“New European Research Area”*
- More **SiS.net resources** such as policy briefs, success stories, etc.: <https://www.sisnetwork.eu/>



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⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe/missions-horizon-europe/soil-health-and-food_en