



TECHNOLOGY
CENTRE PRAGUE

ERA CALL 2026 FIRST FOUR TOPICS

Anna Vosečková, WIDERA (ERA) and EIT NCP
CZ-SK Information day on ERA call 2026
29 January 2026, online Bratislava and Prague

CHANGES IN THE TEMPLATES (SINCE 2023)

HE IMPLEMENTATION DAY
WP 2026-2027

GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE AI (2023)

- When considering the use of generative AI tools for the preparation of the proposal, it is imperative to exercise caution and careful consideration. **The AI-generated content should be thoroughly reviewed and validated by the applicants to ensure its appropriateness and accuracy, as well as its compliance with intellectual property regulations. Applicants are fully responsible for the content of the proposal (even those parts produced by the AI tool) and must be transparent in disclosing which AI tools were used and how they were utilized.**
- Specifically, applicants are required to:**
 - ✓ **Verify the accuracy, validity, and appropriateness** of the content and any citations generated by the AI tool and correct any errors or inconsistencies.
 - ✓ **Provide a list of sources used to generate content** and citations, including those generated by the AI tool. Double-check citations to ensure they are accurate and properly referenced.
 - ✓ **Be conscious of the potential for plagiarism** where the AI tool may have reproduced substantial text from other sources. Check the original sources to be sure you are not plagiarizing someone else's work.
 - ✓ **Acknowledge the limitations of the AI tool in the proposal preparation**, including the potential for bias, errors, and gaps in knowledge.



CHANGES IN GENDER BALANCE CRITERION (GENERAL ANNEXES)

- Annex F (Procedure) for WP 2023-2024 states "...the gender balance among the **researchers** named in the researchers table in the proposal will be used as a factor for prioritisation;"
- Annex F (Procedure) for WP 2025 states "... the gender balance among the **researchers with a leading role** named in the researchers table in the proposal, will be used as a factor for prioritisation."
- The change to the gender balance in lead researchers (in the project, calculated for the whole consortium) applies to **calls under WP 2025 and onwards.** The leading role could be both the task leader and work package leader, **as long as they are declared as having a leading role in the researchers table in the proposal template Part A.**



CHANGES IN APPLICATION FORMS 2026

Tags removed

Page limit reduced by 5

- 40 pages for actual costs RIA and IA, 45 pages for lump sum RIA and IA
- 25 pages for actual costs CSA, 28 pages for lump sum CSA

Part 2 - Impact

▪ Section 2.1

- No longer need to explain the general scientific, economic and societal expected impacts as they are already taken into account in the topic expected impact
- Project's pathways towards impact" subsection was simplified and the subpoint b) asking a detailed indication of the scale and significance of project contributions was removed from the template. We now ask only to "Provide quantified estimates when possible and relevant"

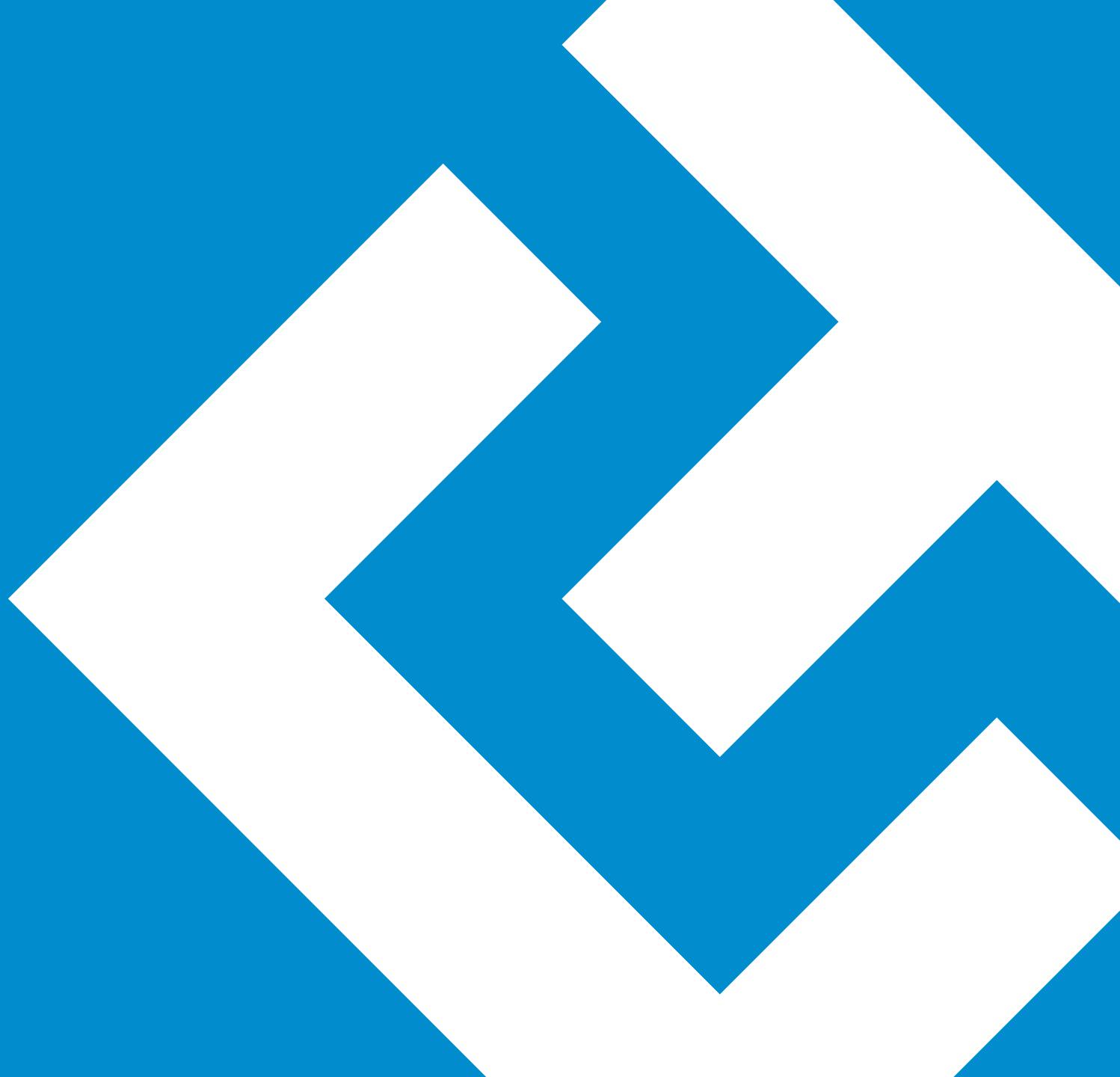
Part 3 – implementation

- **Table 3.1h** "Purchase costs" has been simplified and it now **only covers equipment costs**
- **Tables 3.1i** "Other costs categories", **and table 3.1j** "In-kind contributions" **have been removed**

For actual costs grants, these tables will be required during GAP as part of the Description of Action of retained for funding proposals. For lump sum projects, details on Purchase costs items are provided in the "Any Comments" tab within the detailed budget table.



ERA 2026 CALL TOPIC OVERVIEW



DESTINATION: REFORMING AND ENHANCING THE EU RESEARCH AND INNOVATION SYSTEM (ERA CALL 2026) – 8 TOPICS	EU CONTRIBUTION PER PROJECT (M€)	TOPIC BUDGET (M€)	EXPECTED NO. OF GRANTS	TYPE OF PROJECT
<u>HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-01: Pillar I: Accelerating open access and research assessment reforms in ERA</u>	2-3	6	2	CSA
<u>HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-02: Pillar I: Building institutional capacities for ethical, equitable, open, and inclusive ERA</u>	1,5-2	9	6	CSA
<u>HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-03: Pillar II: Strengthening ecosystems for open, ethical, and sustainable ERA</u>	2	6	3	CSA
<u>HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-04: Pillar II: Piloting innovative approaches to support academic startups and spinoffs</u>	2	4	2	CSA
<u>HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-05: Pillar III: Fostering citizen engagement for more responsible and democratic R&I</u>	1	2	2	CSA
<u>HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-06: Pillar III: European Citizens' Hackathon Championship</u>	3	3	1	CSA
<u>HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-07: Pillar III: Science comes to town 2028</u>	6	6	1	CSA
<u>HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-08: Pillar IV: Advancing Knowledge for ERA</u>	1,5-2,5	16	8	RIA

HORIZON-WIDERA- 2026-06-ERA-01

**Pillar I: Accelerating open
access and research
assessment reforms
in ERA**

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-01

ACCELERATING OA AND RESEARCH ASSESSMENT REFORMS IN ERA

AIM

Foster effective and sustainable structural institutional changes within R&I organisations in alignment with the ERA priorities and **use FSTP (cascading grants) to enable capacity-building activities** (provision of tools, resources, guidelines, training, and quality assurance programmes). **Applicants should select one of the 2 areas** and consider complementarities and synergies with other ERA 2026 call topics

EVALUATION PROCEDURE

To ensure a **balanced portfolio**, grants will be awarded to proposals not only in order of **ranking, but at least also to proposals that are the highest ranked within each area**, provided that proposals pass all thresholds.

TARGET GROUPS

- Large communities of stakeholders ensuring a **wide geographical coverage, inclusivity, broad participation, and accessibility**
- Describe **target groups** in terms of its scope and size and pay particular attention to promoting **inclusive gender equality** and addressing gender-specific challenges

AREA 1 – SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION OF SCHOLARLY SOCIETIES TO NON-PROFIT OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING MODELS

ERA Action **Applying equity in open science**

EXPECTED OUTCOMES (include all)

- Publishing activities of scholarly societies in diverse fields transitioned into non-profit open access publishing models without author fees;
- Improved capacities, skills, and resources for scholarly societies for sustainable transition to such models;
- Greater awareness of and commitment to open science principles and practices among scholarly societies, support to the reform of research assessment and the European Charter for Researchers

ACTIVITIES (include at least the following)

- Business models to support sustainable non-profit open access publishing for scholarly societies beyond the project;
- Guidelines, training materials and lessons learnt to support capacity-building for such transitions of scholarly societies in the future;
- Open call(s) for grants supporting pilot actions for transitioning at least 30 scholarly societies across Europe to open access non-profit publishing models

TARGET GROUPS

- Scholarly societies, research performing and funding organisations, libraries, non-profit scholarly publishers, other research-relevant organisations



AREA 2 – SUSTAINABLE INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS TO IMPROVE RESEARCH ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

ERA Structural Policy **Reforming research assessment**

AREA 2: EXPECTED OUTCOMES (include all)

- Institutional changes in research performing and funding organisations in favour of more responsible research assessment systems (in line with [ARRA](#));
- Implementation of Action Plans of signatories of the ARRA;
- Increased awareness and trust among researchers and research organisations about reforms of research assessment.

AREA 2: ACTIVITIES (include at least the following)

- Launch open call(s) providing grants that support institutional changes;
- Develop or reform research assessment and evaluation criteria and processes (COARA);
- Implement reforms aiming to establish qualitative peer-review at the center of research assessment practices and to move away from the use of traditional bibliometrics;
- Implement institutional changes that recognize the diversity of activities and roles of researchers;
- Analyse the outcomes of research assessment reforms and identify relevant barriers and impact indicators, as well as quantify the progress of action plans.

AREA 2: TARGET GROUPS

- Higher education institutions, research performing and funding organisations, research evaluation agencies, accreditation and quality assurance agencies, notably those engaged in the CoARA approach.



ACCELERATING OA AND RESEARCH ASSESSMENT REFORMS IN ERA

KEY ELEMENTS

Area 1

- Journals/books/monographs of national and/or European scholarly societies;
- All six Frascati fields of science & technology should be addressed;
- At least 2/3 of funding for cascading grants; at least 1/3 of grants for the SSH.

Area 2

- Support institutional changes, raise awareness, and assess the level of progress made in line with the ARRA;
- Distribute cascading grants to effect changes in 40-50 institutions of different types and geographical areas;
- Build on past or ongoing relevant initiatives and projects at European or national level.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- **Type of project: CSA**
- **Total budget: 6 M€**
- **Budget per project: 2 – 3 M€**
- **Expected: 2 projects**
- Project duration: up to **3 years**
- **Consortium:** min. 3 independent legal entities established in a different MS or AC, two of which are established in a MS
- **Beneficiaries must provide financial support to third parties (FSTP) solely in the form of grants – the max. amount is 60 000 EUR**



HORIZON-WIDERA- 2026-06-ERA-02

Pillar I: Building institutional capacities for ethical, equitable, open, and inclusive ERA

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-02

BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES FOR ETHICAL, EQUITABLE, OPEN, AND INCLUSIVE ERA

AIM

Implement a variety of capacity-building activities to foster effective and sustainable structural institutional changes within R&I organisations;

Applicants should select one of the 4 areas and consider complementarities and synergies with other ERA 2026 call topics

EVALUATION PROCEDURE

To ensure a **balanced portfolio**, grants will be awarded to proposals not only in order of ranking, but at least also to proposals that are the highest ranked within each area, provided that proposals pass all thresholds

TARGET GROUPS

- Large communities of stakeholders with broad geographical reach and participation
- Describe **target groups** in terms of its scope and size and pay particular attention to promoting **inclusive gender equality** and addressing gender-specific challenges

AREA 1 - CAPACITY BOOSTER FOR ETHICS AND INTEGRITY: ADDRESSING DIGITAL TRANSITION AND ENSURING DIGITAL INCLUSION FOR ALL

ERA Action

EXPECTED OUTCOMES (include all)

- Institutional ethics and integrity framework that supports researchers and ethics and integrity bodies in addressing challenges related to AI/the digitalisation of research
- Establishment of multidisciplinary networks, fostering responsible/ethical digital research
- Increased awareness of the ethical challenges of digital research

ACTIVITIES (include at least the following)

- Develop an institutional ethics and integrity framework based on standard operating procedures and operational guidance
- Develop training programmes to safeguard responsible and trustworthy research in a digital context
- Conduct C&D actions on ethical challenges in the digital domain to build understanding about risks, through workshops, surveys, communication campaigns, and tailored ethics dialogues
- Build on the results of relevant past or ongoing projects at European and/or national level; ▪

TARGET GROUPS

Researchers, research integrity/ethics committees, European networks in research ethics, research management/integrity offices, ethics officers in research performing organisations, policymakers.



AREA 2 – MUTUAL LEARNING AND MENTORING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF INCLUSIVE GEPS

ERA Structural Policy

EXPECTED OUTCOMES (include all)

- Increased capacity of R&I organisations to design, implement, monitor and evaluate inclusive GEPs through the availability of new or updated methods, guidance and tools
- Increased uptake, quality and effectiveness of inclusive GEPs and policies in organisations that are less advanced in their implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

ACTIVITIES (include at least the following)

- Implement actions in less advanced organisations in inclusive GEPs, targeting underrepresented or socially disadvantaged groups, integrating gender dimension into R&I content
- Exchange good practices and materials for the development, monitoring and evaluation of inclusive GEPs
- Build capacities through activities such as on-site visits, training, workshops, and networking with relevant projects, initiatives and stakeholders beyond the project consortia.

TARGET GROUPS

Research performing organisations, Higher education institutions, Public bodies



AREA 3 – ADDRESS EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN CAPACITIES FOR OPEN SCIENCE

ERA Action [Applying equity in open science](#)

EXPECTED OUTCOMES (include all)

- Support for researchers with diverse profiles and needs in adopting open science practices;
- Consolidated evidence base on equity and inclusion in open science;
- Training material for the practice of open science addressing specific equity needs and profiles

ACTIVITIES (include at least the following)

- Take stock of equity and inclusion barriers in relation to open science practices and access to open science infrastructures, notably in connection to scientists' personal circumstances.
- Develop and disseminate shared tools, training methods, and services tailored to equity needs.
- Support the professionalisation of open science-related profiles, such as data stewards, non-profit academic editors, and non-profit academic journals' reviewers.
- Recommendations for developing a common ERA approach to equity in open science in its different practice.

TARGET GROUPS

Research performing and funding organisations, Research assessment agencies, Research infrastructures, Universities, Researchers, Innovators, Policymakers



AREA 4 – IMPROVING QUALITY, EFFICIENCY AND EQUITY IN PEER-REVIEW FOR SCIENTIFIC PUBLISHING

ERA Action [Applying equity in open science](#)

EXPECTED OUTCOMES (include all)

- Improved quality and increased transparency, recognition, equity, and non-bias in the peer-review process and editorial review system in different disciplines
- Increased awareness among researchers, RPOs, scholarly societies, editors/editorial boards and publishers, of the need for a transparent and equitable peer review process as an integral part of high-quality research

ACTIVITIES (include at least the following)

- Pilot policies and processes in different scientific fields that will improve the peer-review process, mindful of the challenges introduced by AI;
- Draft recommendations for transitioning scholarly publishing in different scientific fields
- Address new forms of peer-review,
- Address attitudes to and effectiveness of peer review practices in different scientific fields, considering geographic, gender, and career stage biases in the process.

TARGET GROUPS

Publishers, Editors/editorial boards, Scholarly societies, Research performing organisations, National research evaluation agencies



ACCELERATING OA AND RESEARCH ASSESSMENT REFORMS IN ERA

AIM

- To foster effective and sustainable structural institutional changes within R&I organisations in alignment with the ERA priorities
- To supports the adoption of ERA policies and practices within institutions through capacity-building activities, such as the provision of tools, resources, recommendations, training, and exchange of good practices.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- **Type of project:** CSA
- **Financial set-up:** **LUMP SUM**
- **Total budget:** **9 M€**
- **Budget per project:** **1,5 – 2 M€**
- **Expected:** **6 projects**
- Project duration: up to **2-3 years**
- **Consortium:** min. 3 independent legal entities established in a different MS or AC, two of which are established in a MS

HORIZON-WIDERA- 2026-06-ERA-03

**Pillar II: Strengthening
ecosystems for open, ethical,
and sustainable ERA**

AIM

Create new or enhance existing ecosystems through activities such as networking and cooperative action, knowledge exchange and dissemination, tools, training, and policy advice. **Applicants should select one of the 3 areas** and consider complementarities and synergies with other ERA 2026 call topics

EVALUATION PROCEDURE

To ensure a **balanced portfolio**, grants will be awarded to proposals not only in order of ranking, but at least also to proposals that are the highest ranked within each area, provided that proposals pass all thresholds

TARGET GROUPS

- Large communities of stakeholders with broad geographical reach and participation
- Describe **target groups** in terms of its scope and size and pay particular attention to promoting **inclusive gender equality** and where relevant, [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#) and the [TRUST Code](#)

AREA 1 - EQUITABLE, SUSTAINABLE, AND ETHICAL RESEARCH

ERA ACTION

EXPECTED OUTCOMES (include all)

- Strengthened international collaboration supporting the open, secure and trusted sharing and re-use of digital research objects in line with the FAIR principles;
- New methodologies for the application of the FAIR principles, supporting the global alignment of EOSC;
- Improved interoperability of digital research objects, and services across data and digital research infrastructures worldwide.

ACTIVITIES (include at least the following)

- Develop toolkits to facilitate partnerships that guarantee 'do no harm' as well as fair and just practice from conception to the implementation of actions;
- Develop training programmes, including a quality assurance system, for researchers and for ethics experts and committees to promote the coherence of the ethics review process;
- Increase awareness and disseminate knowledge of ethical values and norms for responsible R&I,
- Build on the results of relevant past or ongoing projects at European/national levels;
- Include structured cooperation with the Embassy of Good Science

TARGET GROUPS

Researchers, local/national research integrity and ethics committees, European networks of (early career) researchers and educators in research ethics, research management and integrity offices, ethics officers in research performing organisations and policy-makers



AREA 2 - GLOBAL COOPERATION FOR THE UPTAKE OF OPEN SCIENCE PRACTICES

ERA Structural Policy

EXPECTED OUTCOMES (include all)

- Strengthened international collaboration supporting the open, secure and trusted sharing and re-use of digital research objects in line with the FAIR principles;
- New methodologies for the application of the FAIR principles, supporting the global alignment of EOSC;
- Improved interoperability of digital research objects, and services across data and digital research infrastructures worldwide.

ACTIVITIES (include at least the following)

- Initiatives to facilitate cooperation between developments within the European context and international initiatives that promote the reusability of digital research outputs;
- Engagement with international stakeholders to contribute to the development and adoption of globally recognised data practices and standards;
- Provide support for defining and developing EOSC policies and technical specifications by aligning with global, community-driven initiatives and scientific best practices;
- Promote knowledge sharing, capacity building, and skills acquisition..

TARGET GROUPS

Research organisations and their associations, Research community-driven associations, Research infrastructures, Service providers, and Higher education institutions



AREA 3 – ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE SCIENCE

EXPECTED OUTCOMES (include all)

ERA policy: contribute to green transition

- Effective knowledge sharing and support for researchers and R&I organisations in implementing environmentally sustainable practices and policies;
- Enhanced culture and awareness of environmental sustainability within the scientific community
- Increased integration of environmental sustainability considerations in European and national research funding programmes and other initiatives.

ACTIVITIES (include at least the following)

- Consider various measures, with special attention to energy-intensive digital technologies like AI
- Map existing approaches for assessing and reducing environmental footprint and develop sustainability guidelines, considering various disciplines and research contexts;
- Build on existing approaches and methodologies and collaborate with relevant projects, networks and initiatives;
- Offer evidence-based recommendations to integrate sustainability into research funding and evaluation, with attention to different institutional frameworks and engagement at all institutional levels;
- Promote awareness and adoption of sustainability policies and practices through knowledge exchange, collaboration, and trainings that leverage existing resources and expertise

TARGET GROUPS

Higher education institutions, Research performing and funding organisations, Industry, Policymakers, Grassroot initiatives



STRENGTHENING ECOSYSTEMS FOR OPEN, ETHICAL, AND SUSTAINABLE ERA

AIM

- To achieve the expected outcomes, **international cooperation is welcomed**
- Involvement of entities from non-associated third countries in the consortium must be **clearly explained and justified**
- Applicants must demonstrate in their proposal a **viable plan for achieving self-sustainability after the end of the grant agreement**, with a clear description of a minimum set of activities that will be maintained by the consortium with own or other resources

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- **Type of project: CSA**
- **Financial set-up: LUMP SUM**
- **Total budget: 6 M€**
- **Budget per project: 2 M€**
- **Expected: 3 projects**
- Project duration: up to **3 years**
- **Consortium:** min. 3 independent legal entities established in a different MS or AC, two of which are established in a MS
- Legal entities established in **non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this CSA as an associated partner**



HORIZON-WIDERA- 2026-06-ERA-04

**Pillar II: Piloting innovative
approaches to support academic
startups and spinoffs**

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-ERA-04

PILOTING INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO SUPPORT ACADEMIC STARTUPS AND SPINOFFS

AIM

Supporting academic startups and spinoffs to benefit from end-user feedback and links to industry and society through testing the desirability of products and services

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Upgraded guidance and services for supporting early-stage academic spinoffs and startups
- Tested and shared innovative valorisation best practices addressing the needs of early-stage academic spinoffs and startups for engaging with industry, societal actors and end-users

TARGET GROUPS

- Clear target group, wide geographical coverage, support to gender equality
- Academic startups and spinoffs, intermediaries: science parks, technology parks, living labs, hubs, and practitioners in citizen engagement



SCOPE AND ACTIVITIES

ERA Structural Policy **Upscaling**
knowledge valorisation capacities
and activities

- To strengthen ecosystems for knowledge valorisation and innovation by **supporting academic startups and spinoffs** to benefit from end-user feedback and links to industry and society
- Beyond technology validation, there is a need to **test the desirability of their products and services with a broader public**, learn from citizens' feedback, and adapt and improve their value propositions to improve their prospects for collaborating with industrial partners, attracting investors, and growing locally and internationally
- To achieve the expected outcomes, proposals should address the **activities** outlined below and propose any additional complementary activities:
 - **At least 20 pilot actions across Europe** enabling university spinoffs and technology startups to link up to end-users, societal actors, industry, and other stakeholders to boost market uptake and growth
 - **Development of guidance and services**, including methodologies and best practices to support spinoffs and startups, where testing and validating their innovative solutions to better fit society and the market is important.



PILOTING INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO SUPPORT ACADEMIC STARTUPS AND SPINOFFS

KEY ELEMENTS

Projects are expected to:

- Contribute to the **EU Knowledge Valorisation Platform**, which highlights best practices for knowledge valorisation.
- Establish synergies with ongoing projects under the topic “Experimentation and exchange of good practices for value creation”, taking their results into account (funded under HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-03 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01-05)

The topic supports the objectives of the **Startup and Scaleup Strategy** by fostering the market uptake of innovative solutions.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- **Type of project:** CSA
- **Financial set-up:** **LUMP SUM**
- **Total budget:** 4 M€
- **Budget per project:** 2 M€
- **Expected:** 2 projects
- Project duration: up to **2 years**
- **Consortium:** min. 3 independent legal entities established in a different MS or AC, two of which are established in a MS





QUESTIONS?

Anna Vosečková
WIDERA (ERA) AND EIT NCP

+420 606 062 739

voseckova@tc.cz

www.tc.cz