Pump Priming Collaboration between UK and EU Partners

Scheme Notes for Applicants

2026 Competition

Contents

Please read the scheme notes carefully. Any application incorrectly submitted will not be eligible for award.

Applications should be submitted well in advance of the deadline; we recommend at least five days prior to allow for institutional approval.

1   Introduction

1.1   The UK's association to Horizon Europe was a significant achievement that has been widely welcomed across the sector in the UK, as well as by the UK's colleagues and counterparts elsewhere in Europe and beyond. It is imperative now that the opportunities that association provides are taken up swiftly and substantially. The Academy is aware that there are particular hurdles for UK-based researchers, innovators and institutions in bringing together partners and consortia for calls related to Pillar 2. This is why the Academy is pleased to be able to open a fourth round of this pump priming call aligning with the opening of new calls on the Horizon Europe Portal. This round will only focus on applicants aiming to apply to a call on the Horizon Europe Portal.

1.2   The Academy expects that this will be the final Horizon Europe pump priming call run in the 2025-26 financial year with available funding.

2   Summary of the Call

2.1   The British Academy with the support of the Royal Society, the Academy of Medical Sciences, and the Royal Academy of Engineering are inviting proposals from UK researchers and proposals from UK led consortia containing EU/Associated Countries-based researchers to pump prime collaborations to support the effective uptake of the opportunities provided by the UK's association to Horizon Europe. For the purpose of this call Associated Countries include those countries in the process of associating as listed on the European Comission website.

2.2   Proposals are welcome in all disciplines – engineering, natural sciences, medical and health sciences, humanities, and social sciences.

2.3   This call for applications is supported by the UK's Department for Science, Innovation & Technology. We are able to offer awards of up to £10,000.

2.4   The aim of the call is to develop collaborative activity between UK and EU/Associated Countries' entities in Pillar 2 of Horizon Europe. Proposals are welcome from research organisations and universities based in the UK. Proposals that involve collaboration with any other type of organisation eligible for Horizon Europe funding (based in the UK and/or the EU/Associated Countries), including small and medium sized businesses (SMEs), third parties, end users and similar bodies/organisations such as hospitals, libraries, regulators, commercial partners, creative industry partners, museums, local authorities and associations, NGOs, charities and companies are encouraged and welcome.

2.5 **The deadline for this call is Wednesday 5 November 2025, 17:00 (UK time)**.

3 Programme Aims

3.1 This programme is providing pump priming funding to seed collaborations for applications to specific Horizon Europe topics in Pillar 2. The aim is to build collaborative activity between UK and EU/Associated Countries' entities in Pillar 2 where the major consortia building type of applications in Horizon Europe are centred. This will help UK-based entities overcome the barriers to collaborative engagement with EU/Associated Countries' partners to maximise the opportunities Horizon Europe presents. For the purpose of this call, Associated Countries include those countries in the process of associating as listed on the European Commission website. Third country partners, such as Switzerland, can also be considered as appropriate, but projects and proposed consortia must provide confidence that they will address necessary eligibility and impact criteria.

4 Scope of the call

4.1 Horizon Europe is the largest ever EU Framework Programme for research and innovation, with a budget of over €95bn (2021–2027, excluding contributions from Associate Countries). Such EU programmes offer significant opportunities to access new knowledge, partners, markets, customers and suppliers.

4.2 Funding of up to a maximum of £10,000 per grant will be awarded to support a proposal. This will cover collaboration preparation activities to enable multinational consortium building, as well as costs for developing the project ideas and gaining a better understanding of the market opportunities.

4.3 The expectation is that this funding will be utilised in a variety of ways but could include feasibility studies, application advice and training, partnership building, and dedicated resource to take forward an application.

4.4 The purpose of this call is **not** to implement the proposed projects that will be submitted to Horizon Europe, but to give the UK-based partners the resources needed to collaborate with EU organisations and stakeholders to further develop the idea and the market opportunities. Any applications that apply to implement the proposed project will be considered ineligible.

4.5 The call is focused **solely** on Pillar 2 of Horizon Europe – Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness.

4.6   Within Pillar 2, applications for this pump priming funding can be used for Calls and Topics from the 2025 and [draft 2026-27 Work Programmes](#) (i.e. Calls and Topics with 2026 and 2027 in the call code). The draft 2026-2027 Work Programmes have been compiled at the above link and in Annex 1 below. With respect to the draft 2026 and 2027 Work Programmes and the funding available for this call, the Academy will, if necessary, prioritise for funding applications focused on the draft 2026 calls.

4.7   Eligible Calls and Topics are listed either on the [Horizon Europe funding portal](#) as either 'open for submission' or 'forthcoming' *or* those published by the Commission that appear on the UK's [Horizon Europe Hub](#) that close no earlier than **1 January 2026**. Calls with a closing date prior to this will be considered ineligible.

4.8   Applicants may target any type of action and focus on any cluster in Pillar 2: 1 ([Health](#)), 2 ([Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society](#)), 3 ([Civil Security for Society](#)), 4 ([Digital, Industry and Space](#)), 5 ([Climate, Energy and Mobility](#)) and 6 ([Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment](#)), as well as Missions (EU), and New European Bauhaus Facility calls. Calls from other Pillars, such as WIDERA, EIC, EIE, etc. are not eligible.

5   Applying for Calls on the Horizon Europe Portal and in the Horizon Europe Work 2026/2027 Programmes

5.1   Applicants will be required to complete a short form that will include detailing the following:

- The Cluster, Destination, and Call and Topic within Pillar 2 that the application is targeting, including title, call code, link to the call on the funding & tenders portal if available, and call deadline;
- The alignment of the application with the proposed targeted Call and Topic explaining how the application would address the scope and expected outcome specified in the Call and Topic text;
- An overview of the research proposed in the pump priming application with an outline of activities, including the role and expertise of both the UK and non-UK potential partners and how together they will meet the requirements of the Call and Topic that is being targeted in Pillar 2;
- An outline on how this pump priming funding would add value in enabling and improving the development of the proposal;
- An indication of the expected UK participation in the proposed Horizon Europe project (i.e. the extent/scale of involvement the application is looking to see UK organisations have – the level of involvement is not a factor in assessment, however, that there is some level of involvement is a requirement);

- The deliverable: providing information on the anticipated level of funding that will be sought from Horizon Europe and the activities that would be fulfilled if the Horizon Europe bid is successful;

5.2 In all cases, it is for the applicants to demonstrate the feasibility of their proposed pump priming grant. Applicants should consider the deadline of the Horizon Europe call they are targeting, the maximum duration of their pump priming award, and the progress of their consortium to date.

6   Eligibility of Applicants

6.1 Each project will be led by a named Principal Investigator (PI). The PI must be a researcher in the eligible disciplines for this call and from an eligible UK-based organisation. The PI is expected to direct and manage the grant and has responsibility for the overall project reporting requirements.

6.2 Proposals are welcome in all disciplines – engineering, natural sciences, medical and health sciences, humanities, and social sciences.

6.3 Proposals are encouraged and welcomed that involve working closely with any type of organisation eligible for Horizon Europe funding (based in the UK and/or the EU/Associated Countries), including SMEs, third parties, end users and similar bodies/organisations such as hospitals, libraries, regulators, commercial partners, creative industry partners, museums, local authorities and associations, NGOs, charities and companies as appropriate to the selected Call and Topic.

6.4 The PI must be of postdoctoral or above status (or have equivalent research or innovation experience). The PI's position must last at least the duration of the grant funded by the Academy.

6.5 An individual cannot be the PI on more than one bid under this call.

6.6 Projects may also include any number of specified 'Other Participants', who may, for example, be relevant stakeholders participating in networking or dissemination events, academic or policy advisers, practitioners, industry representatives, etc.

6.7 Research and/or clerical assistance is an eligible cost under this programme and it can be supported where a reasonable case is made in line with the type of work that is required to be undertaken.

6.8 For all applications to 2-stage Pillar 2 Calls and Topics for which the first stage deadline has passed, evidence of submission to the first stage will be required in order for your proposal to be assessed. Please also note that any funding provided by the Academy will be conditional upon your success in the first stage. Funds may not be used for any activities until you have been notified of your success in the first stage. If successful, funds may then be used to prepare a second stage application, if unsuccessful, funds must be returned to the British Academy.

7   Funding Eligibility

7.1 Funding may be used to support:

   a. Costs for concept or proof of market work and proposal development

   b. Costs of meetings for the organisations involved in the UK or the EU to prepare the proposal

   c. Travel and subsistence, including costs to participate in information days, brokerage events directly related to Horizon Europe objectives, relevant discussions with European Commission officials or similar

   d. Research and/or clerical assistance (based in the UK or internationally)

   e. Due diligence work on partners

   f. Costs towards child or parent care if activity is conducted away from home and it is not possible to make alternative arrangements

   g. Contributions towards support services such as proposal writing not exceeding 50% of the total value sought

   h. Contributions towards research assistance not exceeding 50% of the total value sought

7.2 The following items are **not** currently eligible for funding (applicants registered with additional needs may consult the Academy about possible exceptions prior to applications):

   a. Institutional overheads, or any element that should properly be ascribed to institutional overheads

   b. PI and Co-Applicant time

   c. Purchasing of assets

   d. Computer hardware including laptops, electronic notebooks, digital cameras, etc.

   e. Books and other permanent resources

f. The preparation of camera-ready copy, copy editing, proof-reading, indexing, nor any other editorial task

g. Subventions for direct production costs (printing, binding, distribution, marketing etc.)

h. Costs of publication in electronic media

i. Travel and maintenance expenses for purposes such as lecture tours or to write up the results of research

j. Carbon offsetting

k. Open access fees

7.3 As this scheme is not run on a FEC basis, institutional overheads, PI, and Co-A time are an ineligible cost.

7.4 All grants will be paid to the employing institution of the PI, and not to the individual researchers involved. Institutions must be officially recognised by the British Academy prior to the proposal being submitted.

7.5 **Additional Needs Funding** - The British Academy has set aside specific [funding to support any additional needs](#) that applicants and award holders may have. This funding is available both to applicants, to assist in making an application to British Academy schemes, and award holders. Funding is managed outside of the *Pump Priming Collaboration between UK and EU Partners* application process.

8 Duration of Award

8.1 The end date of your pump priming project must be before the submission deadline of your chosen Horizon Europe Call and Topic. Please note that deadline of your chosen Call and Topic must be at least 3 weeks after the planned start of the award. If your chosen call is from the 2026-2027 draft Work Programmes and is not currently on the Portal then please note that the maximum duration of your award is 12 months. However, when calls from the draft 2026-2027 Work Programmes are added to the Portal, the end of the award may be adapted if the published deadline on the Portal is earlier than 12 months (an indicative call deadline for the drafts calls is set out in the draft 2027-2027 Work Programmes).

8.2 An interim report with a final financial statement must be submitted, and all award activity concluded, prior to the deadline of the Horizon Europe call being applied to. Funds must not be used after submission of the interim report, and any underspend must be returned to the British Academy. Awards will be required to provide further reporting on their award after the interim report, including in relation to the outcome of their application to Horizon Europe.

8.3 During the award should the PI decide not to proceed with their application to the Pillar 2 Horizon Europe call originally indicated in their award, they must get in touch with the Academy via internationalgrants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk and all unspent grant funds will need to be returned to the Academy.

8.4 Should the PI and their consortium decide to apply for an alternative Horizon Europe call, they must be in touch with the Academy to confirm its validity prior to continuing use of funding. The Academy retains the right to end the award at this stage.

8.5 If during the award the originally selected call from the draft 2026/27 Work Programmes is not subsequently published by the European Commission on the Horizon Europe Portal as a 2026 or 2027 call then the PI must get in touch with the Academy via internationalgrants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk and all unspent grant funds will need to be returned to the Academy.

9 Selection Criteria

9.1 All eligible proposals submitted in response to this call will be assessed by relevant peer reviewers.

9.2 Applications for calls on the Horizon Europe Portal will be assessed against the following criteria:

a) The expertise of the applicants in the specific selected Horizon Europe Call and Topic;

b) The alignment of that expertise and the content of the application with that Call and Topic;

c) The feasibility of the pump priming proposal including the timescale of the award which must be demonstrably in line with the deadline of the award/call, and its plan of action in terms of supporting the delivery of a successful application to Horizon Europe (noting that the deadline of your chosen Call and Topic must be at least three weeks after the planned start of the award);

d) The commitment and ability of the organisations involved to work together and make a successful application to Horizon Europe;

e) The added value of this funding to the proposed pump priming activity, including a particular focus on the relevance of the items listed in the budget and the quality of the financial justification

Please note when planning your application that the earliest possible start date for the pump priming activity is expected to be **10 December 2025.**

10 Application and Assessment Procedure

10.1 All applicants must register in the British Academy's online [Flexi-Grant](#) Grant Management System to enable the processing and assessment of their application. All applications must be submitted in English.

10.2 All applications will be subject to an eligibility check undertaken by appropriate British Academy staff before being put forward for assessment, and **applications that are not completed correctly and on time will not be considered**.

10.3 The deadline for submissions and UK institutional approval is **Wednesday 5 November 2025, 17:00 (UK time).**

10.4 **It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that their application is submitted in good and sufficient time for it to be approved by the Lead's employing institution**.

11 Code of practice

11.1 The British Academy has a [Code of Practice](#), setting out the principles of equity, integrity and confidentiality governing the treatment of all applications for funding. The Code of Practice also covers Data Protection, the British Academy's ethics policy and the appeals procedure.

11.2 Feedback is not a feature of this programme, and the Academy is, regretfully, unable to enter into correspondence regarding the decisions of the awarding committee, which are governed by the Code of Practice. Please note that by applying to this programme, applicants undertake to accept the terms under which applications are assessed.

12 Contact details and Further Information

12.1 Should you have any queries, please contact: internationalgrants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk

13 Annex: Draft 2026-2027 Work Programmes

Cluster 1: Health

Cluster 2: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society

Cluster 3: Civil Security for Society

Cluster 4: Digital, Industry and Space

Cluster 5: Climate, Energy and Mobility

Cluster 6: Food Security, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment

Missions

New European Bauhaus