

INFORMATION EVENT ON THE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND RESILIENCE CANDIDATE EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP UNDER HORIZON EUROPE - SUMMARY OF THE Q&A SESSION

On January 30, 2025, the European Commission and the National Science Centre, the coordinator of the candidate European Partnership on Social Transformations and Resilience (STR), organised an information event for funding agencies, sectoral ministries and other stakeholders interested in joining the network. This document is a summary of the Q&A session.

Financial issues - Partnership

Q: What is the typical funding rate in co-funded partnerships? Is it the same as in Horizon Europe 100 % + 25 % Overhead?

A: In the case of co-funded partnerships, the Commission provides 30% of the funding. The EU top-up is based on Horizon Europe eligible costs, including financial support to third parties (FSTP).

Indirect costs are included in the calculation of eligible costs and will be reimbursed at the flat-rate of 25% of certain eligible direct cost categories (excluding e.g. volunteers costs, subcontracting costs, FSTP).

Each consortium agrees internally on how the EU co-funding is best distributed.

Q: Is there an advance from the EU to start the partnership?

A: Once the Grant Agreement is signed the Commission pays a prefinancing that is usually a quite considerable part of the maximum grant amount.

Q: I've heard that ongoing partnerships are encountering problems funding additional activities, as the outcomes of joint calls may not secure enough top-up from the EC for such activities. Has this issue been resolved?

A: Institutions implementing partnerships have developed some experience in running these types of projects, which has partially solved initial struggles with this instrument. What the European Commission can reimburse depends on the eligible costs that have been generated by the partnership. Therefore, if a partnership struggles with generating enough eligible costs, the top-up will be smaller.

Q: How much of the budget of the partnership will be allocated to the additional activities?

A: This is an issue that will be explored in the preparation phase. There will need to be a balance between the financial contributions collected and the planned activities, which need to be implemented. This issue will be decided by the partners.

Financial issues – joint transnational calls (FSTP)

Q: Can national organizations set the eligible costs in national calls as they wish? E.g. they do not have to include overheads when they cannot under national law.

A: Yes. Eligible costs can be set according to national rules. There are certain standards that the calls must meet, but the implementation and administration of grants for end beneficiaries are based on national rules.

Q: Will there be a joint fund within STR (created from EU contribution) for projects that will be evaluated well, recommended for financing but ultimately not funded because of a lack of funding from funders from countries involved in the project?

A: This type of question will be considered at a later stage when call conditions are defined. Future partners are welcome to share any experiences that could inform the STR Partnership in this regard.

Different financial management models have been adopted by co-funded partnerships, some [examples can be found on ERA Learn](#).

Q: Do the participants in the STR Partnership have to address all impact areas or is it an option?

A: Partners can be involved in different activities of the partnership. Depending on their role and interests, they can decide in which activities, including participation in calls, they want to get involved.

Eligible partners

Q: What entities are eligible to be part of the partnership? Should authorities at national level only participate or authorities at regional level are also eligible?

Q: Is a university eligible to participate in the partnership as a partner?

Q: It was mentioned that also Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) could be beneficiaries in some European Partnerships. Is this the case for this partnership?

A: The following entities are eligible:

- national and regional research funding organisations and ministries funding research,
- sectoral ministries and other public national and regional organisations in strategic roles,
- universities, NGOs, associations, private companies etc. depending on activities planned.

The selection of partners depends on the structure of the partnership and its governance framework. The scope of additional activities will determine which institutions other than

RFOs will become beneficiaries of the grant agreement, and which might be active in external consultation bodies or national mirror groups.

Q: Could the participation of RPOs in the partnership (as partners), risk a conflict of interest?

A: This issue presents a challenge. The Commission expects that sufficient firewalls are established to avoid conflicts of interest. The partnership needs to prove that there is no information flow between the design of the calls and the institutions or researchers who take part in the calls.

Timeline and getting involved

Q: What is the timeline and steps for the development of this STR Partnership? What is going to happen in the coming months?

Q: Is there an official application process e.g. for governmental institutions?

A: In the first quarter of 2025, the Commission will issue a request for financial commitment to Member States and Associated Countries, asking them to present their financial allocation for the STR partnership. There will be a 2–3-month period for submitting the financial commitments. The NCN will organise two online meetings in June and November to inform about the process of formation of the STR Partnership, the development of the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) and financial issues.

The call for the STR Partnership will be opened in the first quarter of 2026, with the SRIA expected to be finalised by that time. The call will close in the third quarter of 2026, and the evaluation results should be known in the first quarter of 2027. The grant and consortium agreements will be signed soon after, in early 2027.

Q: When is the deadline for countries or regions to confirm their participation in the partnership? What countries are confirmed so far?

A: The countries will confirm their interest by submitting the financial commitments requested by the EC. However, 21 Member States have already signalled their interest in the partnership during the preparation of the second Horizon Europe strategic plan.

Additional activities

Q: What is the biggest difference between the ERA-NET scheme (CHANSE, HERA, NORFACE) and the STR Partnership that we should be aware of?

A: Former ERA-NET Cofunds were focused on funding and monitoring of research projects. Horizon Europe Partnerships pursue a more ambitious strategic agenda. Their activities are grounded in SRIAs, feature multiple (typically annual) calls, and are expected to extend beyond

joint transnational calls with additional initiatives. Additional activities are an important element of every partnership. Interim and final payments are based on sound financial reporting and actually incurred, eligible costs.

Q: Does the capacity building block fall under the additional activities category?

A: Yes. Any activity that is foreseen by the partnership that goes beyond the calls for proposals and fits into the eligible cost categories of the Model Grant Agreement (MGA) can be considered an additional activity.

Q: It was mentioned that the focus of the STR Partnership is on the 'uptake of results'. Could you please elaborate more on this?

A: The ambition of the STR Partnership is not only to fund research but also to contribute to the development of measures that can enhance the uptake of results. Activities will be designed to help researchers engage with potential stakeholders e.g. policymakers, business actors, NGOs etc. The partnership would also facilitate connections between stakeholders and researchers to better inform the scientific community about their needs.

Q: What is the definition of research infrastructure in the STR Partnership?

A: Research infrastructures are mentioned in the STR guidance proposal, which was elaborated between the foreseen partners and the Commission. However, research infrastructures will be defined in detail in the final proposal for the STR Partnership which will be submitted to the Commission in 2026. Future partners are welcome to share any experiences which could contribute to the STR Partnership in this regard.

Q: Where can I find more, detailed information about additional activities regarding EU partnerships and the STR Partnership?

A: Information on additional activities is available on the ERA-LEARN website <https://www.era-learn.eu/>, including a [dedicated workshop on the definition and implementation of additional activities](#). There is also a section on the CHANSE website about the STR Partnership <https://chanse.org/social-transformations-and-resilience-partnership-candidate/>