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**Horizon Europe**  
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*9. Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and  
Environment*

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## **Introduction**

The Horizon Europe mandate for Cluster 6 is to provide opportunities to enhance and balance environmental, social and economic goals and to set human economic activities on a path towards sustainability. The underlying paradigm of Cluster 6 is therefore the need for a transformative change of the EU economy and society in order to reduce environmental degradation, halt and reverse the decline of biodiversity and better manage natural resources while meeting the EU's climate objectives and ensuring food and water security.

Research and Innovation (R&I) in this cluster will contribute to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and accelerate the ecological transition required by the European Green Deal. Of particular relevance will be SDG 2 – zero hunger; SDG 3 – good health and well-being; SDG 6 - clean water and sanitation; SDG 8 – decent work and economic growth; SDG 9 – industry, innovation, and infrastructure; SDG 11 – sustainable cities and communities; SDG 12 - responsible consumption and production; SDG 13 – climate action, SDG 14 – life below water and SDG 15 - life on land".

Activities in this work programme will contribute to all key strategic orientations (KSOs) of the strategic plan<sup>1</sup>, with orientations B and C contributing the most directly. These KSOs are:

- A. promoting an open strategic autonomy by leading the development of key digital and enabling technologies, sectors and value chains to accelerate and steer the digital and green transitions through human-centred technologies and innovations;
- B. restoring Europe's ecosystems and biodiversity, and managing sustainably natural resources to ensure food security and a clean and healthy environment;
- C. making Europe the first digitally led circular, climate-neutral and sustainable economy through the transformation of its mobility, energy, construction and production systems;
- D. creating a more resilient, inclusive and democratic European society, prepared and responsive to threats and disasters, addressing inequalities and providing high-quality health care, and empowering all citizens to act in the green and digital transitions.

To contribute to these programme-level KSOs, Cluster 6 will deliver on six specific expected impacts. In this work programme, each expected impact has been transformed into one or two specific destination(s) (see table below). This destination-based work programme structure follows a thematic centre-of-gravity approach, but activities in a given destination may be of a cross-cutting nature and will often contribute to multiple expected impacts. The specific contribution to the overall expected impacts is explained in the introductory text of each destination.

<b>Expected impact (strategic plan)</b>	<b>Destination (Cluster 6 work)</b>
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<sup>1</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/en/web/eu-law-and-publications/publication-detail/-/publication/3c6ffd74-8ac3-11eb-b85c-01aa75ed71a1>

	<b>programme)</b>
Climate neutrality is achieved by reducing GHG emissions, maintaining natural carbon sinks, and enhancing the sequestration and storage of carbon in ecosystems, including by unfolding the potential of nature based solutions, production systems on land and at sea as well as rural and coastal areas, where adaptations to climate change are also being fostered for enhancing resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land, oceans and water for climate action</li> </ul>
Biodiversity is back on a path to recovery, and ecosystems and their services are preserved and sustainably restored on land, inland water and at sea through improved knowledge and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity and ecosystem services</li> </ul>
Sustainable and circular management and use of natural resources as well as prevention and removal of pollution are mainstreamed, unlocking the potential of the bioeconomy, ensuring competitiveness and guaranteeing healthy soil, air, fresh and marine water for all, through better understanding of planetary boundaries and deployment of innovative technologies and other solutions, notably in primary production, forestry and bio-based systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circular economy and bioeconomy sectors</li> <li>• Clean environment and zero pollution</li> </ul>
Food and nutrition security for all within planetary boundaries is ensured through knowledge, innovation and digitalisation in agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and food systems, which are sustainable, resilient, inclusive, safe and healthy from farm to fork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption</li> </ul>
Rural, coastal and urban areas are developed in a sustainable, balanced and inclusive manner thanks to a better understanding of the environmental, socio-economic, behavioural and demographic drivers of change as well as deployment of digital, social and community-led innovations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resilient, inclusive, healthy and green rural, coastal and urban communities</li> </ul>
Innovative governance models enabling sustainability and resilience are established and monitored through enhanced and shared use of new knowledge, tools, foresight, and environmental observations as well as digital, modelling and forecasting capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal</li> </ul>



Activities under Cluster 6 will help to accelerate the ecological transition required by the European Green Deal in order to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. This will be done by preserving Earth's natural carbon sinks such as soils and plants, forests, farmed lands and wetlands, substantially reducing GHG from the agricultural sector and transforming the food system. In addition, activities will foster innovation to develop the circular economy and exploit the potential of biological resources for renewable products. This will reduce the EU's dependence on non-renewable resources, and help to reduce emissions/waste from industrial processes by using more sustainable bio-based systems. At the same time it will avoid trade-offs that could damage biodiversity and will promote synergistic measures to protect biodiversity. R&I will support the objectives the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, of the circular economy action plan, the EU industrial strategy, the bioeconomy strategy, the EU forest strategy, the blue growth strategy, the chemicals strategy for sustainability and the EU plastics strategy, in addition to the EU climate policy.

Protecting and restoring the integrity of ecosystems and their capacity to deliver a wide range of essential services, thus putting Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030, as required by the EU biodiversity strategy, is fundamental to achieving the European Green Deal objectives. Avoiding loss of biodiversity also has the potential of helping to avoid threats to human health in the future. R&I will address the multiple challenges in this area, including by enabling transformative changes. This cluster will improve knowledge on the causes of biodiversity decline, the role of ecosystems and their services and support their restoration. The cluster deals with agriculture, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries, food and bio-based systems, animal and human health, which directly depend on ecosystem services. These sectors have profound environmental impacts and at the same time are particularly affected by the global environmental changes. Particular climate adaptation and biodiversity needs will have to be considered for their transformation. R&I activities will include solutions addressing indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, which at the same time impact the climate and our resilience to adapt to it.

Cluster 6 will steer and accelerate the transition to sustainable, healthy and inclusive food systems to achieve effectively the objectives of the farm to fork strategy. It will empower farmers, fishermen and aquaculture producers to transform their production methods more quickly and efficiently and make the best use of nature-based, technological, digital and social innovations. This will deliver better climate mitigation and environmental results, increase climate resilience and reduce dependency on pesticides and antimicrobials. At the same time it will also provide consumers with affordable, safe, nutritious, healthy and sustainable food. R&I will also stimulate practices at all stages of the food system from processing to services and the use and valorisation of waste and by-products and surplus management. This will ensure safe and sustainable food and facilitate a shift to sustainable and healthy diets. R&I will also support the design, implementation and monitoring of the common agricultural policy (CAP), the common fisheries policy and the EU General Food Law.

Improved knowledge and innovations will be key to the success of the zero-pollution ambition of the European Green Deal to halt and prevent pollution, and will therefore address issues concerning fresh and marine waters, soils, nutrients as well as the environmental

performance of processes. R&I will support EU environmental legislation and policies that target a higher level of protection for biodiversity, soil, water, air and marine resources, including the Birds Directive and the Habitats directive, the pollinators initiative, the revised soil thematic strategy and the EU Water Framework Directive and the maritime policy and the EU Arctic policy.

The cluster will support the development of resilient and vibrant rural, coastal, urban, and peri-urban areas in line with the Commission priority “An economy that works for people”. It will develop new governance models ensuring that no one is left behind to implement the Green Deal initiatives, needed to ensure a fair and just transition. This cluster will help to use, uptake and deploy environmental observation and take advantage of digital solutions in coherence with the EU priority “A Europe fit for the digital age”. The cluster will also take advantage of opportunities that the post-COVID-19 crisis recovery package offers to set the economy on a path to sustainable development in line with the UN 2030 Agenda.

Horizon Europe is the research and innovation support programme in a system of European and national funding programmes that shares policy objectives. Through the programme, special attention will be given to ensuring cooperation between universities, scientific communities and industry, including small and medium enterprises, and citizens and their representatives, in order to bridge gaps between territories, generations and regional cultures, especially caring for the needs of the young in shaping Europe’s future. Calls could be EU Synergies calls, meaning that projects that have been awarded a grant under the call could have the possibility to also receive funding under other EU programmes, including relevant shared management funds. In this context, project proposers should consider and actively seek synergies with, and where appropriate possibilities for further funding from, other R&I-relevant EU, national or regional programmes (such as ERDF, ESF+, JTF, EMFAF, EAFRD and InvestEU ), where appropriate, as well as private funds or financial instruments. The ERDF focuses amongst others on the development and strengthening of regional and local research and innovation ecosystems and smart economic transformation, in line with regional/national smart specialisation strategies. It can support investment in research infrastructure, activities for applied research and innovation, including industrial research, experimental development and feasibility studies, building research and innovation capacities and uptake of advanced technologies and roll-out of innovative solutions from the Framework Programmes for research and innovation through the ERDF.

The EU’s Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) currently available in all Member States aims at financing projects that directly tackle the economic and social impacts from the Coronavirus crisis and support the green and digital transition. For project ideas that directly contribute to these objectives and that have a strong focus in one member state it is advisable to check access to the RRF for a fast and targeted support.

Research on a societal and political framework is necessary to achieve the transformation expected and R&I investments under Cluster 6 will therefore emphasise the role of the social sciences and humanities, gender, inter/transdisciplinary and systems approaches. R&I will build on existing research infrastructures.

Cluster 6 activities will sustain the EU's ambition in international fora in areas of paramount importance such as biodiversity, climate change, the management of natural resources, seas and ocean, sustainable agriculture, food safety and food and nutrition security.

In line with the European Green Deal objectives, research and innovation activities should comply with the 'do no significant harm' principle<sup>2</sup>. This compliance needs to be assessed during the course of the project and during the expected life cycle impact of an innovation if the innovation is commercialised. The robustness of the compliance must be customised to the envisaged technology readiness level (TRL) of the project. In this regard, the potential harm of innovation actions contributing to the European Green Deal will be monitored throughout the project's duration.

To be more effective in achieving impact, the proposals shall synergize with relevant initiatives funded at EU level, including the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). The innovation ecosystems created and nurtured by the EIT KICs can in particular contribute to building communities or platforms for coordination and support actions, sharing knowledge or disseminating and fostering the exploitation of the project results. Where relevant the proposals are encouraged to explore possible forms and means of service provisions distinct to the EIT KICs, in particular EIT Food and EIT Climate-KIC.

For topics in this cluster, the consortia should consider their possible contribution to Joint Research Centre (JRC) relevant platforms for capitalising the knowledge developed in their projects, and to become more policy relevant, contributing in terms of data, indicators and knowledge. With reference to:

- Life cycle assessment (LCA) and its relevant application to value chain assessment, refer to the European Platform on Life cycle assessment (EPLCA, <https://eplca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>) and make reference to the Environmental footprint method when applying LCA (<https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/index.htm>)
- Raw materials, refer to the Raw materials information system (RMIS, <https://rmis.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>)
- Soil and soil related issues, refer to the European Soil Observatory (ESO, <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/eu-soil-observatory>)
- Natural capital accounting, refer to the INCA platform (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ecosystem-accounts>)
- Biodiversity, refer to the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity, ([https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity\\_en](https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity_en)).

### **Specific requirements for multi-actor projects:**

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<sup>2</sup> As defined in Articles 3(b) and 17 of Regulation (EU) 2020/852 on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2020 (see Annex XY)

Proposals submitted for topics requesting to follow the multi-actor approach must meet all requirements listed below. The multi-actor approach described here, which is a form of responsible research and innovation, aims to make the R&I process and its outcomes more demand-driven, reliable and relevant to society. This is more than just widely disseminating the results of a project, or listening to the views of a board of stakeholders. A multi-actor project ensures the genuine and sufficient involvement of a targeted diversity of actors, which serves the objectives of the topic. Which relevant key actors participate depends on the objective of the proposal. The actors are essentially the (end-) **users<sup>3</sup> of the project results** and are backed up by useful intermediaries who can bring in further knowledge relevant to the topic's objectives, such as farmers / farmers' groups, foresters / foresters' groups, fishermen / fishermen's groups, advisors, food processors, businesses, consumer associations, local communities, citizens, civil society organisations including NGOs, government representatives, etc. The genuine and sufficient involvement of such actors should take place **all over the whole course of the project**: from participation in project planning and experiments to implementation, dissemination of results and a possible demonstration phase. Building blocks for the project proposal are expected to come from science as well as from practice and from intermediaries: it is a 'co-creation' process. End-users and practitioners are to be involved, not as a study-object, but to use their practical and local knowledge and/or entrepreneurial skills to develop solutions and create 'co-ownership' of results for (end-) users and practitioners. This will speed up the acceptance and take-up of new ideas, approaches and solutions developed in the project. Therefore, a multi-actor project proposal must demonstrate:

- how the project proposal's objectives and planning are targeting the needs/problems and opportunities of the (end-)users of the project results;
- how the description of the project concept and in particular the composition of the consortium reflects a balanced choice of key relevant actors who have complementary types of knowledge (scientific and practical), and will ensure a broad implementation of project results which should be useful in practice;
- how the project intends to include existing practices and tacit knowledge in scientific work. This should be illustrated in the project proposal with a sufficient number of high-quality knowledge exchange activities indicating the precise and active roles of the different non-scientific actors in the work. Thanks to the cross-fertilisation of competencies and ideas between actors, this should generate innovative findings and solutions that are more likely to be applied;
- how the project will facilitate the multi-actor engagement process by making use of the most appropriate methodologies;
- the project's added value: how the project will complement existing research and best practices;

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<sup>3</sup> An "(end-) user" of project result is a person who is him/herself putting the project results into practice

- the proposal should demonstrate how the project will result in practical knowledge, approaches or tools, made easily understandable and accessible, and how this free material for practice will feed into the existing dissemination channels most consulted by the (end-) users of the project results in the countries and regions;
- for topics linked to Intervention Area 3, for EU-wide communication, this knowledge should also be assembled in a substantial number of 'practice abstracts' in the common EIP format<sup>4</sup> of the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability' (EIP-AGRI);
- for other topics, this EIP may also be used if they are covered under its innovative areas<sup>5</sup>, as may other similarly effective solutions for dissemination through the main existing dissemination channels targeting (end-)users;
- for topics linked to Intervention Area 3, involvement, as much as possible, of interactive innovation groups operating in the EIP-AGRI context, such as EIP-AGRI Operational Groups funded under Rural Development Programmes.

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<sup>4</sup> The EIP common format for "practice abstracts" is available at:  
<https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/content/eip-agri-common-format>

<sup>5</sup> For the innovative areas covered by the EIP see section 8 (pp.8-9) of the Commission Communication 2012(79) final: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012DC0079&from=EN>

## **Destination – Biodiversity and ecosystem services**

The EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 is a cornerstone of the European Green Deal that will put Europe's biodiversity on the path to recovery by 2030, for the benefit of people, the climate and the planet. It will also prepare the EU to take a leading role in the upcoming international negotiations on a new global framework to halt biodiversity loss. With the Green Deal's 'do no significant harm' vision, all EU policies will become more biodiversity-friendly, focusing more on the sustainable use of ecosystems, supporting the recovery in a post-pandemic world<sup>6</sup>. This policy vision is fully supported in the strategic plan of Horizon Europe for 2021-2024 in its first key strategic orientation 'Protecting and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity and managing sustainably natural resources on land and at sea, and achieving climate neutrality and adaptation'. Consequently, Destination 'Biodiversity and ecosystem services' intends to achieve the following expected impact from Cluster 6 **'Biodiversity is back on a path to recovery, and ecosystems and their services are preserved and sustainably restored on land, inland water and at sea through improved knowledge and innovation'**. All actions funded under this destination must therefore help to deliver this main impact.

Research and innovation is key to delivering results that will have an important impact on biodiversity, food, health, water and climate, which are all interconnected, and to achieving the goal of healthy and resilient ecosystems by 2030. It will also enable transformational change engaging European society and economy and their global impacts, making decisions more biodiversity-friendly. R&I will support policy targets, develop nature-based solutions<sup>7</sup> and holistic approaches to address the main causes of biodiversity loss, particularly in connection to production systems, bringing all sectors together to be integrated in ecosystem-based management. Investments in R&I will help to protect and restore the integrity of terrestrial, aquatic and marine ecosystems, currently under multiple pressures, and protect and restore their capacity to deliver a wide range of essential services. Under Horizon Europe, a **long-term strategic research agenda for biodiversity** will also be developed.

The sixth mass extinction is taking place: one million species are at risk of extinction, and the degradation of ecosystems severely affects the fabric of life that enables the survival of humankind<sup>8</sup>. None of the globally agreed targets of the 2011-2020 strategic plan for biodiversity has been fully achieved<sup>9</sup>, with the biodiversity crisis even deepening. Our knowledge on biodiversity status, pressures, impacts and responses needs to be improved, requiring even basic taxonomic work in certain ecosystems. **Understanding biodiversity decline** and addressing its main drivers through data-driven science, integrated

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<sup>6</sup> COM/2020/380 EU biodiversity strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives

<sup>7</sup> Nature-based solutions are "inspired and supported by nature, which are cost-effective, simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits and help build resilience. Such solutions bring more, and more diverse, nature and natural features and processes into cities, landscapes and seascapes, through locally adapted, resource-efficient and systemic interventions. Hence, nature-based solutions must benefit biodiversity and support the delivery of a range of ecosystem services."

<sup>8</sup> IPBES global assessment (2019). Summary for policy-makers.

<sup>9</sup> United Nation's 5<sup>th</sup> Global Biodiversity Outlook (2020).

multidisciplinary knowledge, new tools, models and scenarios, will support Europe's policy needs and boost global biodiversity science. Solutions for preventing and addressing the individual and cumulative effect of direct drivers of biodiversity loss (land use change, overexploitation, climate change, invasive species, pollution) need to be further developed and made available to policy makers and practitioners, such as through the new EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity<sup>10</sup>. For more impact on society and economic sectors, citizen science and crowdsourcing also require big data analysis, artificial intelligence, social sciences, communications and policy tools.

**Valuing and restoring biodiversity and ecosystem services** is necessary to develop tools to guide decisions, inform and implement policies on the environment, water, health, climate, disaster risk reduction, agriculture, forests and other land use types, protected areas management, the sustainable bioeconomy, the blue economy, maritime and cross-sectoral spatial planning, and responsible business practices. The continued degradation of the ecosystems and their services affects biodiversity and climate change<sup>11</sup>, and increases the risk of severe ecological disasters and pandemics. The European Green Deal and its biodiversity strategy call for urgent action to restore damaged aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems in order to increase biodiversity and deliver a wide range of ecosystem services.

The contribution of ecosystems to human wellbeing and the economy is not properly accounted for in market transactions, or in planning and investment decisions: the social and economic co-benefits of healthy ecosystems are often disregarded. Natural capital accounts need to be developed and mainstreamed. Investments in R&I will also lay the ground for scaling up and speeding up the implementation of technological, societal and nature-based solutions (NBS). NBS support vital ecosystem services, biodiversity and biomass provision, as well as access to drinking water, clean soil, improved livelihoods, healthy diets and food safety and security from sustainable food systems. NBS deployment will also create green jobs and build resilience to climate change and natural disasters. Citizens, authorities, businesses, social partners and the research community must be engaged at local, regional, national and European levels.

**Managing biodiversity in primary production:** Biodiversity is the basis for sustainable and resilient agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and forestry, as also recognised in the farm to fork and biodiversity strategies under the Green Deal. With diverse genetic resources, it is possible to use in primary production plants and animals that are adapted to different environments, ecosystems and meet diverse needs. Furthermore, the interplay between species below and above ground delivers important ecosystem services, such as pollination, soil fertility, pest and risk control. Despite these recognised benefits, current production systems tend to be specialised and rely on a limited number of crops, breeds and forest tree species whose genetic basis is narrow. Reversing this trend and increasing their resilience is critical and of global concern in particular in the current context of accelerated climate change and a growing population whose production and consumption footprint is increasing.

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<sup>10</sup> [https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity\\_en](https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity_en)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-020-0738-8>

**Enabling transformative change<sup>12</sup> in biodiversity:** Science (IPBES and IPCC) and Policy (the global post-2020 biodiversity framework and the EU biodiversity strategy) clearly underline that biodiversity loss can only be successfully addressed if transformative changes are initiated, accelerated, and up-scaled. There is however hardly any knowledge on potentials and challenges arising from transitions focused on biodiversity. System-level change of this kind starts with social innovation in the form of, for example, regulations, incentives, local and participatory processes, and through the introduction of new technologies, new production processes, or new consumer products, which change how socio-technical and socio-ecological systems operate and impact their environment. Such transformative change must decrease the impacts of indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, which are in turn, underpinned by societal values and behaviours. Indirect drivers of biodiversity loss are understood to mean here: production and consumption patterns, human population dynamics and trends (including their footprints), trade, technological innovations, and local to global governance (including financing). Research and innovation can enable these transformative changes to happen and initiate processes, behaviour changes and actions which are transforming the way we impact biodiversity. Socio-economic and multidisciplinary research, including on the role of education, will develop knowledge and tools to understand the role of transformative change for biodiversity policy making, address the indirect drivers for biodiversity loss, and accelerate transformative changes in our society that are relevant to biodiversity.

**Interconnecting biodiversity research and supporting policies** refers to the establishment of the European Partnership ‘Rescuing biodiversity to safeguard life on Earth’ and to the support to other science-policy interfaces. The European partnership on biodiversity<sup>13</sup> will connect national, local and European research, innovation and environmental programmes, combining resources in support of one goal, i.e. that by 2030 biodiversity in Europe is back on the path to recovery. It will co-develop multidisciplinary research and innovation programmes with stakeholders, set up a European network of coordinated observatories for biodiversity monitoring, and implement a broad range of activities to increase the relevance, impact and visibility of EU research and innovation in tackling the biodiversity crisis in line with the [EU biodiversity strategy for 2030](#).

Science-policy interfaces on biodiversity and nature-based solutions have made good progress in recent years<sup>14</sup>, and must be stepped up to achieve targeted impacts on biodiversity-relevant policies, that can in turn be used as structured policy input into the research cycle. These interfaces are also key to guiding biodiversity governance, and to implement the EU Green Deal and international conventions<sup>15</sup>. In line with the Commission priority ‘A stronger Europe in the world’, the EU must take and demonstrate leadership in this field, notably by increasing

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<sup>12</sup> Transformative change has been defined by IPBES as “A fundamental, system-wide reorganization across technological, economic and social factors, including paradigms, goals and values”. IPBES global assessment (2019). Summary for policy-makers.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.biodiversa.org/1759>

<sup>14</sup> Good leverage effects have been achieved, notably through EKLIPSE, Oppla, the NBS platform, the EU4IPBES support action 2018-2021.

<sup>15</sup> In particular, the UN Convention on Biodiversity, and the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030



its support to IPBES<sup>16</sup> -to bring it up to the same level as the IPCC-, and to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Besides economic support, this also includes efforts to create synergies and cooperation between IPBES, regional Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other relevant research communities to ensure a full coverage of all relevant aspects of biodiversity and ecosystem services in order to underpin the full scope of the post 2020 global biodiversity framework.

All topics will directly contribute to the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 and to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 13, 14, 15, 17.

Several missions will also help to achieve biodiversity-related impacts, notably in the areas of ‘Adaptation to climate change including societal transformation’, ‘Climate-neutral and smart cities’, ‘Ocean, seas and waters’ and ‘Soil health and food’.

### **Expected impact**

Proposals for topics under this destination should set out a credible pathway contributing to Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and more specifically to one or more of the following impacts:

- **Biodiversity decline, its main direct drivers and their interrelations are better understood and addressed** through the production, integration and use of open data, knowledge, education and training, innovative technologies, solutions and control measures, in collaboration with European and international initiatives.
- **Biodiversity and natural capital are integrated into public and business decision-making at all levels for the protection and restoration of ecosystems and their services;** science base is provided for planning and expanding protected areas, and sustainably managing ecosystems.
- **Europe builds competitive sustainability and tackles climate change and natural disasters through the deployment of nature-based solutions,** including ecosystem-based disaster risk-reduction approaches fully reaping their economic, social and environmental benefits for a green recovery across all European regions.
- **The interrelations between biodiversity, health, food, soil, water, air and climate are better known** and communicated to citizens and policy-makers; in particular, risks associated with microbiomes and biodiversity-friendly prevention/mitigation measures, and opportunities for biodiversity recovery are identified.
- **Practices in agriculture and forestry support biodiversity and the provision of other ecosystems services** based on a) a better understanding of functional biodiversity (above and below ground), b) effective knowledge and innovation systems and c) ready-to use solutions for land managers, adapted to specific conditions.

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<sup>16</sup> The Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

- **Access to a wider range of crops and breeds with a broadened genetic base is improved in line with global biodiversity commitments** by gaining greater insight into the characteristics of genetic resources and by enhancing capacities for their preservation and use in breeding and in primary production (farming, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture). More (bio)diverse, resilient production systems will have positive knock-on effects on value chains, consumption, healthy diets and the wider, non-managed biodiversity.
- **Approaches for enabling transformative changes in society** for biodiversity and ecosystems recovery are identified, tested and implemented in policy, governance, law business and society; all indirect drivers of biodiversity loss are addressed and ‘do not harm’ biodiversity policies become a mainstream part of all sectors.
- **Biodiversity research is interconnected** across Europe, supporting and enhancing the ambition of national, EU and international environmental policies and conventions.

When considering the impact of the proposals, their compliance with the ‘do no significant harm’ principle<sup>17</sup> has to be assessed. Also it has to be ensured that the research and innovation activities do not cause a significant harm to any of the six environmental objectives of the EU Taxonomy Regulation.

The portfolio of actions under this destination will have impacts in the following areas: “Enhancing ecosystems and biodiversity on land and in waters”; “Climate change mitigation and adaptation”; “Clean and healthy air, water and soil”; “Sustainable food systems from farm to fork on land and sea”; and “A resilient EU prepared for emerging threats”.

The following call(s) in this work programme contribute to this destination:

Call	Budgets (EUR million)		Deadline(s)
	2021	2022	
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01	194.50		06 Oct 2021
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02	20.00	20.00	22 Jul 2021
HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01		95.00	15 Feb 2022
HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-02-two-stage		46.00	15 Feb 2022 (First Stage) 01 Sep 2022 (Second Stage)

<sup>17</sup> As per Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 2020/852 on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment (EU Taxonomy Regulation)

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*Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment*

Overall indicative budget	214.50	161.00	
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**Call - Biodiversity and ecosystem services**

***HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>18</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>19</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2021		
Opening: 22 Jun 2021 Deadline(s): 06 Oct 2021				
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-01	RIA	20.00	10.00 to 20.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-02	RIA	10.00	3.00 to 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-03	RIA	16.00	Around 16.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-04	RIA	10.00	Around 10.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-05	RIA	5.00	Around 5.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-06	CSA	4.00	Around 4.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-07	RIA	13.00	Around 13.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-08	IA	10.00	Around 10.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-09	CSA	0.50	Around 0.50	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-10	IA	10.00	Around 10.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-11	RIA	12.00	4.00 to 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-12	RIA	7.00	3.00 to 4.00	2

<sup>18</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.  
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-13	RIA	16.00	Around 8.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-14	IA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-15	RIA	10.00	2.00 to 3.00	4
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-16	RIA	5.00	Around 5.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-17	RIA	8.00	2.00 to 3.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-18	RIA	5.00	2.00 to 3.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-19	CSA	13.00	11.00 to 13.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-20	CSA	5.00	Around 5.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-21	RIA	5.00	2.00 to 3.00	2
Overall indicative budget		194.50		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

### **Understanding biodiversity decline**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-01: European participation in global biodiversity genomics endeavours aimed at identifying all biodiversity on Earth<sup>20</sup>**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 10.00 and 20.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 20.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>International organisations with headquarters in a Member State or associated country are exceptionally eligible for funding given the global dimension of this topic.</p> <p>International cooperation is encouraged.</p> <p>If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).</p>

Expected Outcome: In support of the implementation of the Green Deal and the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, successful proposals will help to create and maintain European nodes and networks integrated into global biodiversity genomics initiatives and help to better understand biodiversity decline, its main direct drivers and their interrelations.

Projects results are expected to contribute to at least four of the six following expected outcomes:

- Creation and management of the European node of the International Barcode of Life.
- Creation of a European hub affiliated to the Earth Biogenome Project, with a common goal and clear targets.
- Development of the necessary networks, technologies, quality standards, reference atlas and taxonomic expertise through Europe to systematically, and comprehensively identify specific, intra-specific and ecosystem diversity through genomics techniques, such as full-genome sequencing, barcoding and metabarcoding.

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<sup>20</sup> Such as the International Barcode of Life (iBOL) consortium, <https://ibol.org/>, and the Earth BioGenome Project global consortium, <https://www.earthbiogenome.org/>

- Advances in the assessment of pan-European biodiversity via genome sequencing and/or DNA barcoding of threatened/endangered species, ecologically through barcoding and/or genome sequencing (animals, plants, fungi and microorganisms), ecological keystone species and economically important species, (e.g. pollinators and their biome, soil, forest, and marine and/or freshwater communities as well as invasive species and/or disease vectors).
- Pan-European barcoding of pollinators by completing the Barcode of Life for European bees, butterflies, moths and hoverflies.
- The active support and cooperation of citizen scientists and other non-professional taxonomists.

Scope: DNA-based identification systems can track biodiversity change on large geographic scales and reveal the interactions among the species in a biome. On the other hand, fully sequencing life, including, when relevant, information on symbiotic organisms, microbiomes and parasites, is expected to provide new tools for the conservation, preservation and regeneration of biodiversity, drug discovery and advanced biotechnology.

The International Barcode of Life (iBOL) consortium has set up high-throughput barcoding infrastructure to barcode all biodiversity on Earth by 2045 with the help of the international community and several new infrastructures across the world. Several EU and associated countries currently participate in the barcoding endeavour, but there is no pan-European node of iBOL as such.

Similarly, the Earth BioGenome Project (EBP), initiated in 2018, aims to sequence and catalogue the genomes of all of Earth's currently described eukaryotic species over a period of 10 years. Several European groups have joined the endeavour but no European target or project has been proposed yet.

Proposals should set up one or both European hubs for iBoL and/or EBP, and leverage resources and expertise to advance in completing the barcoding and/or sequencing of European biodiversity in a smart and efficient way, taking advantage of existing networks, infrastructures and expertise. Specific groups of ecological or economic importance, or species under threat, such as pollinators, mycorrhizal fungi, invasive species or disease vectors, should be sufficiently prioritised.

Projects should sufficiently plan their barcoding effort to maximise possible applications, such as, for example: registering patterns of biodiversity across ecoregions to forecast changes in response to anthropogenic drivers of biodiversity loss; discovering new species; tracking invasive alien species by metabarcoding forest soil samples, freshwaters or coastal waters; revealing symbiomes and trophic chains, etc. Proposals should contribute to the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 by generating the reference genomes of the representative species across the tree of life, leveraging the existing genome sequencing facilities. Sample collection standards and protocols should be developed, validated and adopted, as should

engagement actions and tools to allow citizens and other non-professional-taxonomist stakeholders to participate at different stages of the activities.

Data, results and methodologies from projects funded under this topic should contribute to the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity<sup>21</sup>, and be permanently and openly accessible in any relevant repositories. International cooperation with strategic third country partners is strongly encouraged, for example with Canada.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-02: Data and technologies for the inventory, fast identification and monitoring of endangered wildlife and other species groups**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).

Expected Outcome: In support of the implementation of the Green Deal, the EU biodiversity strategy 2030 and the Birds and Habitats Directives, successful proposals will help to bridge taxonomic and monitoring gaps, by providing methods, data, knowledge and models on the conservation status and ecological requirements of species and habitats and help to better understand and address biodiversity decline, its main direct drivers and their interrelations.

Projects results should contribute to some of the following expected outcomes:

- Systemic, integrated and (open-)standardised data, knowledge and models on the conservation status and ecological requirements of species and habitats, with a focus on those covered by the Birds and Habitats Directives and IUCN Red List. This will lead to better management of protected sites and species, in particular with a view to setting conservation objectives and developing appropriately designed and effective management plans

<sup>21</sup> [https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity\\_en](https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity_en)



- The bridging of taxonomic and monitoring gaps thanks to new enabling tools, technologies, fast identification methodologies and integrated monitoring systems across Europe on wildlife species. These will help to identify biodiversity threats, such as invasive species, emergence of disease threats, conflict situations with production animals and/or human communities, etc.
- Models upscaling the results of biodiversity assessments to wider areas, based on existing datasets of environmental descriptors.
- Integrative taxonomy of inventory pollinator species (bees, butterflies, moths and hoverflies), soil fauna (mites, springtails, woodlice, millipedes and earthworms) and/or other threatened species groups

Scope: The EU biodiversity strategy contains concrete objectives to protect and restore biodiversity and to address the main pressures and threats to biodiversity. In order to achieve these objectives, basic research is needed to better understand, monitor, observe and manage biodiversity, including in protected areas. Such knowledge is also indispensable to support the protection and restoration of natural capital and ecosystems.

Better, accessible and FAIR<sup>22</sup> data on species, biodiversity and ecosystems will also help to ensure that biodiversity preservation is a mainstream feature of other sectors, such as agriculture, transport, energy or the bioeconomy. There is a need for systemic and standardised biodiversity data on the ground in order to build up our knowledge on the status and trends of habitats and species and ecosystems, and on the drivers of decline.

Monitoring needs to be of better quality, greater relevance and more cost-effective. This is to be achieved by, among other things, developing, testing and implementing new (long-term) approaches that make use of recent technological advances and existing data from multiple origins (e.g. observation data, remote sensing, DNA technologies, big data analysis, AI, deep learning, historical records, use of citizen science and volunteer expert data).

Projects should develop, test and implement enabling tools, technologies and fast identification methodologies to produce and integrate data, knowledge and models on the conservation status of species and habitats, with a focus on those covered by the Birds and Habitats Directives. Projects should also help to develop an integrated European biodiversity monitoring system, in collaboration with the initiatives and projects mentioned below. There needs to be a particular focus on those species and habitats, for which knowledge gaps still exist, and on those prioritised for conservation action in line with the EU biodiversity strategy 2030, such as pollinators, sea birds, marine mammals, invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, bats, mosses, lichens, wetlands, coastal and marine areas, grasslands, mires, bogs and fens, heathland and shrubs.

The biogeographical approach of the Natura 2000 network needs to be taken into account. If the proposal addresses the pollinator-related outcomes, projects should produce an inventory

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<sup>22</sup> FAIR data principles: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable  
[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/turning\\_fair\\_into\\_reality\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/turning_fair_into_reality_0.pdf)

of pollinator species through integrative taxonomy, and bridge taxonomic gaps by developing tools (field guides, identification keys, national reference collections and checklists, European online ID platform, image recognition/apps, digitalised collections, etc.) for bees, butterflies, moths and hoverflies.

Projects should contribute their data to the Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity<sup>23</sup> and earmark the necessary resources for cooperation with the Centre; projects should also promote synergies with the European co-funded partnership on biodiversity<sup>24</sup> (HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02-01) and its activities. Cooperation is also expected with other relevant projects and initiatives, such as EUROPABON<sup>25</sup> which was awarded funding under the call ‘SC5-33-2020: Monitoring ecosystems through research, innovation and technology’, or with projects resulting from this specific call as well as other EU-funded calls. Strong collaboration and networking is expected with the future taxonomy CSA resulting from topic HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-02: ‘Building taxonomic research capacity near biodiversity hotspots and for protected areas by networking natural history museums and other taxonomic facilities’.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-03: Understanding and valuing coastal and marine biodiversity and ecosystems services**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 16.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 16.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

**Expected Outcome:**

<sup>23</sup> The EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) is an action of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030. It aims to enhance the knowledge base, facilitate its sharing and foster cross-sectorial policy dialogue for EU policy making in biodiversity and related fields.  
[https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity\\_en](https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity_en).

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.biodiversa.org/1759>

<sup>25</sup> <https://europabon.org/>

- In support of the implementation of the Green Deal and the biodiversity strategy, and in order to better understand biodiversity decline, its main direct drivers and their interrelations, successful proposals will contribute to all of the following expected outcomes: Closure of the gap in the knowledge and exploration of marine and coastal biodiversity at the level of species, the intraspecific/genetic level, ecosystems, functionalities, trophic-interactions and interconnections across temporal and spatial scales;
- New theoretical frameworks for the organisation of marine biotic communities, with key species, from microbiome to megafauna, from benthic to pelagic, especially invertebrates and apex predators, and considering sex segregation determined by environmental parameters, in space and time and the ecosystem processes linking them (energy and biogeochemical cycles, including the role of migratory species behaviour ), from deep sea to coastal biotopes including intertidal areas
- Ocean health prediction (including climate change vulnerability), decision-making and policy implementation supported by the full integration of ecological components with physical and geochemical components (in four dimensions: surface, water columns, seafloor, time) into improved global and regional high-resolution models of ecosystems conditions and dynamics;
- Improved detection and monitoring of invasive alien species, assessment of their impact on biodiversity and conservation monitoring of endangered species;
- Natural capital accounting with an estimation of the value and co-benefits of services from healthy deep sea to coastal ecosystems, including non-financial benefits such as well-being and social and cultural values for policy and decision-making; development of a common EU methodology and criteria for the non-financial ecosystem benefits;
- Improved science-based maritime spatial planning and identification of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas and design of Marine Protected Areas.

Scope: Studies estimate there may be 0.7 to 1.0 million eukaryotic marine species, of which about only 226,000 are described. The EEA State of Nature Report 2013-2018 found a general lack of marine species data that hampers the elaboration of conservation and restoration measures, the sustainable management of ecosystems and, therefore, the achievement of favourable conservation status. For instance, invertebrates supporting the lower level of the food chain or marine mammals are among those species with the highest proportion of unknown assessments (over 78 %). In the deep sea, over 90% of the species may be new to science. Additionally, very little is known about the effects of modern biogenic structures related to feeding types and morphological traits that may play a major role in biogeochemical cycles. Marine biodiversity hotspots in tropical and subtropical shallow areas host species and processes that are yet undescribed. The lack of biodiversity knowledge and appropriate monitoring are critical limiting factors in the definition and implementation of measures, where the range, population size and suitable habitat area are unknown in the majority of Member States and for the majority of vulnerable marine species and ecosystems.

The main reasons are the limited access and high cost of explorations of the diversity of biotopes in the vast marine and coastal realm, in particular the deep sea, and the resources available to identify organisms across the full range of sizes (from microorganisms to megafauna).

Acidification, deoxygenation, global warming and climate change, including seasonal patterns, are affecting marine ecosystems faster than terrestrial ecosystems, with their cumulative and long term effects amplifying the unprecedented pressures of the rapidly evolving ocean economy, driven by human needs for food, energy, transportation and recreation, as underlined by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES GA, 2019). The effects have been documented on mobile and habitat building species over the past two decades and reveal an accelerating trend (IPBES GA, IPCC 2019). Many marine species are highly mobile, often migratory and rely on a number of different habitats throughout their developmental stages. In addition, the marine realm hosts numerous species for which sex determination is dependent upon environmental conditions such as temperature, seasonal patterns, and other geochemical parameters. For these species, environmental changes may cause different responses and effects on species populations and related ecosystems functions that are not shown when studying the species indiscriminately of sex and population dynamics.

With so much still unknown, ecosystem processes cannot be fully understood. This weakens models of marine ecosystems and their responses to pressures and diminishes our capacity to predict and take the best measures. Since biodiversity is declining at an unprecedented rate in Earth's history, there is an urgent need to take conservation measures and develop holistic ecosystem-based management approaches, so that these ecosystems become resilient to environmental changes and are able to provide services for humankind and the planet's life support system. For this, it is critical to improve the knowledge and understand and model marine biodiversity as soon as possible. Proposals should address all of the following aspects:

- Increase understanding of the dynamics of marine biodiversity and ecosystems processes and functioning (including primary production, food webs and biogeochemical cycles) in Europe, in its outermost regions and overseas countries and territories, whose participation is encouraged, and in areas beyond national jurisdictions. Ensure that new modelling and scenario approaches integrate new and existing biodiversity data and knowledge from other EU, international and national projects and from long-term ecosystem and socio-ecological research infrastructure on species, biotopes and ecosystem processes. Genomics and taxonomic technologies for the inventory and fast identification of marine species from microbes, plankton and invertebrates to migratory species (including diadromous species), apex predators such as sharks and mammals, corals and other habitat building species, generating reference datasets from identified voucher specimens and novel methods to improve biodiversity monitoring and inventory.

- Increase understanding of how input from freshwater and estuarine systems influence coastal marine communities and their ecosystem functionality.
- Use acoustic and non-invasive monitoring as an integral component of any marine ecosystem exploration and assessment.
- Develop methods and indicators for regular and timely integrated assessments of the state / health of marine biodiversity and its key ecosystem services, in the EU and associated countries' marine waters (Good Environmental Status) and in areas beyond national jurisdiction.
- Contribute to the Global Taxonomy Initiative of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and to free and open access to the Global Biodiversity Information Facility's biodiversity data.
- Identify opportunities for cooperation with relevant projects, such as EUROPABON<sup>26</sup>, which was awarded funding under the call 'SC5-33-2020: Monitoring ecosystems through research, innovation and technology', or the projects resulting from topics under the Heading 'Understanding biodiversity decline' in Destination 'Biodiversity and ecosystem services' as well as topics from Destination 'Fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption' (aquaculture, fisheries), Destination 'Circular economy and bioeconomy sectors' (biotechnologies, microbiome), Destination 'Land, ocean and water for climate action' (Carbon cycle and natural processes) and Destination 'Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal' (environmental observation). Cooperation is also expected with the Biodiversity Partnership<sup>27</sup> (HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02-01) and other relevant Horizon Europe missions and partnerships. Proposals should outline a plan on how they intend to collaborate with other projects selected and with the initiatives mentioned, by e.g. participating in joint activities, workshops, common communication and dissemination activities, etc. Applicants should allocate the necessary budget to cover the plan. The plan's relevant activities will be set out and carried out in close co-operation with the relevant Commission departments, ensuring coherence with related policy initiatives.
- Where relevant, create links, contributing to and using the information and data of the European Earth observation programme Copernicus, the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), the European Space Agency's Earth Observation Programme and in particular the flagship actions on biodiversity and ocean health of the EC-ESA Joint Earth system science initiative, is expected.
- Improve professional skills and competences on marine taxonomy and system thinking.

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<sup>26</sup> <https://europabon.org/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.biodiversa.org/1759>

- Engage in cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity<sup>28</sup> and other relevant existing platforms and information sharing mechanisms<sup>29</sup>.
- Contribute through education and training (school & ocean literacy, art and citizen science platforms) to a greater overall societal and public understanding of the link between biodiversity and the functioning of ecosystems.

To achieve the expected outcomes, international cooperation is strongly encouraged.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-04: Assess and predict integrated impacts of cumulative direct and indirect stressors on coastal and marine biodiversity, ecosystems and their services**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 10.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: In support of the implementation of the Green Deal and the biodiversity strategy, successful proposals will contribute to all following expected outcomes notably to better understand biodiversity decline, its main direct drivers and their interrelations:

- Policy makers and implementing authorities at national and regional level can assess and predict impacts (incl. tipping points) of multiple stressors on coastal and marine biodiversity (cf. sensitive species and habitats), ecosystems functioning and all its services (including climate change adaptation, resilience and human health)

<sup>28</sup> The EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) is an action of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030. It aims to enhance the knowledge base, facilitate its sharing and foster cross-sectorial policy dialogue for EU policy making in biodiversity and related fields.  
[https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity\\_en](https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity_en).

<sup>29</sup> BISE, BiodivERsA, Oppla, NetworkNature and their joint work streams.

- Better management and impact assessment of invasive species, harmful algal and jellyfish blooms
- Implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive by determining pressure levels that clearly equate to acceptable levels of environmental impact on the Good Environmental Status.
- Ecosystem based management approaches and policy measures for activities both at sea and on land to reduce pressures to ensure Good Environmental Status and will enable the sustainability of coastal and marine ecosystems to deliver services and be resilient to rapid climate and environmental changes.

Scope: The European Environment - State and Outlook 2020<sup>30</sup> (EEA, SOER) underscore the fact that the current trajectories of social and economic development are destroying the ecosystems that ultimately sustain humankind. The Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services: An EU Ecosystem assessment (Maes et al., 2020)<sup>31</sup> points out the knowledge gaps in marine data and highlights that the data coverage in space and time is still insufficient to provide an exhaustive assessment of the condition of marine ecosystems and their services in Europe (incl. the outermost regions and overseas territories). The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) Implementation Report (2020)<sup>32</sup> underlines the lagging targets and actions to reach the Good Environmental Status in European seas. Consistently with the knowledge review in the latest IPCC SROCC<sup>33</sup> and IPBES GA<sup>34</sup> reports, shifting onto sustainable pathways requires urgent rapid and large-scale reductions in human and environmental pressures, going far beyond the current reductions. Europe is not making enough progress in addressing environmental challenges, that natural capital is not yet being protected, conserved and enhanced in accordance with the ambitions of the Seventh Environment Action Programme (7th EAP<sup>35</sup>).

Pressures on marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystems are increasing at a faster rate than the efforts to protect them. Adding to human direct pressures, the integrity of these ecosystems and their capacity to deliver a wide range of multiple essential services and benefits to people is already and will be further undermined by the effects of climate and environmental changes which occurs faster in the ocean (like warming, stratification, sea level rise, extreme events, pollution, eutrophication, deoxygenation, and acidification).

There are still many stressors whose negative effects are not well defined, as their effects may only appear upon interacting with others stressors, creating unknown synergies. Identifying

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<sup>30</sup> The European environment — state and outlook 2020 (EEA SOER 2020) <https://www.eea.europa.eu/soer>

<sup>31</sup> Maes et al., 2020

<sup>32</sup> COM(2020)259 - MSFD Article 20 implementation report ([https://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/eu-coast-and-marine-policy/marine-strategy-framework-directive/index\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/eu-coast-and-marine-policy/marine-strategy-framework-directive/index_en.htm))

<sup>33</sup> Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (<https://www.ipcc.ch/srocc/>)

<sup>34</sup> Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (<https://ipbes.net/global-assessment/>)

<sup>35</sup> The 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP) (<https://ec.europa.eu/environment/action-programme/>)

and defining direct and indirect anthropogenic and environmental stressors and their interactions should be the first step towards correctly quantifying their effects and feeding the models (forecast).

With increasing industrial use of the ocean space, there is a growing need for the development of tools for impact monitoring.

Conceptual and numerical models are crucial tools to understand how multiple factors interact and could affect non-linear systems such as natural ecosystems. They cannot be fully substituted by observations and monitoring, but empirical data is essential to validate model results and provide levels of uncertainty.

Models but also design and use of biodiversity scenarios are important approaches to perform ‘what if’ scenarios, in order to forecast potential impacts of different management options affecting the status of stressed ecosystems under evolving environmental conditions.

In order to facilitate and speed up the development of measures and holistic ecosystem-based management approaches that promote the sustainability of coastal and marine ecosystems and enable them to deliver services and be resilient to rapid climate and environmental changes, proposals are expected to address all of the following aspects:

- Develop a systemic approach for the integrated impact assessment of cumulative direct and indirect stressors on coastal and marine ecosystems processes and services (from benthic to pelagic systems, from food to human health) and assessment of the state of coastal and marine ecosystems “health” or condition, and resilience to cumulative pressures.
- Characterise, measure, and understand the combined impact of different types of pressures or perturbations (chemicals and energy pollution, bioaccumulation, invasive species, extraction activities, river inflows and supplies of sediments and nutrients, hypoxia, pH, warming, etc.) on coastal and marine biodiversity and ecosystems condition (biotic communities, structure, biotope, and functions) from small cells to large ecosystems cells, from invertebrates to predators, and considering sex segregation of species determined by environmental parameters, in space and time including estimates of the extinction risks of species and structures, which might play key roles in the functioning of an ecosystem and in the conservation of marine biodiversity.
- Increased understanding of the biological mechanisms that determine the response of organisms and ecosystems to environmental changes (including components of stability, such as resistance, resilience and recovery), as well as the limits of their response adaptation capacity (tipping points), and the implications for the management of aquatic areas, habitats and species
- State of the Art Biologging technology and molecular methods, in combination with knowledge on oceanographic processes to understand the effects of agents of change on the ecology and population dynamics through different levels of marine food chains.



- Rationalise and advance strategies for monitoring European populations of marine species at the top of food chains, especially those that can indicate important changes in the oceanic environment, and have life histories that make them especially susceptible to change.
- Integrate existing and new biodiversity data and knowledge from multiple origins, including other EU (Horizon 2020 and previous framework Programmes), international and national research projects. Proposals should take into account all the relevant knowledge and data from the IPCC, IPBES, JRC, LIFE projects, EEA, MAES, the IUCN Guidelines and other relevant initiatives.
- Develop technologies, methods and models that can quantify and forecast how cumulative anthropogenic perturbations can affect ecosystem's sustainability, productivity and resilience against environmental stressors.
- Where relevant, creating links, contributing to and using the information and data of the European Earth observation programme Copernicus, the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), European Space Agency Earth Observation Programme and in particular the flagship actions on biodiversity and ocean health of the EC-ESA Joint Earth system science initiative, is expected.
- Contribution to enhancing the overall societal and public understanding of link between marine biodiversity and ecosystem functioning and human health through education and training (school & adult education, citizen science platforms)
- Cooperate with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity by providing and harnessing data and applying an integrated conceptual framework and with other relevant existing platforms and information sharing mechanisms<sup>36</sup>.
- Opportunities for cooperation with the Biodiversity Partnership<sup>37</sup> (HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02-01) and other relevant Horizon Europe missions and partnerships, as well as synergies with relevant projects in Destination 'Fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption' (aquaculture, fisheries), Destination 'Clean environment and zero pollution' (pollution), 'Land, ocean and water for climate action' (climate) and Destination 'Resilient, inclusive, healthy and green rural, coastal and urban communities' (land sea connection, coastal areas) should be identified. Proposals should outline a plan on how they intend to collaborate with other projects selected and with the mentioned initiatives, by e.g. participating in joint activities, workshops, common communication and dissemination activities, etc. Applicants should allocate the necessary budget to cover the plan. Relevant activities of the plan will be set out and carried out in close co-operation with relevant Commission services, ensuring coherence with related policy initiatives.

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<sup>36</sup> BISE, Oppla, NetworkNature and their joint work streams.

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.biodiversa.org/1759>

In order to achieve the expected outcomes, international cooperation is strongly encouraged.

### **Valuing and restoring biodiversity and ecosystem services**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-05: The economics of nature-based solutions: cost-benefit analysis, market development and funding**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).

**Expected Outcome:** A successful proposal will support the development of policies, business models and market conditions to scale up and speed up the implementation of nature-based solutions (NBS)<sup>38</sup>. It will contribute to the wider deployment of NBS and to fully reaping their economic, employment, social and environmental benefits in order to build a competitive sustainability in Europe and to tackle climate change. NBS contribute to the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 and other Green Deal priorities, by supporting biodiversity and vital ecosystem services: climate change mitigation and enhancement of carbon sinks, biomass provision, access to fresh water, clean soil, healthy diets and lifestyles and sustainable food systems. NBS deployment will also create green jobs and build resilience to climate change and natural disasters.

Successful proposals will contribute to all following expected outcomes:

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<sup>38</sup> As defined by the European Commission: Solutions that are inspired and supported by nature, which are cost-effective, simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits and help build resilience. Such solutions bring more, and more diverse, nature and natural features and processes into cities, landscapes and seascapes, through locally adapted, resource-efficient and systemic interventions. Hence, nature-based solutions must benefit biodiversity and support the delivery of a range of ecosystem services. In <https://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm?pg=nbs>.

- Better understanding of the economic and financial performance of NBS, contributing to a greater promotion of investments in NBS and to an acceleration of market uptake.
- NBS markets are further developed and better structured.
- Actors involved in NBS markets are better equipped to conduct cost-benefit analysis and monetisation of NBS, and to address their funding needs, for greater implementation of NBS, including ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction approaches.
- NBS business cases are strengthened, contributing to greater adoption of NBS and awareness of their benefits.
- Regional and Europe-wide advisory services are equipped with better tools and create multi-stakeholder networks to more effectively support NBS project development and investment vehicles.
- Informing Mission Adaptation to Climate Change, the EU Adaptation Strategy and the EU Taxonomy on Sustainable Finance.
- Assess potential skill gaps and devise trainings to tackle this skill shortage

Scope: Developing markets for NBS has proved a continuing challenge. NBS investments are many and varied, with their benefits and costs differing by project type and context. They produce a range of benefits, many of which are public goods with limited revenue streams that may accrue to different stakeholder groups. Detailed understanding of these benefits is lacking. The same is true for potential economic benefits resulting from avoidance or reduction of costs due to NBS intervention (such as those related to insurance, penalty or capital costs). In addition, the variety of NBS and their context-specific nature across urban, periurban and rural realms, makes it difficult to predict reliably their commercial prospects. These features make financing of NBS projects challenging and investment from the private sector particularly so. As a result, funding of NBS has typically focused on a narrow range of public sources. Addressing knowledge gaps about the economic and financial performance of NBS investments, in combination with trialling the development of business cases and models for NBS implementation<sup>39</sup> is particularly urgent in the current context where NBS need to be exponentially scaled up to meet the policy priorities of the European Green Deal. Despite growing interest in NBS, upscaling NBS investment would require better understanding of different return on investment (ROI) models while accounting for indirect revenue streams associated with NBS (e.g. lower insurance costs for local government from investment in flood defences). The successful proposal should:

- Provide guidance for project developers and decision makers to take informed decisions about NBS: e.g. comparison of strengths and weaknesses of green and grey solutions in climate change adaptation; cost-benefit assessments for NBS (including both the initial

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<sup>39</sup> The socio-political and cultural aspects of NBS are, in turn, the focus of HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-05: Assessing the socio-politics of nature-based solutions for more inclusive and resilient communities.

capital investment and maintenance stage); resilience and insurance values of NBS; assessment of other co-benefits of NBS, including non-monetary ones. Synergies should be considered with the dedicated topic HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-06: Nature-based solutions, prevention and reduction of risks and the insurance sector;

- Analyse the potential for development of specific demand and supply chains in NBS;
- Provide methodological guidance on assembling NBS business cases, applying a Total Economic Value framework, of practical use to practitioners in making the case for NBS investments;
- Develop a coaching programme on NBS readiness assistance where businesses and projects selected for Investment Readiness Assistance receive coaching packages tailored specifically to their readiness levels and business objectives to advance the maturity of projects, taking also into account skill gaps;
- Create new or assess, streamline and provide access to existing toolboxes to support regional needs related to NBS financing and implementation; Consider the diversification of financing arrangements and mixes: co-financing and benefit sharing options with the private sector; PPPs; innovative financing mechanisms; and innovative arrangements, e.g. to involve and compensate the land owners who provide the space for NBS implementation;
- Assess the impacts and opportunities for NBS associated with the EU Taxonomy on Sustainable Finance and support the practical implementation of the Taxonomy by stakeholders;
- Analyse innovative financing approaches, including NBS ‘green bonds’ and blended finance at appropriate levels (e.g. European cities), while considering synergies with the European Investment Bank and any other relevant actors;
- Identify the potential for private investment in different NBS typologies and identify the critical conditions/actions necessary for upscaling, including research related needs. Provide a strategy for greater finance mobilisation through, for example, a NBS investment community or marketplace where potential project partners, entrepreneurs, investors, and innovation stakeholders can meet to discuss and advance investment in NBS;
- Identify and analyse case studies of multiple-benefit, co-governance/co-ownership projects with participation of the private sector, exploring their costs and benefits, analysing their financing strategies and identifying critical success factors;
- Explore synergies and interconnection of different EU initiatives (such as INTERREG, LEADER, URBACT, Covenant of Mayors, etc.) in terms of financing and potential for more coordinated actions and aggregated impact on NBS;

- Develop additional training and tailored courses, networking and B2B matchmaking sessions and other relevant events.

Proposals should address all of the above points.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

Collaboration with the Biodiversity Partnership <sup>40</sup> (HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02-01) is expected in the context of reinforcing the knowledge base for assessing, developing and deploying nature-based solutions.

Applicants should create synergies with projects under the same topic and other relevant ongoing or up-coming projects, notably the Horizon 2020 NBS project portfolio and its task forces; HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-06: Nature-based solutions, prevention and reduction of risks and the insurance sector; HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-03: Network for nature: multi-stakeholder dialogue platform to promote nature-based solutions; HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-05: Assessing the socio-politics of nature-based solutions for more inclusive and resilient communities; HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-02-02-two-stage: Developing nature-based therapy for health and well-being; HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-06: Inside and outside: educational innovation with nature-based solutions.

To this end, proposals should include dedicated tasks and appropriate resources for coordination measures, foresee joint activities and joint deliverables.

Proposals should ensure that all evidence, information and project outputs are accessible through the Oppla portal (the EU repository for NBS)<sup>41</sup>.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-06: Nature-based solutions, prevention and reduction of risks and the insurance sector**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: This topic aims to support the development of policies, business models and market conditions to scale up and speed up the implementation of nature-based solutions

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.biodiversa.org/1759>

<sup>41</sup> <https://oppla.eu/>.

(NBS)<sup>42</sup>. It will contribute to the wider deployment of NBS and to fully reaping their economic, social and environmental benefits in order to build a competitive sustainability in Europe and to tackle climate change. NBS contribute to the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 and other Green Deal priorities, by supporting biodiversity and vital ecosystem services, notably building resilience to climate change and natural disasters.

Successful proposals will contribute to all following expected outcomes:

- More robust and integrated NBS for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction at local, regional, national and European level, notably contributing to the EU's Action Plan on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the EU Adaptation Strategy and Mission Adaptation to Climate Change.
- Wider recognition and implementation of NBS as their benefits (avoided damages) are fully recognised when compared to the costs of inaction, thus contributing to greater resilience and competitiveness of the European economy and society.

Greater engagement of the insurance sector in NBS markets and NBS funding and collaboration with other actors across different countries, regions, and cities.

Scope: The costs from climate-related hazards in Europe are increasing and are likely to rise even further and faster over the coming century due to a projected increase in the severity and frequency of events brought by climate change. This will exacerbate other changes related to land use and urbanisation. While encompassing the whole cycle of disaster risk management, in line with the implementation of the EU Sendai Framework over the next ten years (2015-2030) and the new EU Adaptation Strategy, special attention on the role of prevention and risk reduction in Europe is needed, notably through nature-based solutions (NBS). The role that the insurance and reinsurance industry can play in resilience and risk reduction is not sufficiently explored. Previous research highlights that the insurance sector can support action as institutional investors, insurance providers, innovators of new insurance products or as partners bringing their risk management expertise<sup>43</sup>. Data collected by insurance companies can help municipalities in their understanding of risk and to better prioritize climate adaptation measures<sup>44</sup>. However, several barriers remain insufficiently addressed to further

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<sup>42</sup> As defined by the European Commission: Solutions that are inspired and supported by nature, which are cost-effective, simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits and help build resilience. Such solutions bring more, and more diverse, nature and natural features and processes into cities, landscapes and seascapes, through locally adapted, resource-efficient and systemic interventions. Hence, nature-based solutions must benefit biodiversity and support the delivery of a range of ecosystem services. In <https://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm?pg=nbs>.

<sup>43</sup> Weinberg, J., Thakar K., Marchal, R., Nanu, F. and Lopez Gunn, E. (2019). DELIVERABLE 8.3; Second Roundtable Report and Policy Brief. EU Horizon 2020 NAIAD Project, Grant Agreement N°730497.

<sup>44</sup> Ebeltoft, M. (2016). Private-Public-Project: sharing insurance loss data to local and national authorities, (and scientists) in DRR and resilience work. NORDRESS Island, January 2016.

engage the insurance sector in the particular case of NBS – from data management issues to overcoming the uncertainty of investments, or finding adequate regulatory incentives<sup>45</sup>.

The successful proposal should:

- Establish a network and the needed collaborative and participatory arrangements and spaces between all relevant stakeholders in risk reduction across scales: insurers and re-insurers (including insurance associations), public authorities (local, regional and/or national), financing bodies (e.g. the EIB and other investors), farmers associations, relevant actors from the scientific community and potential links to other relevant initiatives (such as the Covenant of Mayors);
- Facilitate a dialogue at different levels of such a network of stakeholders on potential opportunities, strategies or mechanisms to foster collaborative action for a more robust decision-making and for increased risk prevention through NBS;
- Identify risk-related data requirements, mechanisms, existing tools, and opportunities for better data sharing (and data crowdsourcing) to identify areas at risk and potential areas of intervention through NBS or hybrid approaches;
- Support the establishment of secure and efficient data sharing mechanisms between local authorities, insurers and the private sector, taking into appropriate consideration data privacy issues;
- Develop agreed and robust metrics for the quantification of risk reduction performance, and/or ways to assess risk mitigation potential from NBS, including better integration of NBS models and catastrophe models, damage estimates under climate change scenarios and avoided damages;
- Identify financing options and existing success stories for NBS investments from insurance companies, including through blending mechanisms;
- Identify new insurance products that are transparent and affordable in terms of risk premiums and/or pooling of risks;
- Highlight best practices, and remaining gaps, related to the use of NBS to reduce and control risks, considering the type of hazard, location, and scale of intervention;
- Identify specific case studies related to NBS and reduction of risk in EU policies and strategies (e.g. the EU adaptation strategy, the action plan on the Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction, the common agricultural policy (CAP), the EU forest strategy, the Water Framework Directive, the Floods Directive, restoration objectives in the EU biodiversity strategy, etc.).

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<sup>45</sup> Marchal, R., Piton, G. Lopez-Gunn, E., Zorrilla-Miras, P. Van der Keur, P. Dartée, K. Pengal, P. et al. (2019). The (Re)Insurance Industry's Roles in the Integration of Nature-Based Solutions for Prevention in Disaster Risk Reduction—Insights from a European Survey. *Sustainability* 11 (22): 6212. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11226212>.

Proposals should address all of the above points.

Complementary activities such as interviews, research reviews and small research/experimentation-oriented actions may be envisaged. The stocktaking of previous Horizon 2020 projects on NBS, and how these results can be integrated in future insurance sector involvement should also be addressed.

Applicants should create synergies with projects under the same topic and other relevant ongoing or up-coming projects, notably the Horizon 2020 NBS project portfolio and its task forces; HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-05: The economics of nature-based solutions: cost-benefit analysis, market development and funding; HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-03: Network for nature: multi-stakeholder dialogue platform to promote nature-based solutions; HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-05: Assessing the socio-politics of nature-based solutions for more inclusive and resilient communities. To this end, proposals should include dedicated tasks and appropriate resources for coordination measures, foresee joint activities and joint deliverables.

Proposals should ensure that project outputs are accessible through the Oppla portal (the EU repository for NBS)<sup>46</sup>. Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake. This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-07: Ecosystems and their services for an evidence-based policy and decision-making**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 13.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 13.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).

<sup>46</sup> <https://oppla.eu/>.



Expected Outcome: In support to the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 the successful proposal should provide knowledge to support EU and its Member States as well as relevant Associated Countries in the implementation of its actions and commitments by contributing to the integration of biodiversity and natural capital into public and business decision-making at all levels for the protection and restoration of ecosystems and their services. Successful proposals will contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Inform the policy decisions affecting the environment through a better understanding of the condition of ecosystems and their services in Europe, helping fill the current knowledge gaps.
- Contribute to the evidence and awareness of the importance of biodiversity, healthy ecosystems and the social and economic values that emerge from them through a better understanding of ecosystems services in relation with ecosystems condition.
- Support restoration targets and secure the sustainability of human activities and human well-being through the definition of the minimum criteria for ecosystems to achieve or maintain a healthy state or a good condition.

Scope: The first EU-wide Ecosystem Assessment report states that Europe's ecosystems, on which we depend for instance for food, timber, clean air, clean water, climate regulation and recreation, suffer from unrelenting pressures caused by intensive use of land or sea, climate change, pollution, overexploitation of natural resources and invasive alien species. Ensuring that ecosystems achieve or maintain a healthy state or a good condition is a key requirement to secure the sustainability of human activities and human well-being.

The successful proposal should cover the main knowledge gaps identified by the EU Ecosystem assessment<sup>47</sup> report to improve the assessment of the condition of ecosystems while providing uptake of the assessment's outcomes in policy. It should develop and test indicators not yet available for supporting the ecosystem and services assessment. This includes developing the minimum criteria, reference levels and aggregation schemes to define good ecosystem condition. This definition is not restricted to protected areas, but should encompass also forests, agroecosystems, urban areas, soil ecosystems, wetlands, fresh water and marine ecosystems. The proposal should address regional diversity and the corresponding decision level.

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<sup>47</sup> Maes, J., Teller, A., Erhard, M., Condé, S., Vallecillo, S., Barredo, J.I., Paracchini, M.L., Abdul Malak, D., Trombetti, M., Vigiak, O., Zulian, G., Addamo, A.M., Grizzetti, B., Somma, F., Hagyo, A., Vogt, P., Polce, C., Jones, A., Marin, A.I., Ivits, E., Mauri, A., Rega, C., Czúcz, B., Ceccherini, G., Pisoni, E., Ceglar, A., De Palma, P., Cerrani, I., Meroni, M., Caudullo, G., Lugato, E., Vogt, J.V., Spinoni, J., Cammalleri, C., Bastrup-Birk, A., San Miguel, J., San Román, S., Kristensen, P., Christiansen, T., Zal, N., de Roo, A., Cardoso, A.C., Pistocchi, A., Del Barrio Alvarelos, I., Tsiamis, K., Gervasini, E., Deriu, I., La Notte, A., Abad Viñas, R., Vizzarri, M., Camia, A., Robert, N., Kakoulaki, G., Garcia Bendito, E., Panagos, P., Ballabio, C., Scarpa, S., Montanarella, L., Orgiazzi, A., Fernandez Ugalde, O., Santos-Martín, F., *Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services: An EU ecosystem assessment*, EUR 30161 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Ispra, 2020, ISBN 978-92-76-17833-0, doi: 10.2760/757183, JRC120383.

The proposal should investigate how good ecosystem condition is related to the capacity of ecosystems to deliver ecosystem services and focus on quantification of ecosystem services and on data derived from biodiversity and ecosystem monitoring in combination with models to study these. The proposal should develop and test methods and tools (in particular methods developed for natural capital accounting) to consistently report harmonised and verified ecosystem data at EU and Member State and Associated Country level that can be used to regularly report or assess the pressures and condition of ecosystems, dynamics, trends and changes over time.

The proposal should bring the individual MAES components 1) map ecosystems, 2) map and assess condition of ecosystems, 3) map and assess ecosystem services delivered by ecosystems together in integrated ecosystem assessments to better understand how the condition of various ecosystem types influences the delivery of different ecosystem services.

The proposal should demonstrate how to apply the MAES<sup>48</sup> outputs and other relevant ecosystem knowledge in practical policy, including its implementation, and other decision-making process (public and private) at various spatial and temporal scales while involving relevant stakeholders and citizens.

The proposal should follow up on European and global projects and networks to facilitate dialogue among the relevant scientific communities, funding bodies, relevant stakeholders and user communities in Europe throughout the duration of Horizon Europe.

The proposal should test and demonstrate the links between biodiversity, ecosystems and macro-economic policies and national policies for instance on agriculture, fisheries, forestry and climate. The proposal should develop and test practical applications seeking to harness the full potential of ecosystem services for evidence-based decision making. Ecosystem services need to be uptake and better integrated in different sectoral policies including, amongst others, urban and regional development, the common agricultural policy, conservation planning or marine spatial planning.

Applicants should create synergies with relevant projects under this Call. To this end, proposals should include dedicated tasks and appropriate resources for coordination measures, and, where possible, foresee joint activities and joint deliverables. Furthermore, cooperation is expected with the Biodiversity Partnership<sup>49</sup> (HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02-01) and the Science Service HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-19. The proposal should set practical policy recommendations for the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 targets, commitments, and ecosystem services-related policies, thereby contributing to the implementation, monitoring of progress and ratcheting up of the strategy's commitments as part of the European Green Deal.

The successful proposal should show how their results might provide timely information on relevant project outcomes. Cooperation is expected with projects under "HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-20: Support to processes triggered by IPBES and IPCC" and "HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-10: Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity" for

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<sup>48</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/knowledge/ecosystem\\_assessment/index\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/knowledge/ecosystem_assessment/index_en.htm)

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.biodiversa.org/1759>

major science-policy bodies such as the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), as well as the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The successful proposal should ensure that all evidence, data and information will be accessible through the Oppla portal, and prepare the inclusion of its results, knowledge synthesis and policy briefs to the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity. In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement. Where relevant, creating links to and using the information and data of the European Earth observation programme Copernicus, the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) is expected.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-08: Supporting the development of a coherent and resilient Trans-European Nature Network**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 10.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).

Expected Outcome: Contributing to the implementation of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, this topic aims to give support to building a coherent and resilient trans-European nature network (TEN-N) of protected areas, including through the set-up of ecological corridors, thereby contributing to the protection and restoration of ecosystems and their services in Europe.

Successful proposals are expected to contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- Development of a coherent and resilient trans-European nature network of protected areas, by supporting Member States on the key commitments for protecting at least 30% of EU land area, and strictly protecting at least 10% of EU land area.

- Setting up of ecological corridors – within and outside the network - to prevent genetic isolation, allowing for species migration including the response to climate change, and maintaining and enhancing healthy ecosystems, and delivering multiple ecosystem services.

Promote, support and demonstrate innovative and replicable financing solutions for the upscaling investments in green and blue infrastructure<sup>50</sup> (GI) and nature-based solutions (NBS).

Scope: The EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 addresses the on-going biodiversity decline through an EU Nature Protection and Restoration Plan across land and sea, including through the deployment of a truly coherent TEN-N increasing and interconnecting the current network of protected areas. The strategy includes key commitments for 2030 for legally protecting a minimum of 30% of the EU's land area and 30% of the EU's sea area and strictly protecting one third of the EU's protected areas, including all remaining EU primary and old-growth forests. Additionally, setting up and integrating ecological corridors will be important to prevent genetic isolation, allowing for species migration and dispersal, and for maintaining and enhancing healthy ecosystems. This is particularly relevant for increasing resilience of the network with respect to climate change<sup>51</sup>.

The successful proposal should set up a strategic plan to support national authorities in identifying and selecting the relevant priority areas for EU land protection and the set-up of ecological corridors. It should be built on the existing EU network of protected areas and based on the EU Guidance to Member States<sup>52</sup>, referred in the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030.

The successful proposal should consider various climate change scenarios, propose solutions for strengthening ecological connectivity under these different scenarios, through additional protected areas and ecological corridors. In this context, it should also consider the role of Green Urban Spaces and intensively managed ecosystems.

It should promote, support and demonstrate innovative and replicable financing solutions in GI and NBS and innovative cooperation and participatory approaches across borders among Member States on different levels involving a wide range of stakeholders across sectors.

The successful proposal should set out a clear plan to collaborate with national authorities and stakeholders, relevant projects under this call the EU Biodiversity Partnership, the Science

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<sup>50</sup> Green Infrastructure is a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services. It incorporates green spaces (or blue if aquatic ecosystems are concerned) and other physical features in terrestrial (including coastal) and marine areas. On land, GI is present in rural and urban settings.” (European Commission, 2013)

<sup>51</sup> Climate change impacts on ecosystems are now evident across all ecosystems, for example, where climate change is increasing the risk of forest fires and other ecosystem degradation. Furthermore, climate change is projected to drive species to higher latitudes. A more coherent network of nature is one of the solutions to mitigate impacts of and adapt to climate change and allow species to migrate.

<sup>52</sup> This Guidance is currently under discussion in the frame of the EU Nature Directives Expert Group (NADEG) and should be finalized by the end of 2021 at the latest.

Service under HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-19: ‘A mechanism for science to inform implementation, monitoring, review and ratcheting up the new EU biodiversity strategy’ as well with the EU Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process<sup>53</sup> which will be the main forum for discussion of the targets between the Commission, Member States and stakeholders. To this end, proposals should include dedicated tasks and dedicate appropriate resources for coordination measures, and, where possible, foresee joint activities and joint deliverables. The successful proposals should provide knowledge to Convention on Biological Diversity (e.g. SBSTTA/SBI) and to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services processes where relevant. Projects should ensure that all evidence, data and information will be accessible through the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement. Where relevant, creating links to and using the information and data of the European Earth observation programme Copernicus, the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) is expected.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-09: Assessing and consolidating recent scientific advances on freshwater ecosystem restoration.**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 0.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 0.50 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: In support of the implementation of the Green Deal and the biodiversity strategy, a successful proposal will improve the knowledge to restore ecosystems and halt biodiversity loss, in particular Destination ‘Biodiversity and ecosystem services’ impact “Biodiversity in Europe is back on a path of recovery by 2030; ecosystems and their services are preserved and sustainably restored on land, in inland water and at sea through improved knowledge and innovation

The project will contribute to all of the following expected outcomes

- Support public authorities and other organisations engaged in ecosystem restoration to implement and prioritise innovative restoration approaches.

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<sup>53</sup> The Biogeographical Process is guided and monitored by the Expert Group on Natura 2000 Management, and Steering Committees composed of representatives of the Member States, the European Commission, the European Environment Agency, the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity, the European Habitats Forum and the Natura 2000 Users Forum.

- Increase evidence of the potential of innovative restoration approaches to halt biodiversity loss and contribute to carbon storage in sediments and soils.
- Build the foundations for large scale restoration projects and related investments.

Scope: Freshwater ecosystems are degraded due to barriers and other morphological changes, loss of wetlands and floodplains, over abstraction of surface and ground waters, land management that reduces infiltration and generates pollution in land and seas. In responding to the climate and biodiversity crises and acknowledging that healthy water ecosystems are essential for climate adaptation there is an opportunity to determine how to prioritise and deliver aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem restoration at scale throughout Europe, both in rural and urban areas. There is a need to build on recent research from disparate research communities and approaches like the mapping and assessment of ecosystem services to identify how restoration can deliver on multiple objectives (ecosystem services, biodiversity protection, sediment management, climate adaptation, mitigation) and deliver value for citizens.

The objective of this topic is to determine how to implement the restoration of freshwater ecosystems and remove hydromorphological barriers to ensure sustainable environmental flows and to support achievement of good status in both surface and ground waters, long-term water resource management, biodiversity and climate resilience.

This topic should result in a comprehensive review of the knowledge about and past experience with effective approaches to freshwater ecosystem restoration. The scope should include methods for detection and identification of ecosystem degradation, assessment and restoration potential, methods for prioritisation including ones based on mapping of ecosystem services, options for restoration including ones for heavily modified water bodies, approaches to long-term management of restored ecosystems and approaches for monitoring and evaluation including proper evaluation of environmental impacts of restoration options and contribution to climate mitigation. The governance aspects should play important role including strengthening relevant institutions, cross-sectoral collaboration between water and other relevant authorities, financing models for restoration measures, and long term maintenance and protection of restored bodies, economic analysis of costs and benefits, including citizens engagement.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-10: Demonstration of measures and management for coastal and marine ecosystems restoration and resilience in simplified socio-ecological systems.**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 10.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately.

<i>project</i>	Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: In support of the implementation of the Green Deal and the biodiversity strategy, a successful proposal will improve the knowledge to restore ecosystems and halt biodiversity loss, supporting notably the following impact in this destination: ‘Biodiversity decline, its main direct drivers and their interrelations are better understood and addressed’

Projects results are expected to contribute to all following expected outcomes:

- Demonstration of the best combinations of interventions and approaches in a simple socio-ecological system; guidelines to upscale them to more complex systems, for the restoration and protection of coastal, marine and connected freshwater biodiversity and ecosystem services and their resilience to environmental changes in both protected and non-protected areas;
- Formulation and implementation of European & international marine related policies.

Scope: Pressures on marine biodiversity, and the ecosystems they form a part of, are increasing at a faster rate than the efforts at protection. Adding to human direct pressures, the effects of climate and environmental changes are becoming main drivers affecting the integrity of marine ecosystems and their capacity to deliver a wide range of multiple essential services and benefits to people. Those global changes are occurring already and have a more rapid affect in the ocean than on land (like warming, stratification, sea level rise, extreme events, pollution, eutrophication, deoxygenation, and acidification).

There is an increasing need for a holistic ecosystem-based and knowledge-based overarching approach that ensures the sustainability and resilience of coastal and marine ecosystems with a Multi Actor Approach involving the four levers of transformation (science & innovation;

economy & finance; individual & collective action; governance). This approach should at the same time integrate and balance different ocean uses and relevant land-based activities to optimise the overall sustainability of the ocean economy.

This topic aims at speeding up the identification, the development and integration of ad hoc measures and holistic ecosystem-based management approaches at larger scale, considering as well the land-sea interactions, especially connected inland waters, that will restore coastal and marine ecosystems and enable the sustainable delivery of services and resilience to rapid climate and environmental changes. To do so, it is necessary to test with no delay several types of interventions, tools and targets (conservation, restoration, holistic ecosystem-based management, marine nature-based solutions, social innovation) at realistic scales, with spatially well-defined socio-ecological system boundaries before upscaling to larger and more complex socio-ecological systems.

- In this topic simplified socio-ecological systems are systems where the number of socio-economic activities, governance levels and range of ecosystems diversity are such that they allow for the experiment to be conducted within the duration of a project and the range of funding available. They should include already existing MPAs and/or other area based management tools to allow for a quick start of the project's testing approaches. For example, but not exclusively, the system composed by the relevant EU Outermost regions, such as Azores, Madeira, Canary Islands and Cape Verde (Macaronesia), La Réunion, Maurice and related islands (Mascarene Islands), la Gaudeloupe, Saint Martin and la Martinique (Lesser Antilles), Mayotte (Comoros archipelago), French Guyana, or a system of Mediterranean islands (e.g., the Tuscan Archipelago) could provide an example of a large scale but simplified socio-economic system that could be used for assessing cumulated impacts and identifying solutions. Similarly, the Greenland-Iceland-Faeroe region could offer a site in sub-polar Arctic region for identifying integrated solutions for marine biodiversity management under rapid climate change conditions. Inland, presence of protected areas including human activities can also provide an ideal context to explore these questions.
- This topic would allow projects in different simplified socio-ecological systems so several measures and approaches could be conducted in parallel with a shared method enabling both highly system specific as well as shared challenges and solutions to be identified cross-islands / interregional cooperation and policy implementation. Social innovation and co-creation of the approaches and solutions by involving the four levers of transformation in the local communities would be central to enable proper scientifically sound and societally acceptable interventions.
- Innovative approaches and lessons learnt for upscaling measures and holistic socio-ecological management of marine and coastal ecosystems recognising the need to preserve the inherently dynamic nature of coastal ecosystems and their associated landforms. Projects should build on existing knowledge to avoid duplications and overlaps with past or ongoing research and integrate results from multiple origins, including other EU or national projects.



- Where relevant, creating links to and using the information and data of the European Earth observation programme Copernicus, the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) is expected.
- Proposals should outline a plan on how they intend to collaborate with other projects selected under any other relevant topic/call, by e.g. participating in joint activities, workshops, common communication and dissemination activities, etc. Furthermore, the plan should embrace cooperation with the Biodiversity Partnership<sup>54</sup> (HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02-01) and other relevant Horizon Europe missions and partnerships. Applicants should allocate the necessary budget to cover the plan. Relevant activities of the plan will be set out and carried out in close co-operation with relevant Commission services, ensuring coherence with related policy initiatives.
- Contribution to enhancing the overall societal and public understanding of link between biodiversity and ecosystem functioning through education and training (school & adult education, citizen science platforms)
- In order to achieve the expected outcomes, international cooperation is strongly encouraged.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-11: What else is out there? Exploring the connection between biodiversity, ecosystems services, pandemics and epidemic risk**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 4.00 and 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 3-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.biodiversa.org/1759>

Expected Outcome: A successful proposal will contribute to European Green Deal priorities and the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, whilst supporting the EU's response to the coronavirus and other zoonotic outbreaks, in the context of EU's goal of leading just digital, economic and ecological transitions that will leave no one behind, One Health approaches, and the future European Health Union. It will explore the evolution and spread of microbiomes in the wild and their relationship with biodiversity loss, ecosystems dynamics and epidemics risk, in a broad societal, climate change and global context. By doing so, the interrelations between biodiversity, health and environment (e.g. climate and land use) will be better known and communicated to citizens and policy-makers. In particular, risks associated with microbiomes and biodiversity-friendly prevention/mitigation/restoration measures, and opportunities for biodiversity recovery will be identified. This topic is also expected to have impacts related to 'Climate change mitigation and adaptation' and 'A resilient EU prepared for emerging threats'.

Projects results are expected to contribute to some of the following expected outcomes:

- The evolution and spread of microbiomes in the wild and their relationship with biodiversity loss and ecosystems dynamics is understood and modelled, within the broader context of socio-economic driving forces, climate change, public health, and increasing resilience.
- Epidemics risks are understood, mapped and forecasted on the basis of relationships between factors such as land use, ecology, climate, biodiversity, and socio-economic factors, including wildlife trade, that determine the pace at which new pathogens emerge and then spread once transmission between humans occurs.
- Contribution to ecosystem services: use of novel technologies for better land use and environmental management, increasing (or at least preserving) biodiversity under unfavourable environmental/climatic conditions.
- Sustainable prevention/mitigation measures improving microbiomes and biodiversity conservation/recovery are proposed.
- Molecular and phylogenetic characterisation of potential emerging and novel pathogens and their hosts in both natural and human-modified areas for use as pre-leads in future vaccines, antimicrobials and other prevention strategies.
- Pathogen detection and surveillance strategies, focusing on human populations at risk but also on potential reservoirs and vectors, based on rapid, on-site, genomic tools allowing a fast and early response when facing potential outbreaks.
- New multidisciplinary collaborations that embody the One Health/EcoHealth concept are active and efficient as a way to prevent pandemics, sustain biodiversity, promote human, animal and ecosystem health and nature conservation, as well as support the needed transformative change.

- Effective strategies to increase awareness and participation of indigenous and local communities in pandemics prevention are in place: risks management and opportunities for biodiversity conservation/recovery are built together.

Scope: Wildlife microbiomes, whether symbiotic, commensal or pathogenic, and their potential to spread by crossing interspecies barriers, eventually reaching humans via transitional interfaces (e.g. peri-urban, farming areas), are still largely unknown. Complex links between increased human-mediated disturbance, land-use change, natural habitat loss/degradation/fragmentation, climate change and biodiversity loss have all been linked to increases in the increased prevalence and risk of zoonotic disease for a variety of pathogens, mostly driven by human activities that modify the environment or spread pathogens into new ecological niches<sup>55</sup>. Zoonotic diseases are significant threats to human health, with vector-borne diseases accounting for approximately 17 per cent of all infectious diseases and causing an estimated 700,000 deaths globally<sup>56</sup> in a normal year, which can more than double in pandemic years<sup>57</sup>.

The magnitude and direction of altered disease incidence due to anthropogenic disturbance differ globally and between ecosystems. Some described mechanisms and drivers that especially affect infectious disease risk are <sup>58</sup> habitat alteration (e.g. deforestation, urbanisation), depletion of predators, biological invasion, host transfer, biodiversity change, human-driven genetic changes, bushmeat hunting and consumption, environmental contamination by infectious agents, international exchanges, trade, etc.

This call aims to recover biodiversity and ecosystems services whilst predicting and preventing future pandemics and epidemic outbreaks, especially in tropical areas and biodiversity hotspots, through collaboration between environmental (including climate), ecological, biomedical and social sciences. Projects should map, identify and characterise (e.g. with molecular techniques) potential emerging pathogens and their hosts/vectors in both carefully selected natural and human-modified areas, explore the relationship of biodiversity and ecosystems dynamics with microbiomes' evolution and spread, within the broader context of socio-economic driving forces, climate change, public health and animal health.

Pathogen discovery, prophylaxis and operational surveillance strategies should be developed to search for new potential pathogens, within natural and human-modified ecosystems and hosts as well as in cases of human infectious diseases of unknown aetiology, to prevent, detect and contain their outbreaks. Risk maps and predictive models should be built based on development trends, the presence of probable host/bridge species, environmental and socio-economic factors.

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<sup>55</sup> Whitmee et al. 2015 and CBD SoK 2015

<sup>56</sup> IPBES Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services & IPBES The assessment report on land degradation and restoration.

<sup>57</sup> In the first twelve months of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 2 million related deaths have been officially registered worldwide ([worldometers.info/coronavirus](http://worldometers.info/coronavirus), 19 January 2021).

<sup>58</sup> Patz & Confalonieri (2005) Human Health: Ecosystem Regulation of Infectious Diseases. Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Current State and Trends. 1. cited in IPBES global assessment report, 2019

The impacts of land use and climate change on biodiversity, ecosystem services and pandemics should be also taken into account, as well as any recent IPBES reports on the links between biodiversity and pandemics<sup>59</sup>.

Ecologists, infectious-disease researchers, medical doctors, veterinarians, environmental, public-health and animal-health experts, socio-economic stakeholders and the private sector, particularly SMEs, as well as authorities, civil and political entities, should contribute among others to devise an early warning mechanism, track environmental change, assess the risk of pathogens crossing over and reduce risky human activities.

Efforts to preserve/restore biodiversity should address the economic and socio-cultural factors that drive natural habitat alteration and the rural poor's dependency on hunting and trading wild animals. International cooperation with non-EU countries where new pathogens have emerged is strongly encouraged. Projects should ensure availability and interoperability of their data with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity and earmark the necessary resources for cooperation. Collaboration with the Biodiversity Partnership (HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02-01) and creating links to its activities is expected<sup>60</sup>.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of social sciences and humanities (SSH) disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-12: Improved science based maritime spatial planning and identification of marine protected areas**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 7.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project –

<sup>59</sup> IPBES (2020) Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Pandemics. Daszak, P. et al. doi:10.5281/zenodo.4147317 <https://ipbes.net/pandemics>

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.biodiversa.org/1759>

<i>Readiness Level</i>	see General Annex B.
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Expected Outcome: In support of the implementation of the Green Deal and the biodiversity strategy, a successful proposal will improve the knowledge to restore ecosystems and halt biodiversity loss, supporting notably the following impact in this destination: ‘Biodiversity and natural capital are integrated into public and business decision-making at all levels for the protection and restoration of ecosystems and their services; science base is provided for planning and increasing protected areas, and sustainably managing ecosystems’.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- Prioritisation of future protected areas, restoration areas, and science-based maritime spatial planning (including in larger scale hot spots identified in maritime national plans in order to develop ad hoc plans addressing specific scenarios so as to ameliorate the high impact of human activities over the ecosystem services).
- Implementation of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 (legally protect a minimum of 30% of the EU’s sea area of which 10% is strictly protected, and integrate ecological corridors, as part of a true Trans-European Nature Network, maritime spatial planning and ecosystem-based management covering all sectors and activities at sea, as well as area-based conservation-management measures) and the Convention on Biological Diversity post-2020 framework.
- Improved science based for the description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant marine Areas (EBSA)

Scope: Restored and properly protected coastal and marine ecosystems bring substantial health, social and economic benefits to coastal communities and the EU and Associated Countries as a whole. The need for stronger action is all the more acute as marine and coastal ecosystem biodiversity loss is severely exacerbated by global warming.

Achieving a good environmental status of marine ecosystems, will be accomplished not only through protected areas and the restoration of important ecosystems but also by the ways we use the sea so that we no longer endanger food security, fishers’ livelihoods, and the fisheries and seafood sectors. The EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 underlines the application of an ecosystem-based management approach to reduce the adverse impacts of fishing, extraction, mining and other human maritime activities, taking into account pressures from land-based activities, especially on sensitive species and seabed habitats. To support this, national maritime spatial plans should aim to cover all blue economy sectors and take into account the natural ecological features and the link between them.

Experience and lessons learnt from existing marine protected areas (MPAs) show that our capacity to identify ideal locations for MPAs, their sizes, borders, management practices and their connectivity fails to consider the different aspects of biodiversity attributes, to recognise climate change impacts and lacks a sound scientific base in relation to certain aspects. The optimal locations, connectivity and restrictions in MPAs required to achieve the protection of

biodiversity and ecosystem services remain uncertain and are likely to become even more dynamic as the marine environmental conditions are changing fast.

So far, there has been a predominance of MPAs and projects concerned with genes and species and less with individual traits and inter-specific processes, and very few addressing large-scale habitats and ecosystem level processes. Knowledge and scientific approaches are still lacking to address all biodiversity attributes using a coherent and systemic approach. Links and feedbacks between and within biodiversity attributes, ecosystem services and policy implications are lacking.

By building on and integrating existing knowledge and results from multiple origins, including other EU and national projects, research and innovation could pave the way to fill present gaps on marine biodiversity and its management by better linking spatially ecological features with socio-economic elements. It can also have potential links with activities funded by the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF), in particular calls and projects on Maritime Spatial Planning.

- Design of ad hoc innovative flexible socio-ecological management to cope with a rapidly changing environment for coastal, offshore and deep-sea marine ecosystems, taking into account their connectivity, including through deep-sea migratory species, and the need to preserve their inherent natural dynamics.
- Where relevant, creating links to and using the information and data of the European Earth observation programme Copernicus, the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) is expected
- Proposals should outline a plan on how they intend to collaborate with other projects selected under any other relevant topic/call, by e.g. participating in joint activities, workshops, common communication and dissemination activities. Furthermore, the plan should embrace cooperation with the Biodiversity Partnership<sup>61</sup> (HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02-01) and other relevant Horizon Europe missions and partnerships. Applicants should allocate the necessary budget to cover the plan. Relevant activities of the plan will be set out and carried out in close co-operation with relevant Commission services, ensuring coherence with related policy initiatives.
- Provide approaches for greater policy coherence between the Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Maritime Spatial Planning and the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 and how these policies can better assist in the preservation of inherently and spatially dynamic systems.

In order to achieve the expected outcomes, international cooperation is strongly encouraged.

### **Managing biodiversity in primary production**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

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<sup>61</sup> <https://www.biodiversa.org/1759>

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-13: Breeding for resilience: focus on root-based traits**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 16.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

**Expected Outcome:** In line with the objectives of the biodiversity and farm to fork strategies, a successful proposal will support the transition to more sustainable practices in agriculture by reducing the need for external inputs and supporting biodiversity in agroecosystems.

The project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- A better understanding of root-based traits (including the capacity to establish beneficial interactions with soil biota) and their genotypic variability as well as increased insight into the (adaptive) phenotypic plasticity of roots;
- Enhanced capacities for root phenotyping under controlled and on-field conditions;
- The delivery of strategies for breeding for below-ground traits capitalising on more effective interactions between plants and microorganisms in the rhizosphere;
- An increased use and valorisation of genetic resources (in situ and ex situ) for root based traits.

On the longer term projects will contribute to: the development of crops (annual and perennial) and forest trees that are more tolerant to abiotic stress conditions, require less external inputs (e.g. fertilisers and pesticides) and show an increased capacity for carbon sequestration, thereby contributing to adaptation of agriculture and forestry to climate change.

**Scope:** With increasing effects of climate change and a shift towards low(er) input production systems, there is the need for crops that are capable of capturing resources more efficiently and are resilient to abiotic stresses.

The root system and its interaction with soil biota is crucial for nutrient and water acquisition as well as for the capacity of plants to adapt to changing environments and to be more tolerant against pests and diseases. Phenotypic plasticity is key for plants to respond to varying soil conditions and highly dynamic distribution of soil resources. The size and architecture of the root system also determine the allocation of carbon in the soil. Breeding for root traits is therefore a promising strategy to increase plant stress resilience while also enhancing soil carbon sequestration.

Proposals should:

- Identify root traits that increase resource efficiency of plants in different environments, taking into account beneficial plant – microbe interactions and the restitution of plant-fixed carbon to the soil;
- Increase our knowledge on the (molecular and biochemical) plasticity of root responses and their metabolic mechanisms to environmental cues;
- Improve existing and/or develop new root phenotyping tools (including image analysis protocols) to be used in controlled and on-field conditions, thereby overcoming the root data bottleneck;
- Develop strategies to implement “root breeding”, i.e. select for desirable root characteristics and exploit the genetic variation in root traits.

Activities should be carried out in a range of agronomically relevant soil conditions.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-14: Fostering organic crop breeding**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: A successful proposal should support the objectives of the EU biodiversity and farm to fork strategies to transition to fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption, notably the objective to increase organic farming. They should do so by increasing the availability of and access to suitable plant reproductive material for organic crops and by increasing the competitiveness



of the organic crop breeding sector. As such, activities funded under this topic will help the EU achieve the target of at least 25% of the EU's agricultural land under organic farming by 2030. Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- Greater knowledge of relevant traits for organic crop production;
- Improved and open access to a wider pool of high-quality plant reproductive material for the organic crop sector;
- Improved adaptation of new organic crop varieties and organic heterogeneous material to organic farming conditions (e.g. agronomic performance under organic cultivation practices, disease resistance, resilience to drought, longevity, adaptation to different pedo-climatic conditions, nutritional quality, etc.);
- Improved identification and traceability of organic heterogeneous material (OHM);
- Increased competitiveness of the organic crop breeding sector achieved by (i) improved availability of breeding strategies for organic crop production; (ii) novel governance and financing models supporting new breeding initiatives for organic crop production; (iii) increased relevance of the organic sector for commercial plant breeders and seed producers generating increased demand for organic seed and breeding; (iv) improved quality and transparency in the organic plant reproductive material market; (v) training, demonstration and networking.

Scope: Promoting the use of more sustainable farming practices is an EU policy objective enshrined in the European Green Deal and its related strategies. Boosting organic farming in the EU, one of these objectives, can greatly contribute to achieving the ambition to significantly reduce the use and risk of inputs in farming while making agriculture more resilient, including through increased (bio)diversity. Increasing the availability of organic varieties for the organic sector that are better adapted to different and variable conditions is important in order to improve the performance of the organic crop sector. Application of the new organic Regulation<sup>62</sup> (EU) No 2018/848 has the potential to support higher levels of biodiversity and greater resilience in the organic sector with the use of new tools such as the definition of organic heterogeneous material (OHM) and organic varieties. The possibility to use landraces can also revive traditional and regional crops. However, achieving adequate and timely upscaling of organic breeding and seed production that meet growing market demands can be challenging for the sector. Strong involvement from public and private actors, novel governance and financing models for breeding, variety testing and seed production, as well as training, are needed.

Proposals should contribute to improving the availability and quality of plant reproductive material and the selection of varieties suited to the specific conditions of organic farming, in line with the objectives and requirements for organic plant reproductive material set out in Regulation (EU) No 2018/848 and the transformation of the EU's breeding sector. Proposals

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<sup>62</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L\\_.2018.150.01.0001.01.ENG](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2018.150.01.0001.01.ENG)

must implement the ‘multi-actor approach’ and ensure a value chain approach with adequate involvement of the farming sector. Activities should take into account the diversity of seed systems in the EU. The topic is open to all types of organic farming systems in various geographical and pedo-climatic conditions. In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

Proposals should develop measures to support the preservation of genetic resources and increase the availability of plant reproductive material for the organic sector, including through pre-breeding and breeding activities and new approaches to seed sourcing.

Proposals should develop measures that contribute to the development of organic heterogeneous material<sup>63</sup> and varieties suitable for organic cultivation for an increasing range of crops, including arable, forage and horticultural crops.

Proposals should develop specific protocols for testing new organic varieties. Measures should consider the adaptability of OHM and organic varieties to different climatic and edaphic conditions, and resistance to pests and diseases, as well as combining these assets with crop stability, productivity and nutritional content in order to maintain a level of competitiveness of the organic plant reproductive material. The potential of OHM to foster and improve the use of traditional material in organic crop farming should be analysed.

Proposals should develop a toolbox to identify OHM and a system to ensure OHM breeding traceability and maintenance. Case studies of innovative engagement of value chain partners in organic plant breeding in different contexts should be analysed and key factors of success should be identified. Proposals should develop governance and financial models to support organic plant breeding that include all actors in the value chain. Proposals should conceive marketing and value chain development strategies to introduce improved varieties for seed multiplication and treatment, ensuring quality and transparency in the organic seed market. Proposals should set up new networks, and expand existing ones where relevant, to demonstrate and test organic crop breeding in different pedo-climatic regions across Europe, with an emphasis on regions where the organic sector is less developed. Proposals will give attention to participatory on-farm demonstrations. Proposals should design training packages tailored to the specific needs of different actors of the organic breeding and seed business to strengthen their capacities and increase breeding gains.

Proposals should develop scientifically robust and transparent methodologies, building on achievements from previous research activities. To ensure trustworthiness, swift and wide adoption by user communities, and to support EU and national policy-makers, actions should adopt high standards of transparency and openness, going beyond ex-post documentation of

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<sup>63</sup> ‘Organic heterogeneous material’ means a plant grouping within a single botanical taxon of the lowest known rank which: (a) presents common phenotypic characteristics; (b) is characterised by a high level of genetic and phenotypic diversity between individual reproductive units, so that that plant grouping is represented by the material as a whole, and not by a small number of units; (c) is not a variety within the meaning of Article 5(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 2100/94 (1); (d) is not a mixture of varieties; and (e) has been produced in accordance with this Regulation.

results and extending to aspects such as assumptions, models and data quality during the life of projects.

### **Enabling transformative change on biodiversity**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-15: Quantify impacts of the trade in raw and processed biomass on ecosystems, for offering new leverage points for biodiversity conservation, along supply chains, to reduce leakage effects**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in all member states of the African Union are exceptionally eligible for Union funding.

**Expected Outcome:** In line with the EU biodiversity strategy, a successful proposal will develop knowledge and tools to understand the role of transformative change for biodiversity policy making, address the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, and initiate, accelerate and upscale biodiversity-relevant transformative changes in our society.

Projects should address all following outcomes:

- understanding and quantifying the impacts of the trade in raw and processed non-food biomass<sup>64</sup> from land and sea on biodiversity and on the wide range of services that ecosystems can provide, including in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- identifying new leverage points for biodiversity conservation<sup>65</sup>, for example along supply chains, within and beyond the retailing sector, reducing leakage effects (including carbon leakage), and providing recommendations on how to address these leverage points at corporate and institutional level.

<sup>64</sup> See [https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/bioeconomy/topic/biomass\\_en](https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/bioeconomy/topic/biomass_en) (for energy, feed, fibre, textile production or carbon storage)

<sup>65</sup> As referred to in the understanding of transformative change in IPBES and GBO-5, EEA

- making available and using (local) solutions for retailers and their leverage effects on (global aspects of) patterns of biomass production and consumption, rebuilding our economy in a biodiversity-friendly way within planetary boundaries, including through sustainable corporate governance.
- specifying the meaning of transformational change in practice, based on case studies.
- improving the understanding of the biodiversity inter-dependencies of the SDGs; strengthening IPBES and IPCC by the contribution of European research and innovation.
- providing approaches, tools and knowledge influence policies at the right level on transformative change for biodiversity – the key elements of this change by the portfolio of cooperating projects (of which these projects are part).

With the focus on quantifying impacts of trade of raw and processed biomass on ecosystems, projects are encouraged to engage in international cooperation (in particular with African countries, Brazil, Latin American and Caribbean countries or the Mediterranean region) to find new leverage points for biodiversity conservation along supply chains and to reduce leakage effects for the EU and associated countries<sup>66</sup>.

Scope: In addition to focusing on limiting the impacts from biomass production and consumption on biodiversity, proposals should look at the whole trade-related value chain, at the scale needed to have a greater effect on protecting and restoring biodiversity. Proposals should analyse how the biomass sector could increase its positive impact on biodiversity. They should support biodiversity to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services, including on mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Proposals should increase the volume of evidence available by taking systematic approaches that take account of links between activities and leakage effects at different stages in the value chain or link production and consumption explicitly, including with institutions, businesses, retailers and investors, civil society, and should cover more than one product at a time.

The knowledge gained should help establish an ‘ecological footprint’ of biomass and the manufactured goods based on biomass, within planetary boundaries as stipulated in the EU bioeconomy strategy<sup>67</sup>. The knowledge should be usable for science-industry cooperation on the bioeconomy<sup>68</sup>, and should follow the pollution and climate neutrality targets and commitments, due diligence and human rights requirements, and the policy on just transition, for the service industry and the financial sector.

Proposals should take into account the role of governments as major consumers of goods and services (and the leverage in procurement processes), and of manufacturers and retailers as consumers of primary resources.

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<sup>66</sup> Including telecoupling effects on and from Europe

<sup>67</sup> See [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/new-bioeconomy-strategy-sustainable-europe-2018-oct-11-0\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/new-bioeconomy-strategy-sustainable-europe-2018-oct-11-0_en) and biomass assessment studies [https://ec.europa.eu/knowledge4policy/projects-activities/jrc-biomass-study\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/knowledge4policy/projects-activities/jrc-biomass-study_en)

<sup>68</sup> Such as the BBI Joint Undertaking and later the Circular bio-based Europe (CBE) Partnership

The outcomes of these projects should help integrate biodiversity values into the circular economy, for example by cutting waste from the biomass chain, reducing leakage effects, tele-coupling, using carbon and nitrogen footprints in production processes and minimising the use of plastic in the economy. The projects should give explicit values and accounting of these benefits for biodiversity.

Proposals should look at how to further mainstream biodiversity into socio-economic and environmental agendas, from the transformative aspect of minimising the impacts of trade in raw and processed biomass for protecting, sustainably managing and restoring biodiversity and the wide range of ecosystem services it can deliver, in order to nudge pathways towards fair and equitable development and just transitions (1) across the EU Member States and associated countries, and (2) globally.

Proposals should build their analysis on the synergies between multiple Sustainable Development Goals, to deliver directly and indirectly biodiversity benefits. They should highlight the role of biodiversity in attaining the set of Sustainable Development Goals relating to the trade in raw and processed biomass.

Proposals should provide case studies and collect good and failed examples that can serve as useful inputs to these transformations. They should inform and inspire transformative change through learning, co-creation and dialogue.

Proposals should include specific tasks and allocate sufficient resources for coordination measures, to develop joint deliverables (e.g. activities, workshops, joint communication and outreach measures) with all projects on transformative change related to biodiversity funded under this destination. This applies to projects funded under this destination that aim to deliver multiple co-benefits, including on the reduction of biodiversity loss<sup>69</sup>. Proposals should use existing platforms and information sharing mechanisms relevant to promoting transformational change and sharing biodiversity knowledge<sup>70</sup>. Furthermore, projects are expected to cooperate with the European partnership on biodiversity<sup>71</sup> (HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02-01) and the Science Service (HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-19).

Proposals should show how their results can provide timely information for relevant IPBES and IPCC functions. They are expected to cooperate with the CBD, and with projects 'HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-20: Support to processes triggered by IPBES and IPCC', 'HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-10: Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity' and 'HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-21: Impact and dependence of business on biodiversity'.

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<sup>69</sup> In addition, cooperation with projects run under the call Horizon 2020 LC-CLA-14-2020 'Understanding climate-water-energy-food nexus and streamlining water-related policies'

<sup>70</sup> BISE, EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity, BiodivERsA, Oppla, NetworkNature and their joint work streams

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.biodiversa.org/1759>

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-16: Biodiversity, water, food, energy, transport, climate and health nexus in the context of transformative change**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome: In line with the EU biodiversity strategy, a successful proposal will develop knowledge and tools to understand the role of transformative change for biodiversity policy making, address the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, and initiate, accelerate and upscale biodiversity-relevant transformative changes in our society.

Proposals should look at how to further mainstream biodiversity into policy making and governance (including financing) for achieving transformative action, both under and above the scope of socio-economic and environmental agendas.

The project should address all following outcomes:

- The interlinkages (nexus) between biodiversity, water, food, energy, transport and health in the context of climate change, the underlying causes of biodiversity loss and the determinants of transformative change to achieve the 2050 vision for biodiversity are assessed.
- Options for change, showing which societal factors (including policy competences, markets and stakeholder interests) drive transformative change with a positive effect on biodiversity, and which factors drive transitions that have a negative impact on biodiversity in the short-, medium- and long-term, are identified, understood, and co-developed by the relevant actors.
- Guidance to facilitate potential just transition pathways and actions at European level to feed into systemic policy decisions. This includes guidance on how to enhance the synergies between biodiversity preservation and action on climate-neutrality, and how to avoid trade-offs.
- Specifying the meaning of transformational change in practice, based on case studies illustrating how to put transformational change into action. Creating specific narratives, business models and policies, including on nature-based solutions for climate mitigation and adaptation, water and health, to aid the transition to a biodiversity- and climate friendly, sustainable Europe.

- Knowledge is produced (e.g. meta-studies<sup>72</sup>, publications) and made available by 2023-2024, fit for the production of IPBES assessments on transformational change and on the nexus between biodiversity, climate, water, food and health. Putting in place measures to build capacity, policy support, and science brokerage of project results, including after the release dates of the IPBES assessments, by effective and impactful dissemination.
- Scientists dispose of a network that facilitates and promotes research on transformational change for biodiversity across natural and social sciences<sup>73</sup>.
- Approaches, tools and knowledge influence policies at appropriate level on transformative change for biodiversity – the key elements for this change are delivered by the portfolio of cooperating projects (of which this project forms part of).

Scope: The European Green Deal and its biodiversity strategy call for transformative change, which requires the policy and tools to bring about transformative change. The post-2020 biodiversity goals risks to be missed from the outset if the required policy decisions are not taken and implementation is not secured. Policy makers find the task of translating science on transformative change into policy daunting and challenging. This is where European research and innovation together with the community outside academia (business, government organisations etc.) must urgently demonstrate what transformative change could actually mean and achieve for biodiversity. There is also a need for practical guidance to policy makers and society on the impacts of the necessary structural, ecological, social and economic transformations the European Green Deal could achieve.

The European Union and associated countries still need to identify the key factors in society that can stimulate or hinder this transition across the continent and share such findings with other regions of the world. This includes research into behavioural, social, cultural, economic, institutional, infrastructure, technical and technological factors.

Proposals should focus on indirect drivers of biodiversity loss: production and consumption patterns, human population dynamics and trends, trade, technological innovations, local to global governance (including financing), which in turn cause the direct drivers (land and sea use change, over-exploitation, climate change, pollution, invasive species).

With the focus on biodiversity, and links to human activity, proposals should examine how transformative change takes place in different societal and cultural contexts. They should look at what triggers these changes and what obstacles there are (behavioural, financial, policy, institutional, power setting etc). The proposals should measure and model their impact; and provide options for action (at individual, business and society level) to promote and enable transformative changes, including through nature-based solutions. Social innovation and the gender dimension should be explored when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and

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<sup>72</sup> Based on available knowledge, such as in GBO-5, EEA reports on transformative change, EU workshop on transformational change for biodiversity ([https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/workshop-transformative-change-global-post-2020-biodiversity-framework-2020-mar-18\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/workshop-transformative-change-global-post-2020-biodiversity-framework-2020-mar-18_en)), FP7 and H2020 projects on urban and climate transformations, including under the projects from topic LC-CLA-14-2020 Understanding climate-water-energy-food nexus and streamlining water-related policies

<sup>73</sup> STEAM and SSH

requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake. The proposals should look at gender dynamics and diversity to investigate how different identities and social groups are tangibly promoting transformative changes through bottom-up transition initiatives for sustainable lifestyles that are of major relevance to biodiversity.

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is for biodiversity and ecosystems services what IPCC is for climate change. In this context, this topic should support the upcoming IPBES assessments, expected to deliver in 2023-24, on transformational change and on the nexus of biodiversity, climate, water, food and health, with an additional focus on energy and transport. The IPBES assessment is expected to examine, inter alia:

- (a) Values (relational, utilitarian, etc.) and how they influence behaviour;
- (b) Notions of good quality of life, worldviews and cultures, models of interaction between nature and people and social narratives;
- (c) The role of social norms and regulations, and of economic incentives and other institutions in leveraging behavioural change in individuals, businesses, communities and societies;
- (d) The role of technologies and technology assessment;
- (e) The role of collective action;
- (f) The role of complex systems and transitions theory;
- (g) Obstacles to achieving transformative change;
- (h) Equity and the need for “just transitions”;
- (i) Lessons from previous transitions.

The project should feed input into this assessment, critically examining the usability of the IPBES conceptual framework for these aspects.

Proposals should provide case studies and collect good and failed examples, including current and business models, the role of citizen science, and scenarios that could provide useful input into these transformations and inform and inspire transformative change through learning, co-creation and dialogue.

Proposals should build their analysis on synergies between multiple Sustainable Development Goals to deliver both direct and indirect biodiversity benefits. They should also look at the role of biodiversity in reaching the set of Sustainable Development Goals, when related to the interlinkages (nexus) between biodiversity, water, food, energy, transport and health<sup>74</sup> in the context of climate change, the underlying causes of biodiversity loss, and the determinants of transformative change.

Proposals should include specific tasks and allocate sufficient resources to develop joint deliverables (e.g. activities, workshops, joint communication and outreach) with all projects

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<sup>74</sup> Integrating lessons from the global ‘One Health’ and the One Health European Joint Programmes, IPBES workshop report on biodiversity and pandemics and cooperation with projects HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-11: ‘What else is out there? Exploring the connection between biodiversity, ecosystems services, pandemics and epidemic risk’ and HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-02-02-two-stage: ‘Developing nature-based therapy for health and well-being’.



on transformative change related to biodiversity funded under this destination. They should use existing platforms and information sharing mechanisms relevant to transformational change and to biodiversity knowledge<sup>75</sup>. Furthermore, cooperation is expected with the Biodiversity Partnership (HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02-01), the Science Service HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-19, and the Convention on Biological Diversity and projects under ‘HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-20: Support to processes triggered by IPBES and IPCC’ and ‘HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-10: Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity’.

This topic should involve contributions from social science and humanities disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-17: Policy mixes, governance (including financing) and decision-making tools for transformative action on biodiversity**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome: In line with the EU biodiversity strategy, successful proposals will develop knowledge and tools to understand the role of transformative change for biodiversity policy making, address the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, and initiate, accelerate and upscale biodiversity-relevant transformative changes in our society.

Projects should address all following outcomes:

- Tools promoting the benefits of biodiversity are taken up by policy makers, industries, civil society organisations including NGOs, financing entities, businesses and retailers. These solutions can include a stocktaking of good practice (in addition to natural capital accounting and reporting), standards, agreements, charters, commitments, regulations, financing streams (positive incentives vs harmful subsidies), engaging society and incorporating lifelong learning.
- Increased use and mainstreaming of ‘green over grey’ approaches, in particular by adopting nature-based solutions on land and at sea, in line with the Green Deal’s ‘do no significant harm’ principle.
- Ways to facilitate the application of systemic, sustainable policy mixes and governance approaches, based on a range of policy tools, economic instruments or regulations.

<sup>75</sup> BISE, EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity, BiodivERsA, Oppla, NetworkNature and their joint work streams.

- Developing and testing approaches on (1) mitigating existing and future risks to biodiversity and on (2) better reflecting how biodiversity loss affects company business models, value chains, profitability and long-term prospects, so that methods and tools can be integrated into decisions, while factoring in societal and democratic processes (citizen engagement, political campaigns, science denialism).
- Making options available on how to implement in practice the renewed sustainable finance strategy for the financial system to generate a positive impact on biodiversity.
- Promoting tax systems and pricing that reflect environmental costs, including biodiversity loss, to shift the tax burden from labour to pollution, and to tackle the issue of under-priced resources and other environmental externalities.
- Making available case studies on what transformational change<sup>76</sup> means in practice.
- Improving the understanding of the biodiversity inter-dependencies of the SDGs. Supporting IPBES and IPCC work by providing input from European research and innovation. Providing approaches, tools and knowledge influence policies at the right level on transformative change for biodiversity. The key elements for this change will be delivered by the broader portfolio of collaborative projects (of which these projects developing the toolbox for transformative changes with a positive effect on biodiversity, providing policy mixes, science-policy communication, governance and decision-making tools form part).

Scope: Policy mixes, governance (including financing) and decision-making tools to achieve the necessary ecological, climate, economic and social transition for biodiversity are not yet widely available, and must be developed. Proposals should take up the work of the renewed sustainable finance strategy which will help ensure that the financial system contributes to mitigating existing and future risks to biodiversity.

Proposals should look at how to further mainstream biodiversity into policy making, science, and governance (including financing) to achieve transformative action within and beyond socio-economic, climate and environmental agendas.

Proposals should build their analysis on the synergies of multiple Sustainable Development Goals, to deliver direct and indirect biodiversity benefits, and on the role of biodiversity in reaching the set of Sustainable Development Goals.

Proposals should produce case studies and a collection of good and failed examples of developing and implementing policy tools, best practices and instruments, which could feed into the just transformation process and inform and inspire transformative change through learning, co-creation and dialogue.

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<sup>76</sup> Referring to, and critically assessing, the understanding of transformative change in IPBES and GBO-5, EEA and based on existing tools such as <https://www.sustainable-prosperity.eu/> or workshops [https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/workshop-transformative-change-global-post-2020-biodiversity-framework-2020-mar-18\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/workshop-transformative-change-global-post-2020-biodiversity-framework-2020-mar-18_en)

Proposals should include specific tasks and allocate sufficient resources to develop joint deliverables (e.g. activities, workshops, joint communication and dissemination) with all projects on transformative change related to biodiversity funded under this destination. They should use existing platforms and information sharing mechanisms relevant for transformational change and on biodiversity knowledge<sup>77</sup>. Projects are expected to cooperate with the European partnership on biodiversity (HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02-01) and the Science Service (HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-19). Proposals should show how their results and outcomes could provide timely information for major science-policy bodies such as the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and the Convention on Biological Diversity<sup>78</sup>.

This topic should involve contributions from the social sciences and humanities disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-18: Understanding the impacts of and the opportunities offered by digital transformation, new emerging technologies and social innovation on biodiversity**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in all member states of the African Union are exceptionally eligible for Union funding.

Expected Outcome: In line with the EU biodiversity strategy, successful proposals will develop knowledge and tools to understand the role of transformative change for biodiversity, tackle indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, and initiate, accelerate and upscale biodiversity-relevant transformative change in our society.

Digital technologies are transforming all sectors of society, from food production to mobility, energy, climate mitigation and adaptation measures, construction, infrastructure, technology

<sup>77</sup> BISE, EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity, BiodivERsA, Oppla, NetworkNature and their joint work streams

<sup>78</sup> In particular the policy support function of IPBES, <https://ipbes.net/policy-support>. Projects are requested to cooperate with projects ‘HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-20: Support to processes triggered by IPBES and IPCC’ and ‘HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-10: Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity’.

use, human behaviour and societal organisation, with different impacts on and perceptions of biodiversity, due to the speed, scale and level of connectivity of these transformations. Projects should help identify a safe operating space, in which digitalisation and new emerging technologies generate no unsustainable rebound effects, but instead can be a vehicle for accelerating and amplifying the transition to a safe and just world for humankind whilst protecting, restoring and sustainably using biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Project should address all following outcomes:

- A better understanding, today and for the future, of the impacts on, risks and opportunities for biodiversity of digital transformation (for example smart technologies, artificial intelligence, automation, miniaturised sensors, citizen science applications, crowdsourcing), new materials (e.g. for biomimicry), and new and emerging technologies.
- Identification and an assessment of how system-level change affecting biodiversity through social innovation happens. This should cover bringing in new technologies, new production processes, consumer products, regulations, incentives, or participatory processes, and changes how socio-technical and socio-ecological systems operate.
- Making proposals for safeguards to build public understanding of the range of diverse values held by members of the public (i.e. indigenous communities, youth, women, vulnerable groups in society, socially or economically marginalised groups), to promote democracy and a socially just transition taking action on biodiversity. Proposals should promote incorporating these safeguards in transformative processes linked to the digital sector and technology, which can have positive or negative impacts on biodiversity and on the wide range of services ecosystems can provide.
- Demonstrating the potential of social innovation to tackle biodiversity loss, as well as using biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides, with nature-based solutions as case studies. Demonstrating how nature-based solutions, enabled by social innovation, tackle poverty, low resilience and social inequality to achieve a just transition.
- Testing active intervention by R&I policy and sector policies (niche creation, reformulation of governance, ‘exnovation’), also by empowering and endowing communities.
- Approaches, tools and knowledge influence policies provided at the right level on transformative change for biodiversity. The key elements for this change are to be delivered by the portfolio of cooperating projects (of which these projects form part).

Outcomes should be formulated in such a way that enables their potential users (policy makers, institutions, businesses, engineers, civil society) to understand and concretely apply them, including for monitoring, accounting and reporting purposes. The outcomes should be translated into options to ratchet up the targets and enabling mechanisms of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, the global post-2020 biodiversity framework, and to feed input

into the processes on the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals and IPBES. With the focus on the impacts and opportunities of digital transformation, new emerging technologies and social innovation on biodiversity for the EU and associated countries, projects are strongly encouraged to engage in international cooperation, in particular with African countries, Brazil, Latin American and Caribbean countries or the Mediterranean region, in order to understand differences between the EU/AC and other world regions.

Scope:

- Proposals should generate, collect and distribute knowledge on how to tackle the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss linked to technological and social innovation, which includes digitalisation. They should also assess the impacts on biodiversity of the digital divide between urban, peri-urban and rural areas. Proposals should explain how changes in our societies are fostered by technological and social innovation impacting biodiversity – for example by bringing in new and emerging technologies, new production processes, consumer products, regulations, incentives, or participatory processes, which change how socio-technical and socio-ecological systems operate.
- Proposals are expected to contribute to informing stakeholders and users on the social and technological impacts of new and emerging technologies that are not covered by existing procedures for biodiversity-related risk assessments<sup>79</sup>. This includes the wider positive and negative impacts on societal values, behaviour, institutional, financial and business frameworks, which in turn are having an impact on biodiversity and the capacity of ecosystems to provide a wide range of services.
- Proposals should assess which tools further mainstream biodiversity into policy making, and governance (including financing, the promotion of innovation, and bringing in new and emerging technologies) to achieve transformative action that benefits biodiversity, to avoid, mitigate or manage conflicts linked to these transformational changes<sup>80</sup>. In doing this, proposals should engage with civil society, policy makers, finance and business leaders, to create a toolbox for transformative change via action on biodiversity.
- Proposals should build their analysis on the synergies between multiple Sustainable Development Goals to deliver both direct and indirect biodiversity benefits, staying within planetary boundaries, and on the role of biodiversity in reaching the set of Sustainable Development Goals. Proposals should factor in impacts and opportunities of digital transformation, new emerging technologies and social innovation on biodiversity. This explicitly includes the interdependence of biodiversity loss and climate change, and the impacts on biodiversity of digital, technological or social approaches on action to mitigate and adapt to climate change – and vice versa.
- Proposals should develop pathways for digital developments to achieve a successful twin digital and biodiversity transition. They should develop methodologies to assess their

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<sup>79</sup> Such as in the frame of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Cartagena Protocol

<sup>80</sup> Referring to, and critically assessing, the understanding of transformative change in IPBES and GBO-5, EEA

impacts (including the impacts from energy/electricity infrastructure, or on democracy and on trust in science) on environmental, social and economic systems. Such assessments should focus on the direct and indirect effects of digital developments on biodiversity, intertwined with climate change and health.

- Proposals should provide case studies and a collection of good and failed examples, including current relevant business models, the role of citizen science, and scenarios that could provide useful impact to these transformations and inform and inspire transformative change through learning, co-creation and dialogue.
- Proposals should include specific tasks and allocate sufficient resources to develop joint deliverables (e.g. activities, workshops, and joint communication and dissemination) with all projects on transformative change related to biodiversity funded under this destination. They should use existing platforms and information sharing mechanisms relevant to transformational change and to biodiversity knowledge<sup>81</sup>. Furthermore, projects are expected to cooperate with the Biodiversity Partnership and the Science Service. Proposals should show how their results and outcomes can provide timely information to major science-policy bodies such as the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and to the Convention on Biological Diversity. They are expected to cooperate with projects ‘HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-20: Support to processes triggered by IPBES and IPCC’ and ‘HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-2022-01-10: Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity’.
- Where relevant, projects are expected to create links to and use information, data and impact-related knowledge from the European Earth observation programme Copernicus, the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS).

### **Interconnecting biodiversity research and supporting policies**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-19: A mechanism for science to inform implementation, monitoring, review and ratcheting up of the new EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 ('Science Service').**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 11.00 and 13.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

<sup>81</sup> BISE, Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity, BiodivERsA, Oppla, NetworkNature and their joint work streams

<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 13.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:  Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants to actions under point k) of the topic . The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 200 000, as actions under k) are key activities which the Science Service must deliver through the approaches laid out in its other actions, and to which the broad science community should contribute. Maximum 30% of the total requested EU contribution may be allocated to this purpose. The process of selecting entities for which financial support will be granted, within open calls for proposals to be evaluated by external, independent experts in a fair and transparent process must be defined in the proposal.

Expected Outcome: The project is expected to connect up biodiversity research across Europe, supporting and enhancing the ambition of national, European and international environmental policies and conventions.

Contributing to the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, the aim of this topic is to give support for developing and implementing this and other EU policies by generating knowledge generation, guiding biodiversity governance and ecosystem monitoring, and implementing the EU Green Deal. It supports the development of a long-term strategic research agenda for biodiversity.

The project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- a single entry point linking European research and biodiversity policymaking that will be embedded in the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) as ‘scientific pillar’, which will collect and organise knowledge resulting from science that is relevant for implementing the EU biodiversity strategy and other relevant EU policies, in particular knowledge generated from EU-funded R&I projects, relevant infrastructures and platforms.
- feeding input into the monitoring, reporting and review mechanism of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 with relevant research-based assessments and options that can feed into any short- and medium-term corrective action necessary (“ratcheting up”).

- full integration into, and support to the governance framework of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 to steer implementation of the commitments on biodiversity agreed at national, European or international level.
- setting up a functional, early delivering Science Service at EU level, also involving associated countries where appropriate, to bolster at global level the EU's ambitions for research into biodiversity-relevant areas.

Scope: The EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 announced a science policy mechanism for research-based options to ratchet up the implementation of commitments made on biodiversity. This topic is to provide a Science Service as a dedicated tool to regularly integrate science into EU biodiversity policy-making in terms of what is needed to implement the strategy. It should bridge the continued and critical gap on knowledge sharing and should complement other EU-funded initiatives<sup>82</sup>. It should feed into the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity<sup>83</sup>. At the same time, it should provide a single-entry point linking RTD funded research and innovation with biodiversity policymaking via the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity. Further, the Science Service might act as a pilot on how any science component could work in practice in the context of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. With this work, Europe could test and lead the way on how to make such an instrument, triggering research-based options to implement the biodiversity strategy, work in practice.

The objective is to reformat and connect research results to the needs of environmental policy in a targeted dialogue between science and policy makers. This should include science resulting from the latest EU R&I activities and infrastructures, shape future R&I and be embedded in the long-term strategic research agenda on biodiversity. Proposals should develop a Science Service mechanism that covers all of the following aspects:

- a. Inspired by IPBES functions, it should provide relevant policy tools (e.g. indicators), generate knowledge to fill gaps, build capacity within and beyond the EU, and contribute to science-based assessments for the EU decision-making process.
- b. All work carried out by the Science Service should be defined under strong and clear governance arrangements, including how to prioritise requests, and designed to support implementing, monitoring, reporting and reviewing the EU biodiversity strategy. The governance should be led by DG RTD, in cooperation with DG ENV, DG JRC and the EEA, and ideally involve the Environmental Knowledge Community (EKC)<sup>84</sup> and factor in its needs and requests.

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<sup>82</sup> Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity, Biodiversity Partnership, Horizon Europe's large-scale missions, further projects funded by R&I within this work programme.

<sup>83</sup> The EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) is an action of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030. It aims to enhance the knowledge base, facilitate its sharing and foster cross-sectorial policy dialogue for EU policy making in biodiversity and related fields. [https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity\\_en](https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity_en).

<sup>84</sup> The Environmental Knowledge Community (EKC) is a collaboration between different services of the European Commission (EC) and the European Environment Agency (EEA) to exploit new ways of creating and exchanging knowledge that is related to environmental policy-making.



- c. The Science Service should feed into the EC Knowledge Centre on Biodiversity<sup>85</sup> and support it to direct knowledge gaps and policy questions to science, synthesize knowledge, and communicate emerging issues identified by science to decision-makers in policy, business, NGOs, land users or site managers. The Science Service should also be involved and feed knowledge into strategic dialogues and fora organised by the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity, as well as in expert meetings requested by the EKC. The Knowledge Centre on Biodiversity should manage exchanges from policy to science and vice-versa, and the Science Service constitutes its primary tool for making scientific information accessible to policy makers.
- d. Member States, and where appropriate associated countries, civil society and the Mission Boards under Horizon Europe, may also ask the Science Service to cover specific topics. The process of directing requests for contents and format to the Science Service, and how to provide information, is to be agreed with the relevant EU services, including with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity.
- e. The Science Service should use the tools and results funded by the EU research framework programmes<sup>86</sup>, by other sources of European funding<sup>87</sup>, and additional relevant sources<sup>88</sup>, which it should help integrate into the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity. It should cooperate with the European partnership on biodiversity<sup>89</sup>.
- f. The Science Service should take up requests from biodiversity policy-making to the Biodiversity Partnership, and to the biodiversity-relevant missions in Horizon Europe. This would be orchestrated in collaboration with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity; such as via its user forum function. The Science service should also organise ad-hoc high-level expert advice to the European Commission's high-level decision-makers on specific issues related to biodiversity.
- g. The work of the Science Service should be presented and discussed at expert or working groups according to the governance framework of the EU biodiversity strategy, and should support European research policy related to biodiversity. It should also act as a 'back office' for organising the cooperation of biodiversity-relevant research projects – in thematic clusters where appropriate – under Horizon Europe and Horizon 2020, such as yearly meetings or through common products, in collaboration with the Executive Agency. This would be done in collaboration with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity.

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<sup>86</sup> e.g. directly EU-funded or co-funded projects by Joint Programming Initiatives, ERA-Nets, the European partnership on biodiversity

<sup>87</sup> Such as funding under the Multi-annual financial framework (e.g. LIFE or COST, regional and cohesion, agricultural and rural development, fisheries and maritime, climate, social, just transition funding, neighbourhood, international cooperation), or under the Recovery Fund.

<sup>88</sup> This covers e.g. relevant ESFRI's research infrastructures and Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) national nodes, biodiversity-relevant knowledge and data from citizen science, businesses, NGO, earth observation (linked to Galileo and Copernicus), governance processes, in order to increase the value and return-on-investment.

<sup>89</sup> <https://www.biodiversa.org/1759>

- h. The Science Service should support the orchestration of current and future knowledge mechanisms to implement the long-term European strategic biodiversity research agenda, including work under the Biodiversity Partnership and other biodiversity-relevant partnerships; such as EKLIPSE, Oppla, NetworkNature, the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity<sup>90</sup> and other biodiversity-relevant science advisory mechanisms. It should also describe the global aspects of its services in the mid-term planning.
- i. Proposals should indicate what specific results the Science Service should initially deliver by the end of year one. This pilot exercise should be relevant to and fit the timeframe set out in the policy agenda of the EU biodiversity strategy, and optionally, for the global biodiversity agenda. Throughout the duration of the project, the following annual work plans should be aligned to the long-term strategic research agenda (in preparation - See EU biodiversity strategy).
- j. The Service should then deliver, communicate and disseminate regular (e.g. half-yearly) input in the form of options and scenarios for implementing the biodiversity strategy for 2030 and beyond. The aim must be to trigger response from those entities responsible for implementing the strategy (e.g. EU services, national and local authorities, business, civil society and the environmental knowledge community in general).
- k. It should provide, on request of its governance bodies, summaries, knowledge synthesis, factsheets or briefs and reviews of biodiversity research outputs and tools usable for implementing and ratcheting up the EU biodiversity strategy, in language and format tailored to the target users, such as:
  - i. foresight, analysis of new and emerging topics,
  - ii. indicators and valuation methods,
  - iii. analysis of the behavioural, institutional and bio-physical factors for biodiversity conservation and restoration, including on tipping points and planetary boundaries,
  - iv. projections/forecasts, integrated models, scenarios and pathways that integrate socio-economic and cultural values, that avoid lock-in pathways, and that provide incentives for large-scale demonstration of nature-based solutions and testing of governance approaches, financing and business models to enable transformative change,
  - v. requests to existing science-policy services (such as EKLIPSE and Oppla) in collaboration with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity for dedicated biodiversity-relevant science-policy tasks that those services can deliver, and that the Science Service channels into the biodiversity governance framework,

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<sup>90</sup> The EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) is an action of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030. It aims to enhance the knowledge base, facilitate its sharing and foster cross-sectorial policy dialogue for EU policy making in biodiversity and related fields. [https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity\\_en](https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity_en).

- vi. support for science-based decision-making for biodiversity against disinformation campaigns; and
  - vii. testing new ways of communicating biodiversity-related science to non-scientific audiences.
1. Proposals should describe how the Science Service can deliver its work in line with the timeframe for policy processes and to implement the EU biodiversity strategy. They should explain how they have sufficient resources, and a flexible, lean mechanism following the principles of credibility, relevance and legitimacy, including whether internal assessments or peer reviews on its outputs are planned.
  - m. Proposals should evaluate the experience of comparable instruments covering some of the actions or procedures that the Science Service should set up<sup>91</sup>, focused on biodiversity but also in other fields, and under the governance framework of the EU biodiversity strategy.
  - n. The project should draw up a plan on how to finance and govern the activities of this kick-starting service over the medium- and long-term and seek to secure commitments to allow the work of the Science Service to continue after the funding of this topic ends, i.e. before 2027.

Proposals should strike an appropriate geographical balance across Europe.

This topic should involve contributions from the sciences and humanities disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-20: Support to processes triggered by IPBES and IPCC**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in all member

<sup>91</sup> such as IPBES, IPCC, EEA (the European Environment Agency), SCAR (Standing Committee on Agricultural Research), EPBRS (European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy), SfEP (Science for Environment Policy), SAM (the European Commission’s Scientific Advice Mechanism), EPRS (European Parliamentary Research Service) or the UK’s Climate Change Committee.

	states of the African Union are exceptionally eligible for Union funding.
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**Expected Outcome:** In line with the Commission priority 'A stronger Europe in the world', to implement the EU Green Deal and demonstrated leadership as stipulated in the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, a successful proposal will step up EU support to processes triggered by IPBES and IPCC<sup>92</sup> to achieve targeted impacts on biodiversity-relevant policies, and to integrate structured policy input into the research cycle. Projects should produce all following outcomes:

- EU projects and initiatives are aware of and use the knowledge generation, policy support and capacity building functions of IPBES, including the recommendations issued by its task forces (for IPBES and IPCC).
- better take up IPBES and IPCC findings and conclusions.
- Resolving shortcomings in the uptake of IPBES assessments in sectorial policy making other than for biodiversity, and business decisions at European, national and local level, when translating its outcomes into options for better protecting and restoring biodiversity and ecosystem services.

**Scope:** Science-policy interfaces on biodiversity and nature-based solutions have made good progress in the last years, but must be stepped up to achieve the targeted impacts on biodiversity-relevant policies, and to get structured policy input into the research cycle. They are also key in guiding biodiversity governance, and in implementing the EU Green Deal and international conventions. In line with the Commission's priority 'A stronger Europe in the world', the European Union must take and demonstrate leadership in this field, notably by increasing its support to IPBES -to elevate it to the same level as the IPCC-, and for the Convention on Biological Diversity. Besides economic support, this also includes efforts to create synergies and cooperation between IPBES, regional Multilateral Environmental Agreements, and other relevant research communities to ensure a full coverage of all relevant aspects of biodiversity and ecosystem services in order to underpin the full scope of the post 2020 global biodiversity framework.

This action delivers targeted support to areas of specific interest for European research policy by using IPBES outputs. It also helps European researchers play their role in IPBES assessments, in particular those from southern, central and eastern European countries, and those from the Western Balkans, Central Asia, and from Africa<sup>93</sup>, who remain underrepresented, due to a lack of capacity to participate in meetings, networking or science input at global level. Three major functions of IPBES still need to be further developed to achieve a proper level of uptake in Europe: knowledge generation, policy support and capacity building functions, including the task forces.

The project should cover the following points:

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<sup>92</sup> Considering Horizon Europe Cluster 5 – Destination 1 “Climate Science and Responses”

<sup>93</sup> Europe and Central Asia form one region for IPBES purposes; cooperation with Africa is a priority for the policy agenda of the European Union

- a. providing assistance to the EU and associated countries, and to central Asian and to African researchers, knowledge holders and local communities for input into IPBES and IPCC;
- b. networking between scientific disciplines relevant to IPBES and IPCC (e.g. between SSH, STEM);
- c. translating IPBES output into EU languages, targeted to a wider readership by the EU public, interest groups, research and innovation projects, policy makers and businesses in cooperation with ‘HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-19: A mechanism for science to inform implementation, monitoring, review and ratcheting up the new EU biodiversity strategy (‘Science Service’)’;
- d. facilitating synergies through cooperation between IPBES and IPCC researchers and relevant regional Multilateral Environment Agreements, such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Air Convention;
- e. proposing standards for EU-funded biodiversity projects in applying the relevant work of the IPBES data and knowledge task force;
- f. supporting European negotiators at IPBES plenary meetings and inter-sessional work (such as for the review of assessments, the work of task forces and preparation for plenary groups);
- g. improving the level of coherence in how the EU and associated countries give input into both, CBD (e.g. SBSTTA/SBI) and IPBES processes in cooperation with ‘HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-10: Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity’.

The project should detail a plan on how the work can be further financed and governed over the medium- and long-term and secure commitments that enable the work to continue after the funding of this topic ends.

Proposals must not develop any new platforms but ensure that all relevant evidence, data and information is accessible through e.g. the Oppla portal and cooperate with existing networks of national platforms<sup>94</sup>. They must also prepare the inclusion of its results to the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity according to an agreed format.

The project is to set a clear plan on how it will plan to collaborate with other projects selected under this and any other related topics, such as ‘HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-16: Biodiversity, water, food, energy, transport, climate and health nexus in the context of transformative change’ and ‘HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-21: Impact and dependence of business on biodiversity’, and with the Biodiversity Partnership (HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02-01). This includes links to ESFRI research infrastructures, to test whether they could host predictive models, visualization and analysis of their platform's, early warning systems, to respond to IPBES assessments and CBD requests), by participating in joint

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<sup>94</sup> Such as e.g. the ECA network, the Sub-global Assessment Network, BES-Net or EKLIPSE

activities such as workshops or joint communication and dissemination measures. Proposals should include dedicated tasks and allocate sufficient resources for coordination measures.

This topic should involve the contribution from the social sciences and humanities disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-21: Impact and dependence of business on biodiversity**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply:  Proposals must present an interdisciplinary team of experts, including corporate practitioners, in accounting, ecology, business management and organisation, social, political and environmental economics.

Expected Outcome: In line with the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030<sup>95</sup>, the topic aims to support the development of policies, business decisions and knowledge generation, to tackle the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, and accelerate biodiversity-relevant transformative changes in businesses and our society.

Successful proposals will help integrate biodiversity into business decisions to improve:

- public health and well-being and to tackle inequalities, create new jobs and sustainable growth in rural, post-industrial and coastal areas; strengthen resilience against environmental and climate stressors; minimise the risks of future diseases linked to business activities, with disastrous health, economic and social impacts, and
- corporate decision making and business resilience and to minimise investment risk and thereby play a key role in the sustainable transition of the economy.

Projects should produce all following outcomes:

- A better understanding and awareness of how businesses depend, and impact upon, biodiversity and ecosystem services, based on past and ongoing knowledge, also from practical business experience (by private companies), to feed into business decision making.

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<sup>95</sup> In particular its chapter 3.3 “Building on an integrated and whole of society approach”

- Making available knowledge (e.g. meta-studies, publications) for the production of the IPBES methodological assessment on business and biodiversity, which is planned to be adopted in 2024-25, following a fast-track approach. Putting in place capacity building, policy support, and science brokerage of the projects, including after the release dates of the IPBES assessment, through effective and impactful dissemination.

Making accessible scientific evidence that is directly relevant to multiple Sustainable Development Goals, in particular closely related to Goals 9 (build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation), 12 (ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, i.e., issues of production and efficient use of natural resources), 13 (climate change), 14 (life below water) and 15 (life on land).

Scope: Key economic sectors depend on and have a direct and indirect, positive or negative impact on biodiversity. Biodiversity is directly at the centre of many economic activities, and a healthy biodiverse planet is a precondition for humankind to exist – and thus for businesses to grow and for the economy to recover following a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keeping nature healthy is critical for the economy, both directly and indirectly. The World Economic Forum ranks biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse as one of the top five threats humankind will face in the next ten years. Businesses rely on biodiversity as inputs into their production processes, with over half of global GDP – some €40 trillion – dependent on nature and the services it provides.

Conversely, if we continue doing business as usual, and contribute to destroying ecosystems, the continued degradation of our natural capital will considerably limit business opportunities and socio-economic development potential. Internalising biodiversity into business decisions can enhance the health and well-being of all people and tackle inequalities, create new jobs and sustainable growth in rural, post-industrial and coastal areas; strengthen resilience against environmental and climate stressors; and minimise the risks of future outbreaks of infectious diseases with disastrous health, economic and social impacts. From the perspective of the private sector companies, integrating natural capital and biodiversity impacts and dependencies will enhance corporate decision making and business resilience as well as minimise investment risks. It will better inform, transform and improve their companies' sustainable decision-making processes, including by removing key blind spots in company risk assessments.

This means putting together a highly interdisciplinary team of experts, including biodiversity and corporate practitioners. It needs to cover biophysical and socio-economic aspects related to multiple sectors that have different impacts and ways of managing and accounting. Key expertise is needed in accounting, ecology, business management and organisation, social, political and environmental economics. This topic does not cover developing natural capital accounts or measuring biodiversity footprints.

The proposals should cover all of the following points:

- identifying criteria and indicators for measuring dependence, impact and contribution to the recovery of biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- developing methods to reduce adverse impacts and related material and reputational risks, and to develop the business case for long-term sustainability, for business sectors in addition to forestry, agriculture and fisheries, tourism, energy and mining, infrastructure and manufacturing and processing, that are directly dependent upon ecosystem services;
- developing a tool box to measure, assess and monitor the dependence and impact of the business sector on biodiversity, improved risk management linked to biodiversity, and the contribution of business to biodiversity recovery<sup>96</sup>;
- assessing the broader impact of businesses on biodiversity, the cumulative impact and the indirect impact from supply chains, trade or substitution effects (such as tele-coupling);
- collating targets and regulations (at any level within the EU and in associated countries) that stimulate innovation generating a positive impact on biodiversity and on the decoupling of environmental pressures from increased output;
- promoting (1) business cases that contribute to the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity and the wide range of ecosystem services and (2) public accountability, informing regulatory agencies and guiding financial investments and influencing producer, retailer and consumer behaviour. Analysing the added value of creating a Horizon Europe prize<sup>97</sup> for innovative businesses that improve biodiversity and its wide range of ecosystem services, focused on nature-based solutions<sup>98</sup>. Delivering timely input to IPBES assessment on business, and the processes on IPBES objectives for building capacity, strengthening the knowledge basis, supporting policy, and communicating and engaging, on impact and dependence of business on biodiversity, and the relevant IPBES task forces.

Proposals should also show how their results could provide timely information on project outcomes to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Projects are expected to cooperate with projects HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-20: Support to processes triggered by IPBES and IPCC, HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-10: Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity and

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<sup>96</sup> Based on, and/or in cooperation with relevant projects funded by the EU (such as ‘Aligning Biodiversity Metrics for Business and Support for Developing Generally Accepted Accounting Principles for Natural Capital’), under Horizon 2020 (‘WeValueNature’, ‘MAIA’) or LIFE (such as ‘Transparent’), and the EU and national Business@Biodiversity Platforms, and further EU and global networks and platforms

<sup>97</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/prizes/horizon-prizes\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/prizes/horizon-prizes_en)

<sup>98</sup> Complementary, and in distinction to the European Business Award for the Environment <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/awards/index.html>



HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-04: Natural capital accounting: Measuring the biodiversity footprint of products and organizations.

Proposals should make available the relevant evidence, data and information via the Oppla portal, and prepare to feed in the uptake of its results according to an agreed format to the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity. Collaboration with the Knowledge Centre should also include its stakeholders forum.

The project should set out a clear plan on how it will collaborate with other projects selected under this and any other relevant topics, such as HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-16: Biodiversity, water, food, energy, transport, climate and health nexus in the context of transformative change, and with the European partnership on biodiversity HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02-01<sup>99</sup>, by participating in joint activities such as workshops or communication and dissemination activities. The project should also set out a clear plan on how it will collaborate with key business-related networks that promote the integration of biodiversity into corporate decision making. Proposals should include specific tasks and allocate sufficient resources for these coordination measures.

This topic should involve the contributions from the social science and humanities disciplines.

**Call - Biodiversity and ecosystem services**

***HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>100</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)		Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>101</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2021	2022		
Opening: 22 Jun 2021					
Deadline(s): 22 Jul 2021					
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02-01	COFUND	20.00	20.00	40.00 to	1

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.biodiversa.org/1759>

<sup>100</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
 The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
 All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.  
 The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>101</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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				165.00	
Overall indicative budget		20.00	20.00		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02-01: European partnership rescuing biodiversity to safeguard life on Earth**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 40.00 and 165.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 40.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Programme Co-fund Action
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of

	Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. Financial support provided by the participants to third parties is one of the primary activities of the action in order to be able to achieve its objectives. The EUR 60 000 threshold provided for in Article 204(a) of the Financial Regulation No 2018/1046 <sup>102</sup> does not apply. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 7 000 000 for the whole duration of Horizon Europe.
<i>Total indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the duration of the partnership is EUR 165 million.

Expected Outcome: The partnership is expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

In line with the European Green Deal and the Convention on Biological Diversity, this partnership will contribute to the objectives and targets of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 under the overarching objective that, by 2030, biodiversity in Europe is back on the path to recovery. A successful proposal will contribute to the EU Green Deal priorities, the Birds and Habitats Directives, and to EU climate and agricultural policies. It will help connect biodiversity research across Europe, supporting and raising the ambition of national, EU and international environmental policies and conventions<sup>103</sup>. The expected outcomes of the topic will also contribute to other impacts of Destination 'Biodiversity and ecosystem services', as well as to the Commission priority 'A stronger Europe in the world', and to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 13, 14, 15, 17.

- Biodiversity research and environmental policy institutions build up coherent initiatives through a co-funded European partnership.
- National/local and EU research & innovation programmes share information between programmes and with environmental ministries and agencies, combining in-cash and in-kind resources. EU and national/regional biodiversity research agendas from EU Member States and associated countries- are complementary; a long-term pan-European strategic research agenda is co-created and implemented.

<sup>102</sup> Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012; <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1046>

<sup>103</sup> In particular, the UN Convention on Biodiversity, and the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030

- Biodiversity monitoring in Europe is structured in the form of a network of coordinated observatories providing accessible knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services to users via the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity.
- The partnership increases the relevance, impact and visibility of R&I and European leadership in tackling the biodiversity crisis.
- Biodiversity is mainstreamed across sectors and policies across Europe by using tools such as natural capital accounting and by rolling out nature-based solutions, including traditional and new technologies, which provide multifunctional and resilient solutions to complex societal challenges.

Scope: The European partnership on biodiversity ‘Rescuing biodiversity to safeguard life on Earth’ is one of the actions included in the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030. It should coordinate research programmes between EU and its Member States and associated countries and trigger combined action. For the first time, it should mobilise environmental authorities as key partners in carrying out biodiversity research and innovation, along with ministries of research, funding agencies, and environmental protection agencies. The partnership’s co-created strategic research and innovation agenda for seven years should include calls for research projects, biodiversity- and ecosystems monitoring and science-based policy advisory activities.

The partnership and its members should be committed to the Global 2050 Vision of ‘Living in harmony with nature’ adopted under the Convention on Biological Diversity - by 2050, biodiversity and its benefits to people should be protected, valued and restored. The long-term goals in the zero-draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, adding up to this 2050 Vision include:

- net zero ecosystem loss by 2030, with a decreased risk of species extinction risks decreasing, and an increase in abundance of endangered species and their genetic diversity;
- rolling out of nature-based solutions at sufficient scale to contribute to people’s and environmental needs across Europe;
- good biodiversity status fully acknowledged as one of the basis for sustainable development and a green economy, and EU/AC leadership is recognised in this context.

To reach these long-term goals, the Biodiversity Partnership should support the contribution of R&I to the EU biodiversity strategy to 2030 to enable transformative change that puts biodiversity on the path to recovery by 2030, for the benefit of the climate and people.

The partnership should aim to achieve five overarching objectives:

1. Produce actionable knowledge to tackle both the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss; produce knowledge on biodiversity status, trends and dynamics, and in integrating drivers, pressures, impacts and responses; produce knowledge on the trade-

offs and synergies between multiple drivers of biodiversity change; and an assessment of new tools and approaches to biodiversity/ecosystem conservation and restoration;

2. Expand and improve the evidence base, accelerate the development and wide deployment of nature-based solutions to meet societal challenges across Europe in a sustainable and resilient way, contributing to protecting biodiversity while tackling multiple challenges such as the climate crisis while improving food and nutrition security, the water supply, addressing flooding and water scarcity, and tackling other societal priorities.
3. Making the business case for the conservation and restoration of ecosystems, by contributing science-based methodologies to account for and possibly value ecosystem services and the natural capital, and to assess the dependency and impact of businesses on biodiversity.
4. Improved monitoring of biodiversity and ecosystem services across Europe (status and trends), building on existing national/regional monitoring schemes, building new capacity for setting up new schemes, promoting new and efficient technologies and experience from processes related to mapping and assessing ecosystems and their services (MAES) with regard to enhancing and standardising tools for mapping and assessment.
5. Science-based support for EU, Member States and associated countries policy-making, including for strengthening and implementing environmental policies and laws, and improving cross-sectoral links synergies with other European sectoral policies. More generally, R&I programmes should be better linked to the policy arena, providing greater input to policy making and improving the assessment of policy efficiency. The European partnership for biodiversity should be implemented through a joint programme of activities ranging from research to coordination and networking, including training, demonstration and dissemination, to be structured along the following main work streams:
  6. Actions to promote and support R&I programs and projects across the European Research Area, including launching ambitious joint calls to fund transnational R&I projects and run mobility schemes, for example for young scientists or between academia and business;
  7. Actions to build R&I capacity and increase the impact of R&I programmes and projects, including science-based policy support;
  8. Actions to support, harmonise and carry out biodiversity monitoring;
  9. Measures to improve the uptake, demonstration and rollout of solutions to tackle the above-mentioned objectives of the partnership;
10. Measures to enhance the excellence, visibility and impact of European R&I at international level.

11. Measures to regularly update the partnership vision and strategy.

The composition of the partnership should include at least a geographically representative distribution of national and regional research and innovation authorities and funding agencies, environmental authorities, and environmental agencies from EU Member States, associated countries and their regions. The number of partners and their contribution should be sufficient to attain a critical mass in the field. Partners are expected to provide financial and/or in-kind contribution, in line with the level of ambition of the proposed measures. The partnership should be open to including new partners over the lifetime of the partnership. Its governance should create a clear and transparent process for engaging with a broad range of stakeholders, together with the full members of the partnership, to ensure that the work strategically covers a wide range of views in the field of biodiversity, nature-based solutions and ecosystem services throughout the lifetime of the partnership. To ensure that all work streams are coherent and complementary, and to leverage knowledge investment potential, the partnership is expected to foster close cooperation and synergies with the Horizon Missions on Soils; Ocean, seas and waters; Climate Adaptation and Cities; and with the future European Partnerships Agroecology, Urban Transitions, Agriculture of Data, Water, Blue Economy, and Circular/Bio-based economy. The partnership should collaborate closely with the EC ‘Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity’<sup>104</sup> recently launched by the EC to build the expertise in Europe to inform, track and assess progress in implementing the EU 2030 biodiversity strategy and to underpin further biodiversity policy developments. It should also cooperate with the Science Service project under Horizon Europe<sup>105</sup>, which is embedded into the EC ‘Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity’ and aims to facilitate the inclusion of research results into action to implement biodiversity policies.

The partnership should allocate resources to cooperate with existing projects, initiatives, platforms, science-policy interfaces, institutional processes at EU level, and at other levels where relevant to the partnership’s goals. Proposals should pool the necessary financial resources from participating national (or regional) research programmes with a view to implementing joint calls for transnational proposals that provide grants to third parties.

Applicants are expected to describe in detail how they would carry out this collaborative work in practice. Given the global dimension of biodiversity, membership and other modalities of participation from institutions in non-EU countries is encouraged. In particular, the participation of legal entities from international countries and/or regions including those not automatically eligible for funding is encouraged in the joint calls.

Proposals should pool the necessary financial resources from participating national (or regional) research programmes with a view to implementing joint calls for transnational proposals that provide grants to third parties.

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<sup>104</sup> The EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) is an action of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030. It aims to enhance the knowledge base, facilitate its sharing and foster cross-sectorial policy dialogue for EU policy making in biodiversity and related fields.  
[https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity\\_en](https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity_en).

<sup>105</sup> To be funded through the topic HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-19

Financial support provided by the participants to third parties is one of the primary channels under this action to enable the partnership to achieve its objectives. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 7 million for the whole duration of Horizon Europe. It is expected that the partnership organises joint calls on an annual base from 2022-2027 and therefore it should factor ample time to run the co-funded projects.

This topic should involve contributions from the social sciences and humanities disciplines.

The Commission envisages to include new actions in future work programme(s) to continue providing support to the partnership for the duration of Horizon Europe.

### **Call - Biodiversity and ecosystem services**

#### ***HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01***

### **Conditions for the Call**

#### Indicative budget(s)<sup>106</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>107</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2022		
Opening: 28 Oct 2021 Deadline(s): 15 Feb 2022				
HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-01	RIA	14.00	4.00 to 14.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-02	IA	6.00	Around 6.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-03	CSA	6.00	Around 6.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-04	IA	10.00	Around 10.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-05	RIA	16.00	Around 8.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-06	RIA	8.00	Around 8.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-07	RIA	8.00	Around 8.00	1

<sup>106</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>107</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

*Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2021-2022*  
*Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment*

HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-08	RIA	12.00	Around 3.00	4
HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-09	RIA	10.00	3.00 to 4.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-10	CSA	5.00	Around 5.00	1
Overall indicative budget		95.00		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

### **Understanding biodiversity decline**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-01: Observing and mapping biodiversity and ecosystems, with particular focus on coastal and marine ecosystems**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 4.00 and 14.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 14.00 million.



<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:  To ensure a balanced portfolio covering all types of ecosystems, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but with at least two-third of the topic budget to projects highest ranked within marine/coastal ecosystems, and one third of the topic budget to the highest ranked projects within the terrestrial/freshwater ones, provided that the applications attain all thresholds

Expected Outcome: In support of the implementation of the Green Deal and the biodiversity strategy, successful proposals will contribute to all the following expected outcomes notably to better understand biodiversity decline, its main direct drivers and their interrelations:

- Next generation fit for purpose and user friendly, validated and integrated coastal, marine and terrestrial biodiversity observation, mapping and monitoring tools (from remote sensing to eDNA, AI, robotics and citizen science framework) that provide data to feed models of prediction of biodiversity (for global and regional scales to define and update ecosystem-based management approaches).
- Fulfil the objectives of the Global Biodiversity Observation Network (The Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network – GEOBON, MBON, GOOS)
- Empowering ocean observations (e.g., citizen science framework, robotics, artificial intelligence, big data analytics) and robust science-based thinking at national and international levels will promote science diplomacy and wider societal actions to support responsible and sustainability thereby enhancing ocean governance
- Coastal, marine and terrestrial biological processes and biodiversity are integrated into national, regional (including EU and AC sea basins), and global observation systems. Reliable and affordable methods for monitoring water quality in line with the MSFD and WFD, which would generate information that is geo referenced and available more in real time.

- In line with the targets of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, contribute to establish a network of effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative, protected areas and/or other area-based effective conservation measures.
- “Blue Carbon” balance model in the different marine ecosystems for possible use for carbon offsetting and for Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)

Scope: Better biodiversity observations are needed to assess the health of ecosystems and the impact of measures derived from EU policies, and to feed data into models for the predictions of effects and the development of management measures for the implementation of EU policies.

Observation and mapping of coastal and marine biodiversity are key tools to manage and share the “ocean commons” in a fair and responsible way under the present global challenges and rapid environmental changes. They also help ensure that the benefits derived from the exploitation of ocean resources can be sustainably managed and equitably shared. The distribution of these “ocean commons” is changing. The melting polar ice caps, stagnation in wild seafood provisioning opportunities, emergence of harmful pathogens and parasites, and previously inaccessible ocean spaces (e.g. the deep sea) now increasingly within human reach, are challenges that need to be addressed by responsible ocean governance to reduce the potential for conflicts at all levels and ensure human well-being. Current knowledge on how to relate and govern marine natural resources and associated societal changes is fragmented, and observations of resource distribution, use, state and dynamics are scant and insufficiently accessible. We need to advance observations to support modelling of the complex links between marine ecosystems and societal developments to forecast, manage and mitigate these changes.

Adequate scientific knowledge is also fundamental to protect and restore favourable conservation status of habitats and species under EU nature legislation, notably the Birds and Habitats Directive and good ecological status under the Water Framework Directive. Reliable data and knowledge are necessary inter alia to define protected areas in line with the EU biodiversity strategy and its underlying legislation, to develop conservation objectives, conservation and restoration measures, to define the conservation status and to undertake environmental impact assessments.

In order to do so, projects are expected to encompass all of the following aspects:

- Use of satellite and drone images (earth observation) to assess pressures on freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems (fragmentation, hydromorphological changes, etc.);
- Develop eDNA protocols complementing established biological indicators to monitor ecological status, in the context of the Water Framework Directive.
- New platforms and integration of variety of sensors in situ, autonomous unmanned vehicles, acoustic monitoring, satellite applications, holistic approaches (e.g., systems biology, meta-omics, and ecosystem approaches) and novel theoretical frameworks

linking evolutionary theory and oceanography as well as marine social sciences and humanities can provide an integrated framework to inform decision making, particularly in inherently dynamic coastal ecosystems.

- Where relevant, creating links, contributing to and using the information and data of the European Earth observation programme Copernicus, the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), European Space Agency Earth Observation Programme and in particular the flagship actions on biodiversity and ocean health of the EC-ESA Joint Earth system science initiative, is expected.
- Contribute to improving the knowledge on marine and terrestrial habitats and species protected under the Birds and Habitats Directive.
- Contribute to improving the knowledge on how invasive alien species interact with local biodiversity to better feed policies on their prevention, eradication and management In line with EU Regulation 1143/2014 on invasive alien species,
- Implement the Essential Ocean Variables for sustained observations of marine biodiversity and ecosystem changes identified by the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS).
- The projects should benefit from the large datasets recovered from the long-term environmental monitoring conducted through the national and European dedicated Research Infrastructures (e.g. eLTER).
- Technical, theoretical and practical development and validation for the use of environmental DNA (eDNA), combined with other ocean data (both biotic and abiotic). These approaches promise leaps in our ability to sample ecosystem-wide data at increasingly low costs.
- Investigate all key processes (ecological and anthropogenic) controlling the fate of carbon and its sequestration in marine and coastal ecosystems. Evaluate the “Blue Carbon” balance in the different marine ecosystems through high-resolution mapping and modelling of marine ecosystems of the European EEZ, characterised by habitats, species, processes and functions, from deep sea, offshore to coastal.
- The tools, models and geo-referenced information systems that should be designed should be focused on user needs and designed with user experience.
- Standardised minimum set of Essential Ocean and Biodiversity Variables (EOVs / EBVs)
- Contribution to enhancing the overall societal and public understanding of link between biodiversity and ecosystem functioning through education and training (school & adult education, citizen science platforms)

- All the marine observations connected though these actions should be incorporated into EMODnet.
- Cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity and other relevant existing platforms and information sharing mechanisms<sup>108</sup>.
- Contribute to the free and open access to biodiversity data of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility.
- Opportunities for cooperation with relevant projects, such as EUROPABON <sup>109</sup> awarded under the call ‘SC5-33-2020: Monitoring ecosystems through research, innovation and technology’ or the projects resulting from topics under the Heading ‘Understanding biodiversity decline’ in Destination ‘Biodiversity and ecosystem services’ and from Destination ‘Land, ocean and water for climate action’ (Carbon cycle and natural processes) and Destination ‘Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal’ (environmental observation) should be identified. Furthermore, cooperation is expected with the European co-funded partnership on biodiversity<sup>110</sup> (HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02-01) and other relevant Horizon Europe missions and partnerships. Proposals should outline a plan on how they intend to collaborate with other projects selected and with the mentioned initiatives, by participating in e.g. joint activities, workshops, common communication and dissemination activities, etc. Applicants should allocate the necessary budget to cover the plan. Relevant activities of the plan will be set out and carried out in close co-operation with relevant Commission services, ensuring coherence with related policy initiatives.
- This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.
- In order to achieve the expected outcomes, international cooperation is strongly encouraged.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-02: Building taxonomic research capacity near biodiversity hotspots and for protected areas by networking natural history museums and other taxonomic facilities**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.

<sup>108</sup> BISE, Oppla, NetworkNature and their joint work streams.

<sup>109</sup> <https://europabon.org/>

<sup>110</sup> <https://www.biodiversa.org/1759>

<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Capacity-building actions and local nodes may be supported through grants to third parties. In this case, the proposal must define the process of selecting entities for which financial support will be granted, within open calls for tenders to be evaluated in a fair and transparent process. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 200 000, as building capacity near biodiversity hotspots is a key activity of the action. Maximum 30% of the requested EU contribution may be allocated to this purpose.</p>

Expected Outcome: In supporting the implementation of the Green Deal, the EU 2030 biodiversity strategy and the Birds and Habitats Directives, successful proposals will contribute to increasing and transferring local taxonomic knowledge, innovation and expertise across Europe, in particular for endangered species and other relevant groups of species, to better understand and address biodiversity decline, its main direct drivers and their interrelations.

Successful proposals must address all the following outcomes:

- Increased local taxonomic knowledge and expertise across Europe, in particular for endangered species and other species groups of particular interest, through a network of expert trainers.
- National reference collections for pollinators (bee, butterfly, moth and hoverfly specimens).
- Better taxonomic research capacity and reinforced digital networking, in particular near biodiversity hotspots and for protected areas, and access to materials, resources, advice, and professional expertise and infrastructures from museums and other taxonomic facilities, such as botanical gardens, herbaria, natural history collections, and biodiversity research centres.
- New taxonomy methods and technologies are put to use and tested *in situ*, in particular, generation of reference datasets linking DNA data and voucher specimens, and identification methodologies and digital applications, including 2D and 3D specimen digitalization. Knowledge and tools are generated and shared among central and local taxonomy nodes in the network, as well as with citizen scientists and end-users worldwide.
- Strategic opportunities to promote integrative taxonomy in professional careers and academic curricula are identified. Pilot actions to address the current shortage of taxonomists are initiated.

Scope: Professional taxonomists are highly specialised and skilled experts, traditionally working in academia or curating collections in natural history museums, herbaria, botanical garden or biobanks. European collections hold and document 80% of the worlds' described biodiversity. Today, this expertise is increasingly required by decision-makers at local and regional levels to plan and implement conservation efforts, establish protected areas, combat invasive species, sustainably manage forests, fields and seas, and many other aspects of ecological, economic and societal importance. There are millions of species still undescribed and there are far too few taxonomists to do the job: global biodiversity is being lost at an unprecedented rate because of human activities, and, paradoxically, many species are disappearing at the same rate to the decline of the number of experts who are able to document that disappearance.

EU Member States and associated countries, often lack permanent taxonomic capacity in the field, in particular near biodiversity hotspots and protected areas. They could greatly benefit from professional expertise, networking and infrastructures from natural history museums and other taxonomic facilities, such as botanical gardens or biobanks, and centres integrating new genome- and image-based technologies to advance taxonomy, contributing at the same time with adequate in situ conservation monitoring, data and samples.

Building on expert findings and recommendations, the taxonomic network should develop a plan to strengthen taxonomic expertise in Europe, promote taxonomy and its applications in official curricula and businesses, and develop plans for international cooperation. Expert taxonomy trainers across Europe<sup>111</sup> should train a network of 'followers', by creating simple-to-use identification guides and methodologies, training programmes, online tools and activities adapted to local needs and resources (by area and by taxa of particular importance, such as endemic, locally-threatened species, those in the Red List, or intra-specific diversity). The strategy of promoting integrative taxonomy should also account of the publication gap in taxonomic journals, discouraging specialists in academic competitions. For example, strategies should encourage the engagement of taxonomists in wide ecological research projects, and identify relevant opportunities in the private sector, securing their career development. The project should also lead with guidance, resources and expertise to establish or improve national reference collections for pollinators in all European countries (bee, butterfly, moth, and hoverfly and beetle specimens), as well as for soil fauna (mites, springtails, woodlice, millipedes and earthworms) and freshwater taxa including invasive alien species in all European countries. This should be carried out in collaboration with projects resulting from topic HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-02: 'Data and technologies for the inventory, fast identification and monitoring of endangered wildlife and other species groups'.

The network should also support, guide and supervise the establishment of adequate facilities in a pilot number of local nodes (such as wet labs, connected computer data nodes and remote communications). For this purpose, proposals can include financial support to third parties in the form of grants. A maximum of EUR 200 000 per third party could be granted. The

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<sup>111</sup> Such as the members of the Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF): <https://cetaf.org/>

consortium need to define the selection process of organisations, for which financial support will be granted. A maximum of 30% of the EU funding can be allocated to this purpose.

Successful proposals should also promote the effective development of European infrastructures, such as LifeWatch ERIC, the future DiSSCo's digitalised collections, or eLTER, and application of advanced taxonomic technologies (such as eDNA, genomics, AI).

The action should also seek to involve amateur taxonomists, reach for citizen scientists with tools and networks, produce/update a strategic mapping and agenda for taxonomic expertise in Europe, and identify gaps and needs for future actions. Gender aspects should be addressed both in amateur and professional taxonomy communities and the biogeographical approach needs to be taken into account.

### **Valuing and restoring biodiversity and ecosystem services**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-03: Network for nature: multi-stakeholder dialogue platform to promote nature-based solutions**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action.</p> <p>Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in all member states of the African Union are exceptionally eligible for Union funding.</p>

**Expected Outcome:** This topic aims to support the development of policies, business models and market conditions to scale up and speed up the implementation of nature-based solutions (NBS)<sup>112</sup>. It will contribute to deploying NBS more widely and to fully reaping their

<sup>112</sup> As defined by the European Commission: Solutions that are inspired and supported by nature, which are cost-effective, simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits and help build resilience. Such solutions bring more, and more diverse, nature and natural features and processes into cities, landscapes and seascapes, through locally adapted, resource-efficient and systemic interventions. Hence, nature-based solutions must benefit biodiversity and support the delivery of a range of ecosystem services. In <https://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm?pg=nbs>.

economic, social and environmental benefits in order to build a competitive sustainability in Europe and to tackle climate change. NBS contribute to the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 and other Green Deal priorities, by supporting biodiversity and vital ecosystem services: climate change mitigation and improving carbon sinks, biomass provision, access to fresh water, clean soil, healthy diets and lifestyles and sustainable food systems. Deploying NBS will also create green jobs and build resilience to climate change and natural disasters.

Successful proposals must contribute to all following expected outcomes:

- Broad and effective community of innovators in the EU and associated countries, practitioners and developers of NBS – including but not limited to Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe projects – engaged across communities of science, business, policy and practice, and from local to global level;
- Better engagement, with public authorities, private sector and society at large for implementing and investing in NBS;
- Establish European NBS “quality brand” with an underlying, comprehensive and agreed vision and agenda, to position and promote EU excellence in NBS innovation;
- Improve cooperation and synergies with key strategic international partners and collaboration with CEN/CENELEC to develop European and international standards and foster the emergence of a global market for NBS;
- Consolidate NBS knowledge across sectors and disciplines through regional and Europe-wide transdisciplinary collaboration, advisory services, awareness raising, knowledge transfer and skills development.

Scope: Nature-based solutions (NBS) deliver multiple ecosystem services to address diverse societal challenges with a systemic and innovative approach. An effective multi-stakeholder platform is needed to support and consolidate the understanding of NBS and to promote their use and speed up market up-take and wider implementation.

Such a platform enables: a) dialogue, interactions, knowledge and information sharing; b) integration of EU project results and platforms; and c) collaboration and think-and-do-tanks among relevant stakeholders (science, public administration, professional organizations, businesses and investors, civil society).

NetworkNature<sup>113</sup>, a CSA funded under Horizon 2020’s Societal Challenge 5 (WP 2019) that is due to end in 2022, is in the process of creating this platform. The Oppla<sup>114</sup> portal is developing the underlying EU NBS knowledge repository, supporting access, sharing NBS knowledge more widely, including from EU-funded NBS projects, to already engaged and new target audiences, such as the finance and investment sector and the wider public.

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<sup>113</sup> <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/887396/>.

<sup>114</sup> <https://oppla.eu/>.



This topic aims to maintain and build upon the achievements of NetworkNature and Oppla. The successful proposal should further develop and consolidate an engaged, broad and effective European community of innovators, practitioners and developers to promote the design, deployment, out- and up-scaling of NBS at the European and global scale, while recognising regional and national specificities, contexts and needs.

The successful proposal should undertake continuous and strategically driven stakeholder dialogue and facilitate sharing of practice, experience and expertise related to all NBS-relevant aspects, across multiple scales and sectors. Actions should cover social, economic, financial, environmental, educational, institutional, regulatory and cultural aspects; in particular:

- Improve engagement, strengthened ties and new partnerships with public authorities, the private and financing sector and society at large to implement and invest in NBS, based on a high level of awareness about their advantages in order to widen the uptake of these solutions;
- Maintain and further develop an online open source stakeholder platform that facilitates the interactions within and between NBS knowledge holders and implementers;
- Identify, evaluate, standardise and gather tools, mechanisms and advisory services that support different actors in NBS in a one-stop-shop, aiming at supplying offers to match the needs which are brought forward;
- Build on NetworkNature's business plan, to make such a platform financially self-sustainable by the end of the project, and emphasise payback models and payable advisory services;
- Maintain and support established NBS hubs and establish new ones; support and advise on communication and outreach campaigns and regular events in all Member States, involving international networks and environmental communicators and targeting all relevant stakeholders involved in the NBS value chain, including the scientific community;
- Develop a ready-to-use communication toolbox in all EU official languages for regional and local authorities to better communicate about NBS and their benefits, namely in terms of economic growth and job creation;
- Facilitate the clustering of current and upcoming EU-funded NBS relevant research and innovation projects and promote the uptake of their results in further EU or national initiatives (e.g. in projects resulting from the LIFE programme or cohesion policy);
- Assist the Commission in organising science-policy workshops and assessing the contribution of NBS to global and EU policies, notably related to the EU Green Deal. These include biodiversity, pollution, climate adaptation and mitigation, water, agriculture and forestry, as well as urban and regional development, health, transformative change and just transitions;

- Facilitate the development of guidelines for practitioners with state-of-the-art NBS design practices and protocols; Collaborate with CEN/CENELEC to develop European standards, making sure these guidelines are accessible to all users;
- Help to the develop and mainstream NBS-related professional training and include it in primary, secondary and higher-education curricula<sup>115</sup>;
- Develop mechanisms for capacity building and knowledge sharing across disciplines, the involving EU and MS/AC-wide professional organisations. Include partner organisations across EU Member States to ease dissemination of NBS knowledge at local and Europe-wide level ;
- Promote international cooperation with key strategic partners and sharing best practice, in particular with – but not limited to –Latin American and Caribbean countries, the USA and Africa;
- Support a dialogue between cities implementing NBS (e.g. through twinning, peer exchanges, etc.) to encourage NBS knowledge sharing, experience exchange and access to best practices in the Member States; and establish links with other networking initiatives such as ICLEI, or the Covenant of Mayors;
- Further develop and maintain existing databases of facts and figures on NBS cost-effectiveness, including in monetised form, and according to NBS typology and challenges addressed by NBS, for improved communication and outreach;
- Identify specific areas and priorities where further research and innovation and educational development are needed to more widely implement, exploit benefits and market acceptance of NBS.

The proposals must address all of the above points and should ensure that all evidence and information will be accessible through the Oppla portal (the EU repository for NBS)<sup>116</sup>.

Applicants should create links with projects under the same topic and other relevant ongoing or up-coming projects, notably the Horizon 2020 NBS project portfolio and its task forces; ‘HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-05: The economics of nature-based solutions: cost-benefit analysis, market development and funding’; ‘HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-06: Nature-based solutions, prevention and reduction of risks and the insurance sector’; ‘HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-05: Assessing the socio-politics of nature-based solutions for more inclusive and resilient communities’; ‘HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-02-02-two-stage: Developing nature-based therapy for health and well-being’; ‘HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-06: Inside and outside: educational innovation with nature-based solutions’. To this end, proposals should include specific tasks

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<sup>115</sup> Synergies should be considered with HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-06: Inside and outside: educational innovation with nature-based solutions.

<sup>116</sup> <https://oppla.eu/>.

and sufficient resources for coordination measures, envisage joint activities and joint deliverables.

Collaboration with the Biodiversity Partnership (HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02-01) is expected in the context of strengthening the knowledge base for assessing, developing and deploying nature-based solutions.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of social sciences and humanities disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-04: Natural capital accounting: Measuring the biodiversity footprint of products and organizations**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 10.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.

Expected Outcome: In keeping with the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 the successful proposal is expected to contribute to measuring and integrating the value of nature into public and business decision making at all levels for the protection and restoration of ecosystems and their services.

Successful proposals will contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- Change the way in which EU and associated countries organizations and companies allocate capital or influence their activities to promote a sustainable management by mainstreaming the use of corporate natural capital accounting.
- Integrate biodiversity and ecosystem considerations into business decision-making at different levels by measuring the biodiversity footprint of products and organisations through improving, developing and implementing standardised methods, criteria and standards that focus on essential features of biodiversity, ecosystems services, values, and sustainable use.

- Improve corporate biodiversity disclosure through innovative approaches to foster principles of biodiversity data transparency to accurately report on biodiversity, ecosystems and services.
- Demonstrate innovative solutions for valuing business impacts and dependencies in biodiversity and ecosystem and how this ends up in risks and opportunities for businesses private decision-making.
- Explore solutions to decrease the biodiversity footprint of retailers in global value chains.

Scope: The EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 recognises that biodiversity considerations need to be better integrated into public and business decision-making at all levels. This should include measuring the environmental footprint of products and organisations on the environment, through life-cycle approaches complemented and eventually integrated by natural capital accounting. In this context, the Commission will support the establishment of an international natural capital accounting initiative.

Natural capital accounting has potential in providing a meaningful basis for business performance reporting by explicitly mapping out impacts and/or dependencies on natural resources and placing a monetary value on them. Specific examples include business accounting and reporting and the disclosure of non-financial reporting and accounting directives.

The successful proposal should develop, take up or demonstrate in real settings standardised natural capital accounting practices to support companies to measure, value and synthesise biodiversity and ecosystem risks assessment, notably in a way that is suitable for routine consideration in business and economy decision-making (including at executive level). It should also mainstream environmental footprints methods for instance through quantifying the environmental impacts of products, or supply and value chains, business models or organisations based the Commission Organisation Environmental Footprint (OEF) and the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF).

The successful proposal should contribute to the alignment of natural capital accounting between the public and private sectors and to explore how the links to link the collection and use of statistics and data for natural capital accounting. It should also address the obstacles businesses are facing, in particular on data collection and improving the access and utility of European environmental data sets at different levels (i.e.: national statistical offices, environmental agencies, corporate reports) allowing better corporate and national data integration for economic and financial decision making.

The successful proposal should work on methodologies for companies to set science-based biodiversity targets. It should also address the specific decision-making needs of corporates and financial service provider to allow a specific and meaningful linkage with the macro-economic perspective and the ecological concept of planetary boundaries at the scale of

decision to be taken at corporate level enabling to assess and understand to corporate safe operating space.

The successful proposal should develop and test concrete natural capital accounting and reporting frameworks for business performance with respect to biodiversity and ecosystem services reporting. This should include explicit mapping of the impacts and/or dependencies on natural resources and placing a monetary value on them. Specific examples should include business accounting, reporting, and the disclosure of non-financial reporting.

The successful proposal should explore to which extent the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting / Experimental Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA EEA) framework in its current form is useful for natural capital assessment and natural capital accounting by businesses. This should be done both in terms of methodological approach and data collection o the opportunities for adapting the SEEA EEA framework to make it more tailored to the business needs or the extent to which national statistical offices can benefit from data collection by businesses.

The successful proposal should develop and test concrete natural capital accounting basis for business performance on biodiversity and ecosystem services reporting by explicitly mapping out impacts and/or dependencies on natural resources and placing a monetary value on them. Specific examples should include business accounting, reporting, and the disclosure of non-financial reporting.

The successful proposal should support the European contribution to a globally consistent approach to account for ecosystems and their value. The proposal should ensure that the EU continues to play a lead role in international environmental affairs through its support for effective measures, international standards and accounting relating to natural capital.

The successful proposal should improve the access and utility of European environmental data sets at different levels (i.e: national statistical offices, environmental agencies, corporate reports) allowing better corporate and national data integration for economic and financial decision making.

The successful proposal should support developing and testing natural capital and biodiversity based business models. These are expected to invest in nature for the benefit of biodiversity, ecosystems functioning and ecosystem services and address the challenge to turn the value of ecosystem into a revenue stream. The successful proposal should help making natural capital and biodiversity based business models bankable, thereby enabling private investments in nature conservation. In other words, ‘how to facilitate making money with nature by enhancing ecosystem conditions but not by exploiting it to the detriment of nature’.

The successful proposal should therefore take stock and establish links with the work undertaken by ongoing initiatives, European and national platforms on business and

biodiversity, the Natural Capital Protocol, Value balancing alliance, the Knowledge Innovation Project KIP INCA and other Horizon 2020 related projects<sup>117</sup>.

The successful proposal should support the practical implementation of corporate reporting obligations such as under the EU Non-Financial Reporting Directive (2014/95/EU)<sup>118</sup> or of the EU Taxonomy on Sustainable Finance.

Applicants should create synergies with relevant projects under this call ('HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-07: Ecosystems and their services for an evidence-based policy and decision-making'; 'HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-17: Policy mixes, governance (including financing) and decision-making tools for transformative action for biodiversity' the EU Biodiversity Partnership and the Science Service. To this end, proposals should include specific tasks and appropriate resources for coordination measures, and, where possible, envisage joint activities and joint deliverables.

The proposal should set practical policy recommendations for the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 targets and commitments. Proposals should contribute to strategic dialogue with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity forum and ensure that all evidence, results, data and information will be accessible and interoperable with the KCBD<sup>119</sup>.

In this topic, the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

This topic should include the effective contribution of social sciences and humanities disciplines.

### **Managing biodiversity in primary production**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-05: Intercropping – understanding and using the benefits of complexity in farming and value chains**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

<sup>117</sup> [MAIA](#) and [We Value Nature](#)

<sup>118</sup> The Commission is currently working on a review of the EU Non-Financial Reporting Directive (2014/95/EU) – current guidelines: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/non-financial-reporting-guidelines\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/non-financial-reporting-guidelines_en)

<sup>119</sup> The EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD) is an action of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030. It aims to enhance the knowledge base, facilitate its sharing and foster cross-sectorial policy dialogue for EU policy making in biodiversity and related fields. [https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity\\_en](https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity_en).

<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 16.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

Expected Outcome: In line with the objectives of the farm to fork and biodiversity strategies, successful proposals will promote diversification in agriculture as a means to increase the resilience of the sector vis-a-vis variable environmental, climatic and economic conditions. By promoting biodiversity, proposals will address consumer demands for more diversified and sustainable production in agriculture.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- Integration of knowledge from diverse disciplines (e.g. ecology, agronomy, genetics, physiology as well as social sciences) to better understand, assess and use ecological processes which underpin the multiple benefits arising from intercropping;
- Better understand the barriers for the adoption of intercropping by farmers;
- Optimised, field-tested and ready-to-use agronomic practices for intercropping applicable to various conditions across Europe;
- More wide-spread practical expertise of intercropping amongst advisors and farmers;
- Increased evidence and appreciation of the beneficial effects of intercropping on crop quality and product quality along with wider benefits for biodiversity, soil health, water quality and reduced GHG and air pollution emissions;
- Demonstration of the economic avenues and benefits of diversified production for the farming sector and related value chains.

In the long(er) term:

- More sustainable, biodiverse and resilient farming ensuring the continued delivery of a larger range of food and non-food products along with multiple ecosystems services;
- Stronger links between the various operators in value chains and increased economic avenues for the farming sector;
- Better appreciation by the wider public of the benefits of intercropping and diversification in general.

Scope: Farmers face increasing pressure to shift production towards lower input systems, while continuing to ensure sufficient supplies of food and non-food products. The Green Deal in particular has set ambitious targets to reduce by 2030 the overall use of chemical pesticides and fertilisers, reduce nutrient losses and increase organic farming<sup>120</sup>.

Species rich production systems such as intercropping<sup>121</sup> have shown significant potential to increase resource efficiency and resilience against biotic and abiotic stresses, thereby allowing to deliver yield gains without increased inputs, or stabilise yields with decreased inputs. Diversified farming systems making use of strategic intercrops can also improve soil health and deliver multiple ecosystem services.

The benefits of intercropping are the result of highly dynamic interactions between plants and their environment and allow to optimise the use of resources such as nutrients, water or solar radiation. Despite these benefits, intercropping is not widely applied in European agriculture, due e.g. to an increased complexity of operations and labour intensity at farm level or a market pulls for more standardised products and processing as well as for simplified modes of marketing,

Activities should:

- Study the (context specific) mechanisms that underpin the benefits associated with intercropping such as enhanced resource efficiency, disease and pest avoidance and product quality;
- Elucidate the links between above- and below-ground species interactions and how these could be optimised through management;
- Provide evidence on the effects of intercropping on product quality down the value chain;
- Identify, test and demonstrate agronomic practices that promote benefits from intercropping by optimising the interactions between plants, environment and management (G x G x E x M) , including the use of inputs and adapted machinery such as precision tools;
- Explore farmers' the motivation to adopt intercropping practices and propose solutions to overcome potential barriers;
- Promote the uptake of intercropping through the development of guidelines and wide-spread practical demonstrations taking into account a range of farming systems, pedo-climatic conditions and value chains;

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<sup>120</sup> Green Deal farm to fork and biodiversity strategies with 2030 targets: Reduce by 50% the overall use and risk of chemical pesticides and reduce use by 50% of more hazardous pesticides; reduce nutrient losses by at least 50% while ensuring no deterioration in soil fertility; this will reduce use of fertilisers by at least 20 %; achieve at least 25% of the EU's agricultural land under organic farming

<sup>121</sup> intercropping is understood as a farming practice growing two or more crop species together at the same time in the same place



- Identify and test avenues for marketing and processing of more diverse farming outputs across the value chain.

Result of activities should benefit both conventional and organic agriculture. International co-operation is strongly encouraged in particular with countries where intercropping is more widely applied, yet would benefit from further optimisation.

Activities must implement the multi-actor approach, thus ensure an adequate involvement of advisors, farmers, other players in the value chain and consumers. Communication and outreach to a wide range of stakeholders is essential.

This topic should include the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

Proposals should specify how they plan to collaborate with other proposals selected under this and other relevant topics, e.g. by undertaking joint activities, workshops or common communication and dissemination activities. Proposals should allocate the necessary resources to cover these activities.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-06: Monitoring and effective measures for agrobiodiversity**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome: In line with the objectives of the 2030 biodiversity strategy and other policies such as the common agricultural policy (CAP), successful proposals will contribute to the take up of practices in agriculture that promote biodiversity as well as to effective monitoring of farmland biodiversity to maintain and re-establish biotopes and habitats.

Projects should address all of the following outcomes:

- Methods and tools for a systematic monitoring of in situ biodiversity of agricultural areas, considering above ground and soil biodiversity;
- Enhanced methods and indicators to evaluate the impact of agricultural practices and in particular CAP agri-environment measures or ecoschemes on above and below ground biodiversity;
- Increased access to information on carbon- and nature-rich areas;

- More effective farm advisory systems in relation to biodiversity issues and providing special advice for farmers including those operating in Natura 2000 sites

In the longer term:

- More effective agri-environment measures, improving both above- and below ground biodiversity in agricultural areas along with an increased uptake of agroforestry measures under rural development programmes.

Scope: The EU biodiversity strategy 2030 underlines the role of farmers in preserving biodiversity while at the same time indicating that certain agricultural practices are a key driver for biodiversity decline.

According to the latest State of Nature Report (EEA, 2020), many terrestrial habitats are severely impacted by agriculture, especially grasslands and freshwater habitats, heath and scrub, and bogs, mires and fens playing important role in soil carbon sequestration. This is also the case for most of the species groups, including reptiles, molluscs, amphibians, arthropods, vascular plants and breeding birds.

Grasslands as one of the most species-rich habitats in Europe, are among the habitats with the highest share of assessments showing a bad conservation status (49 %), accompanied by deteriorating soil properties.

Farmland birds and insects, particularly pollinators, and soil microbiota are key indicators of the health of agroecosystems and are vital for agricultural production and food security. The biodiversity strategy aims to bring back at least 10% of agricultural area under high-diversity landscape features. These include, amongst others buffer strips, rotational or non-rotational fallow land, hedges, non-productive trees, terrace walls, and ponds. Such measures help enhance carbon sequestration, prevent soil erosion and depletion, filter air and water, and support climate adaptation.

The EU Birds and Habitats Directive aims at reaching favourable conservation status of wild birds as well as of those species and habitats covered in the annexes of the Habitats Directive. However, there are many data gaps to identify species' requirements and to monitor population trends over time for those species dependent on agricultural habitats. This hampers the design of appropriate agro-ecological conservation measures and the proper implementation of the Directives. It is therefore necessary to monitor the diversity and area of habitats for farmland-dependent species, in space and time, in order to maintain and re-establish biotopes and habitats.

Projects should:

- Map carbon and nature rich areas and analyse the effects of agricultural practices on biodiversity;
- Monitor the diversity and area of habitats for farmland-dependent species, in space and time;

- Develop and test effective agri-environment measures as well as indicators and monitoring tools to determine the effectiveness of conservation measures for species and their habitats in the agricultural context;
- Develop and demonstrate practical examples of agro-forestry systems and how these can be promoted through rural development programmes.

Activities should be carried across a range of climatic/biogeographical regions in the EU and Associated Countries.

The project needs to take account of already existing European species action plans, such as the Turtle Dove action plan and the EU Wet Grassland Wader action plan. Furthermore, cooperation is expected with the Biodiversity Partnership and other relevant Horizon Europe missions and partnerships.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-07: Protection and sustainable management of forest genetic resources of high interest for biodiversity, climate change adaptation, and forest reproductive materials**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome: In line with the EU biodiversity and climate change objectives, successful proposals will support the protection and sustainable use of forest genetic resources by contributing to a better insight into the characteristics of genetic resources in the climate change context, adaptive and biodiversity supporting practices in forestry and the enhancement of Europe's ambition in the international biodiversity agenda and international conventions.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Improved cooperation and knowledge sharing on deploying and conserving forest genetic resources in Europe;
- Better conservation of unique tree lineages for forest ecosystem restoration and management;

- Sustainable use of genetic resources within the forest community in a climate change context;
- Efficient implementation of the Access and Benefit Sharing Regulation in the EU.

Scope: Diversity of forest genetic resources provides the adaptive potential for tree species and populations to cope with climatic changes and future challenges. The adaptive potential of forests depends on their demographic history and the forces of natural selection. It also depends on forestry activities and the choice of species and populations that show better potential for adaptation to climate change or to subsequent effects of climate change. Provenance trials and common garden trials allow for the assessment of phenotypic responses in various environmental conditions and genomic backgrounds and therefore, genotype X environment interactions. New provenance trials in new environments including populations from range and habitat margins, coupled with genomic analysis of the provenances should provide insights to improve adaptive forest management.

Proposals should:

- Conduct research and networking on provenance trials or common gardens, with new trials and reassessment of older provenance tests using phenotypic traits related to climate change adaptation. This analysis should guide adaptive forest management to choose appropriate forest reproductive material, including its use through assisted migration. This may also lead to a requirement for research into adaptive silvicultural management of stands to support the efficient and sustainable deployment of forest genetic resources.
- Evaluate the impact of forestry activities on forest genetic diversity, develop new cultural trajectories to protect and sustainably use forest genetic resources in naturally regenerated forests, and quantify the ecosystem services provided by forest genetic resources.
- Focus on methods and strategies to breed forest reproductive material with a higher genetic diversity, to diversify tree species composition when establishing new forests and regenerating existing forests. Biomass properties, essential for wood-based products as well as properties related to resilience to climate change induced disturbances, need to be safeguarded or enhanced in the new reproductive material.
- Develop methods and tools to expand the production capacity of nurseries and the diversity of forest reproductive material produced to anticipate and mitigate the impact of extreme weather events, stimulate the development of nurseries in regions where forest reproductive material with useful characteristics is available, establish an EU network of forest nurseries assisting each other with the provision of forest reproductive material, and ensure the traceability of the material from the nursery to the final planting site.

- Expand the EU Forest Reproductive Material Information System (FOREMATIS) and link it with existing information systems to provide information on genetic conservation units with useful properties, to serve as a decision-support tool on where to best source and/or plant forest reproductive material. This would take into account current/future climatic conditions, and create an archive for future generations that should allow the tracking of exact planting site and performance of forest reproductive material.
- Cover different climate/biogeographical regions in Europe.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

### **Enabling transformative change on biodiversity**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-08: Assessing the nexus of extraction, production, consumption, trade and behaviour patterns and of climate change action on biodiversity in the context of transformative change**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in all member states of the African Union are exceptionally eligible for Union funding.

Expected Outcome: In line with the EU biodiversity strategy, a successful proposal must develop knowledge and tools to understand the role of transformative change for biodiversity policy making, address the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, and initiate, accelerate and upscale biodiversity-relevant transformative changes in our society.

Projects must address all of the following outcomes:

- Economically, socially, ethically and institutionally viable and sustainable pathways are designed to minimise biodiversity loss or to enhance biodiversity. These pathways should consider mutually influencing extraction, production, consumption, trade patterns in the medium- and long-term (beyond 2030).

- Improve understanding of the human dimensions impacting biodiversity i.e. ethics, social context, institutions, organisation, behaviour will provide policy makers, industrial stakeholders and civil society the tools needed to reframe their actions, by highlighting the synergies of mainstreaming biodiversity with climate transitions, including on how to avoid or minimise trade-offs.
- Better understand social norms and behaviours, linked to socio-economic values (e.g. ethics, social context of individuals, consumers, institutions, organisations, industry) affecting biodiversity.
- Inform and motivate transformational change through learning, co-creation and dialogue based on case studies. The understanding of the biodiversity inter-dependencies of the SDGs has improved; IPBES and IPCC are strengthened through European research and innovation. Provide a set of approaches, tools and knowledge influence policies at the appropriate level on transformative change for biodiversity – the key elements for this change are delivered by the portfolio of cooperating projects (of which these projects form part).

With focus on assessing the nexus of extraction, production (including processing), consumption, trade and behaviour patterns, including transformative changes for climate change on biodiversity for the EU and Associated Countries, international cooperation in particular with African countries, Brazil, Latin American and Caribbean countries or the Mediterranean region is strongly encouraged.

Scope: Proposals should address all the following points:

- Assess how extraction, production, processing, consumption, trade, behaviour patterns, especially linked to primary production (e.g. livestock with/or energy crops, etc. including through tele-coupling from consumption and all along supply chains), integrated food systems, and transformative changes towards climate neutrality, affect biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- Develop pathways together with key industries and key stakeholders to minimise loss of, and enhance biodiversity, whilst increasing the delivery of a wide range of ecosystem services. These industries cover food, feed, fibre, energy production and the wider food chain (related to bio-economy, renewable energies, infrastructure, technologies)<sup>122</sup>, and the deployment of climate mitigation and adaptation measures potentially harmful for biodiversity (e.g. concrete walls in coastal areas, replacement of biodiversity rich ecosystems for energy crops, etc.).
- Identify and address leverage points for transformational change in trade, triggering changes in established and new production and consumption patterns for new business models.

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<sup>122</sup> Based on the development of sustainable pathways as issued by projects such as CD-LINKS and EUCalc.

- Highlight the potential of (1) public procurement for delivering biodiversity benefits and (2) nature-based solutions for enabling and accelerating the relevant aspects of transformative change.
- Quantify investments into infrastructure and labour that could be shifted from impacting biodiversity negatively towards benefits for biodiversity, including the anticipation, mitigation and management of social, institutional and economic conflicts this may trigger (or decrease), to achieve a just transition process.
- Understand and engage communities and other social actors, including through citizens science, and initiate behavioural changes leading to production and consumption patterns preventing further biodiversity loss.
- Cooperate with ongoing activities to include biodiversity into integrated assessment models<sup>123</sup> and analyse the usability of existing and emerging concepts such as ‘Planetary Boundaries’, ‘Doughnut Economy’, ‘Environmental Footprints’.
- Explain the relevance of transition pathways for biodiversity for competitive sustainability, towards a just transition in the full range of SDGs and climate neutrality.

Unsustainable production and consumption, including the role of trade for linking both, are pushing many of the direct drivers of biodiversity loss: land use change, overexploitation, climate change and pollution. Proposals should, based on a clear understanding of these relationships<sup>124</sup> address how leverage points and levers can be identified and used for generating benefits for biodiversity, e.g. through revision of regulation, standards, funding practices or governance processes.

They should highlight how the primary production sectors (in particular in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, raw material extraction, and also the construction sector) and the related infrastructure and energy provision and use impacts biodiversity directly. They should show effects on the direction of economic development, which leads to lock-in effects, inequalities, lack of capacities of institutions at every level to shift towards sustainable use, the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystem services. On patterns of consumption, proposals should show how their impacts such as uneven use and exploitation of resources, generation of waste and pollution, value setting, power setting in societies, institutions and financial streams could be addressed in business, institutional and consumer agendas to achieve positive outcomes for biodiversity.

Proposals should assess the cultural diversity that influences these compromises and people’s engagement, and lead the way to further mainstream biodiversity in socio-economic and environmental agendas, from the transformative aspect of changing extraction, production and processing, consumption, trade and behaviour patterns, including on actions for addressing

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<sup>123</sup> Such as activities stemming from CL5-D1-CSR-07-2021/2, CL5-D1-CSR-09-2021/2 and CL5-D1-CSR-15-2021/2

<sup>124</sup> As provided in IPBES (2018, 2019), IPCC (2019), EKLIPSE and EC (2020), GBO-5 (2020), FP7 and H2020 projects on climate and urban transitions. See also <http://www.biodiversitybarometer.org/>

climate change on biodiversity. They should also analyse and test the use of nature-based solutions as tool in this regard. Optimal and cost-effective use of behavioural games, networks of sensors, GIS-mapping, big data and observational programmes such as the European Earth observation programme Copernicus, through the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) as well as citizens' observatories, should be used as appropriate to enable the integration and visualisation of data.

Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

Proposals should build their analysis upon the links between multiple Sustainable Development Goals, to deliver direct and indirect biodiversity benefits, and of the role of biodiversity in reaching the set of Sustainable Development Goals, when related to extraction, production, consumption, trade and behaviour patterns.

Proposals should produce case studies and collect good and bad examples that could inform these transformations and inform and inspire transformative change through learning, co-creation and dialogue.

Proposals should include specific tasks and ensure sufficient resources to develop joint deliverables (e.g. activities, workshops, as well as joint communication and dissemination) with all projects on transformative change related to biodiversity. This concerns projects funded under this destination, or under calls included in Destination 'Fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption' related to transformational change (Fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption) that aim to deliver various co-benefits, including on the reduction of biodiversity loss. Projects should use existing platforms and information sharing mechanisms relevant for transformational change and on biodiversity knowledge<sup>125</sup>. Cooperation and possibly synergies with relevant topics in Cluster 5 should be explored and established as relevant. Furthermore, cooperation is expected with the European partnership on biodiversity and with the Science Service

Proposals should show how their results might provide timely information for major science-policy bodies such as the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), as well as the Convention on Biological Diversity on project outcomes. Cooperation is requested with projects under 'HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-20: Support to processes triggered by IPBES and IPCC' and 'HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-10: Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity'.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of social science and humanities disciplines.

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<sup>125</sup> BISE, Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity, BiodivERsA, Oppla, NetworkNature and their joint work streams



**HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-09: Understanding the role of behaviour, gender specifics, lifestyle, religious and cultural values, and addressing the role of enabling players (civil society, policy makers, financing and business leaders, retailers) in decision making**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome: In line with the EU biodiversity strategy, a successful proposal will develop knowledge and tools to understand the role of transformative change for biodiversity policy making, finance and business leaders, address the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, and initiate, accelerate and upscale biodiversity-relevant transformative changes in our society.

The projects should address all of the following outcomes:

- Inform approaches tackling biodiversity loss and implementing nature-based solutions that consider how behaviour, lifestyles, religious, societal and cultural values shape the choices of producers and consumers, institutions and their policy decisions.
- The motives behind broad societal changes and transitions are taken up in the design of relevant policies, communication and engagement campaigns and other actions.
- Leverage points in those sectors with the greatest impact on biodiversity are addressed, as the role of decisive actors (civil society, education institutions, policy makers, financing and business leaders, retailers) and their inter-sectorial consultation is known. This includes human rights and due diligence across economic value chains, as well as the role of employment patterns for a just transition.
- The understanding of the biodiversity inter-dependencies of the SDGs has improved; IPBES and IPCC are strengthened by the contribution of European research and innovation. Approaches, tools and knowledge influence policies at the adequate level on transformative change for biodiversity – the key elements for this change are delivered by the portfolio of cooperating projects (of which these projects form part).

Scope: Proposals should engage with civil society organisations – in particular those working on gender, diversity, equity and inclusion –, social partners, policy makers, financing, industry and business leaders, and retailers and value-led (such as religious and cultural) institutions when addressing the role of enabling players for transformative changes in

biodiversity actions, exemplified at relevant levels from local to global. They should identify and test measures to overcome barriers for behaviour changes in biodiversity action, considering ethical questions in behavioural economics, e.g. linked to future generations. This should acknowledge the interdependence of the climate and biodiversity crisis.

The proposals should explore intersectionality approaches and consider interlocking systems of power between gender and other social categories and identities such as religion, ethnicity and race (including migrants and refugees), social class and wealth, gender identity and sexual orientation and disability to better address access to and ownership of nature-based solutions.

The proposals should analyse and address the impact of intrinsic vs economic/utilitarian values. They should include an estimation of the importance of engineered vs haphazard policy making factors at relevant levels, and specify and address effects of processes affecting adherence to democracy, voting campaigns, science denialism<sup>126</sup>.

The proposals should build their analysis upon the synergies of multiple Sustainable Development Goals, to deliver direct and indirect biodiversity benefits, and of the role of biodiversity in reaching the set of Sustainable Development Goals, considering the importance of behaviour, lifestyle, religious and cultural values.

The proposals should produce case studies and collect good and failed examples that could inform these transformations<sup>127</sup> and inform and inspire transformative change through learning, co-creation and dialogue.

Proposals should include specific tasks and provide sufficient resources to develop joint deliverables (e.g. activities, workshops, as well as joint communication and dissemination) with all projects with all projects on transformative change related to biodiversity funded under this destination, and should use existing platforms and information sharing mechanisms relevant for transformational change and on biodiversity knowledge<sup>128</sup>. Furthermore, cooperation is expected with the European partnership on biodiversity and the Science Service (HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-19: A mechanism for science to inform implementation, monitoring, review and ratcheting up of the new EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 ('Science Service')). Proposals should show how their results might provide timely information for major science-policy bodies such as the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), as well as the Convention on Biological Diversity on project outcomes. Cooperation is expected with projects 'HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-20: Support to processes triggered by IPBES and IPCC' and 'HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-2022-01-10: Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity'.

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<sup>126</sup> Cooperation with Horizon 2020 Green Deal Call topic 10.2 is encouraged

<sup>127</sup> Using results from previous projects and initiatives at EU and global level (see also project POLICYMIX and studies such as <http://www.biodiversitybarometer.org/> or <https://portfolio.earth/>) and referring to, and critically assessing, the understanding of transformative change in IPBES and GBO-5, EEA

<sup>128</sup> BISE, Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity, BiodivERsA, Oppla, NetworkNature and their joint work streams

This topic should involve the effective contribution of social science and humanities disciplines.

### **Interconnecting biodiversity research and supporting policies**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-10: Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: In line with the Commission priority 'A stronger Europe in the world', to implement the EU Green Deal and demonstrated leadership as outlined in the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, a successful proposal will increase the European support to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The project results must contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- A dedicated mechanism for scientific and technical cooperation of the EU and associated countries with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) delivers support for its working groups and task forces, and for the respective subsidiary bodies (including the Informal Advisory Group on Technical and Scientific Cooperation).
- Improved coherence in how the EU and associated countries contribute to CBD (e.g. SBSTTA/SBI) and to IPBES processes in cooperation with HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-20: Support to processes triggered by IPBES and IPCC.

#### Scope:

- Research on biodiversity and nature-based solutions has made good progress in the last years, but must be stepped up to achieve targeted impacts on biodiversity-relevant policies. Global initiatives, in turn, should provide structured policy input into the research cycle. This is also key to guiding biodiversity governance, and to implement the EU Green Deal and international conventions. In line with the Commission priority 'A stronger Europe in the world', the EU must demonstrate leadership in this field, notably by increasing its support to the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- The proposals should cover all the following points:

- o Deliver a dedicated mechanism for scientific and technical cooperation of the EU and Associated Countries with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for its Informal Advisory Group on Technical and Scientific Cooperation.
  - o In cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity, deliver on the European technical and knowledge contribution to a global biodiversity platform for biodiversity, and support the implementation of the CBD monitoring framework (including in collaboration with EU and national monitoring initiatives and the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership),
  - o Improve biodiversity knowledge to better understand gaps in global biodiversity action and to identify the needs for stepping (“ratcheting”) up biodiversity commitments and action.
  - o Engage and support European researchers participating in CBD working groups and task forces, and the CBD’s subsidiary bodies, and provide this expertise to UNFCCC processes.
  - o Provide technical and scientific support to negotiators from the EU and associated countries in preparing and at SBSTTA/SBI meetings and CBD COPs.
  - o Share relevant information so that the EU can lead and cooperate on worldwide research, which includes targeted capacity building for central and eastern European and associated countries.
- Proposals should indicate which specific tasks they plan to deliver at the end of year one. This should be relevant and timely for the policy agenda of the Global Biodiversity Agenda, and for the international dimension of the EU biodiversity strategy.
  - Proposals should then deliver regular (e.g. every six months) input according to the agenda of SBSTTA and SBI to the EC services, and continuous support for the Working/Advisory Groups under CBD, in cooperation with the Science Service (HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-19: A mechanism for science to inform implementation, monitoring, review and ratcheting up of the new EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 (“Science Service”), the Biodiversity Partnership, and further relevant instruments, tools and mechanisms<sup>129</sup>. Its results, where relevant, should be accessible through the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity, according to agreed standards. Proposals should outline sufficient resources for such cooperation and contribute to the strategic dialogues into the KCBD forum.

### **Call - Biodiversity and ecosystem services**

***HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-02-two-stage***

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<sup>129</sup> Such as BISE, Oppla, EKLIPSE, NetworkNature, EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity

## Conditions for the Call

### Indicative budget(s)<sup>130</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>131</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2022		
Opening: 28 Oct 2021 Deadline(s): 15 Feb 2022 (First Stage), 01 Sep 2022 (Second Stage)				
HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-02-01-two-stage	IA	20.00	6.00 to 10.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-02-02-two-stage	IA	14.00	Around 7.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-02-03-two-stage	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
Overall indicative budget		46.00		

### **General conditions relating to this call**

<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General

<sup>130</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.  
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>131</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

	Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

### **Managing biodiversity in primary production**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-02-01-two-stage: Maintaining and restoring pollinators and pollination services in European agricultural landscapes**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 6.00 and 10.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 20.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply: Project consortia must give evidence that they have the rights to undertake actions on the areas to be restored.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p>
<i>Procedure</i>	<p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Grants will be awarded to proposals according to the ranking list. However, in order to ensure a balanced portfolio of supported actions, at least the two highest-ranked proposals covering action mainly in the European Union and Associated Countries will be funded provided that they attain all thresholds.</p>

Expected Outcome: Responding to the EU Green Deal, the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 and the farm to fork Strategy, a successful proposal will restore pollinator-habitats, support

the development of pollinator-friendly policies, business models and market conditions, by helping to establish sustainable, productive, climate-neutral and resilient farming systems by minimising pressure on ecosystems, delivering a wide range of ecosystem services, improving public health and generating fair economic returns for farmers. Projects should address all of the following outcomes:

- Agricultural landscapes that are dominated by intensively managed crops and grasslands, are restored<sup>132</sup> through co-designed (with farmers and other land managers, local communities, agricultural advisory services, landscape planners, the nature conservation sector etc.) large-scale, experimental pollinator-friendly practices and services and through social innovation processes, such as new innovative approaches to enhance community participatory planning and innovative business models.
- Management, restoration, conservation and connectivity of wild pollinator habitats follow scientific and policy recommendations, which have been tested in the projects on their applicability. The range of recommendations in question is set in the Assessment Report on Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production of IPBES<sup>133</sup> and the updated Plan of Action of the international initiative on the conservation and sustainable use of pollinators<sup>134</sup>.
- Systemic approaches provide an effective enabling environment for stakeholder actions. They demonstrate that coherent and comprehensive policies for the conservation and sustainable use of pollinators at various governance levels can be demonstrated at least at landscape scale. , and contributing to foster sustainable agricultural practices while ensuring farming viability and profitability, for different agricultural sectors.
- Improved coordination in governance, as well as enhanced data accessibility, financing and maintenance agreements for actions beneficial for pollinators are achieved
- Adaptive management of measures for the conservation and sustainable use of pollinators is informed by continuous monitoring and assessing of the outcomes, including by using results-based payment schemes.

**Scope:** This topic aims at maintaining and restoring species-rich pollinator communities and their services in agricultural landscapes dominated by intensive land use, and facilitating the uptake of pollinator-friendly practices at wider scale.

The direct and indirect drivers of pollinator decline are cross-cutting in nature .This calls for the need to ensure policy coherence and to integrate pollinator and pollination considerations not only in policy measures that support the transition towards more sustainable agricultural

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<sup>132</sup> “Restoration” is based on CBD guidance on ecosystem restoration, and in line with the EU 2030 biodiversity strategy whose Restoration Plan aims to help bring diverse and resilient nature back to all landscapes and ecosystems. On experience of the LIFE programme, see i.a. [https://ec.europa.eu/easme/sites/easme-site/files/restoration\\_of\\_intensified\\_farmland\\_life\\_platform\\_-\\_final.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/easme/sites/easme-site/files/restoration_of_intensified_farmland_life_platform_-_final.pdf)

<sup>133</sup> IPBES (2018) <https://ipbes.net/assessment-reports/pollinators>

<sup>134</sup> As adopted in CBD/COP/DEC/14/6..

practices, but also across sectors (for example forestry, consumption and health) and at different spatial scales (farm, landscape, ecosystem).

Despite efforts, many of the main direct drivers of pollinator loss have remained largely unchanged over the years: habitat fragmentation and land use change, the widespread use of synthetic chemicals in agriculture and in other sectors, invasive alien species, and pathogens (in case of managed pollinators). In particular, great attention has been focused on drivers linked to intensive agricultural practices, such as monoculture, and the use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides that can have direct and indirect effects on pollinators. In addition, the increasing negative impact on pollinator habitats of other direct drivers, such as climate change, have exacerbated the problem.

This topic aims at restoring and maintaining species-rich pollinator communities and their services in agricultural landscapes characterised by intensive farming practices, and facilitating the uptake of pollinator-friendly practices in the agricultural sector at a wide scale, in different pedo-climatic conditions across Europe. The proposed projects should emphasise mainstreaming pollination concerns into policies, developing and implementing measures on the ground to support the conservation and sustainable use of pollinators, addressing risks, and building capacity. In doing this, they should involve all relevant stakeholders along the agri-food chain and share knowledge on multiple levels to integrate pollination considerations into farming, land use and other management decisions, focusing collaborative research on emerging issues and prevailing needs.

The proposed projects should build on existing experience<sup>135</sup> in particular on lessons learned and best practices gained through EU-funded projects and initiatives such as those supported by Horizon 2020, Results-Based Payment Scheme projects<sup>136</sup>, the LIFE programme, and prepare the uptake of approaches developed and tested in this topic into future EU-funded activities (such as LIFE, the common agricultural policy, Horizon Europe). The proposals should show how their results may contribute to the EU Pollinators Initiative<sup>137</sup>, feed into relevant IPBES functions, and ensure cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity. Coordination with the two following topics should be envisaged: ‘HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-10: Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity’ and ‘HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-20: Support to processes triggered by IPBES and IPCC’.

Projects are expected to secure additional funding or in-kind contributions when implementing restoration actions.

Proposals should include specific tasks and envisage sufficient resources to develop joint deliverables (e.g. activities, workshops, as well as joint communication and dissemination) with all projects funded under this topic for aspects of horizontal nature and for cooperation

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<sup>135</sup> Based on and/or informing the EU Pollinators Initiative, the Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity, BISe, and further projects and initiatives of EU importance and globally such as SC5-32-2020: Addressing wild pollinators decline and its effects on biodiversity and ecosystem services, or EcoStack, POSHBEE, B-GOOD and IPMWORKS, EIP-AGRI, the Focus Group on Bee Health and Sustainable Bee Keeping <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/focus-groups/bee-health-and-sustainable-beekeeping>

<sup>136</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/rbaps>

<sup>137</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/pollinators/index\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/pollinators/index_en.htm)



with other projects such as BiodivERsA, Oppla, the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity, relevant H2020 projects such as SHOWCASE and HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-08: ‘Agroforestry to meet climate, biodiversity and farming sustainability goals’. Actions should use existing platforms and information sharing mechanisms relevant for pollinators and the restoration of their habitats. Furthermore, cooperation is expected with the European partnership on biodiversity<sup>138</sup> and with the Science Service (HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-19: A mechanism for science to inform implementation, monitoring, review and ratcheting up the new EU biodiversity strategy (‘Science Service’), and with other large-scale initiatives under Horizon Europe, such as the candidate partnership on agroecology, living labs, research infrastructures and the proposed mission ‘Caring for soils is caring for life’.

The proposals should address all of the following points:

- Demonstrate measures to diversify large-scale farming systems and the resulting feeding resources and habitats of pollinators in agricultural lands, grasslands and semi-natural areas, through agro-ecological practices, including organic farming and agroforestry, as well as through home gardens, and forestry systems where relevant to the restored landscapes, with a view to ensure heterogeneous habitats formed by native species that offer diversified floral and nesting resources for pollinators;
- Create set-asides for nature, such as uncultivated patches of vegetation, to enhance floral diversity, and to ensure native, diverse, abundant and continuous floral resources for pollinator across time and space;

The two points mentioned above combined should cover at least 50% of the proposed budget.

- Analyse and evaluate different options to protect and conserve threatened pollinator species as well as their natural environment, and elaborate the requirements to promote recognition of pollinator-friendly practices and consequences on pollination functions and services in existing certification schemes; and develop methods for the inclusion of pollinator conservation into ecosystem restoration frameworks (in particular on grassland and other agro-ecosystems).
- Develop prototypes of potential extension services, farmer-to-farmer sharing approaches and farmer field schools to strengthen synergies between scientific evidence, traditional knowledge, conservation and farmer-researcher community practices, to exchange knowledge and provide hands-on education and empowerment of local farming communities on pollinators. This could include for instance fostering networks for exchanges of native seeds
- Elaborate, based on the large-scale approach, how the promotion of coherent policies across sectors and issues (e.g. biodiversity, agriculture and food security, chemicals and pollution, reduction of inequality, climate change and disaster risk reduction) could look like for pollinators. This scalability plan should be developed with the involvement of

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<sup>138</sup> <https://www.biodiversa.org/1759>

the communities concerned, and should include the dissemination of innovative solutions and practices, and a process for commitments in adopting large-scale restoration of pollinator communities within governance and financing systems, to allow replication and upscaling across the EU, associated countries and internationally. It should seek guarantees for the non-reversibility and/or continuity of restoration activities and/or further replication and/or expansion, implementation of sustainable management practices and monitoring after the end of the projects.

- Assess and propose options to develop and implement innovative incentives, consistent with international obligations, for farmers and other actors along the agri-food chain, to encourage the adoption of pollinator-friendly practices (e.g. carbon sequestration measures that increase pollinator habitats; conservation of uncultivated areas for pollinator forage; communication to consumers and other actors on the benefits of pollinator-friendly practices, etc). This should also cover assessing the impacts on farmers' income, on overall business performance of farms, as well as on social aspects in farming communities.
- Build on existing knowledge, developed inter alia by EU-funded research projects, to assess options to remove or reduce incentives that are harmful to pollinators and their habitats (e.g. pesticides subsidies; incentives for pesticide use as credit requirements from banks), and to promote alternative approaches to pesticide use (e.g. Integrated Pest Management), taking into consideration the needs of farmers, gardeners, land managers, indigenous people, local communities and other stakeholders<sup>139</sup>;
- Design and test a system to monitor the effectiveness of the large-scale interventions, taking into consideration the scale-dependent aspects of protecting pollinators and managing pollination functions and services, using standard methods in line with the proposal for an EU Pollinator Monitoring Scheme<sup>140</sup>, and contribute to their improvement.

The proposals should develop scientifically robust and transparent methodologies, building on achievements from previous research activities. To ensure trustworthiness, swift and wide adoption by user communities, and to support EU and national (including from associated countries) policy-makers, actions should adopt high standards of transparency and openness, going beyond documentation of results and extending to aspects such as assumptions, models and data quality during the projects life.

Applicants are reminded that costs for land purchase or lease are not eligible costs in the context of activities of research and innovation or innovation projects.

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<sup>139</sup> In cooperation with e.g. Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe calls on Integrated Pest Management  
<sup>140</sup> <https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/EUPKH/EU+Pollinator+Monitoring+Scheme>

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-02-02-two-stage: Boosting breeding for a sustainable, resilient and competitive European legume sector**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 14.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

**Expected Outcome:** A successful proposal should support the objectives of the EU biodiversity strategy and the farm to fork strategy to transition to a fair, healthy and resilient European agriculture, notably its objective to foster EU-grown plant proteins, in line with the ‘Report on the development of plant proteins in the EU’<sup>141</sup>. They should do so by increasing the availability of crops and breeds that cater for the specific needs of the legume sector, thus supporting increased (agro-) biodiversity and the transition to sustainable, productive, climate-neutral and resilient farming systems that minimise pressure on ecosystems while ensuring fair economic returns for farmers and food consumption that is sustainable in terms of both health and the environment.

Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- Improved legume varieties for different attributes/traits (e.g., resilience to abiotic and biotic stresses, nutrient composition, food and feed processing, flavour, etc.);
- Improved availability of and open access to data on breeding methods and legume breeding research outcomes;
- Increased competitiveness of the legume breeding sector through cost-effective legume breeding methods, novel governance models, testing, training and networking;

<sup>141</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52018DC0757>

- Improved biodiversity and diversification of farming systems and agri-food value chains, as well as increased farmers' competitiveness through the implementation of crop rotation systems based on the cultivation of legumes;
- Improved delivery of environmental services from agriculture, including the reduction of greenhouse gas and air pollution emissions.

Scope: Legume crops are a source of food, feed and environmental services. For instance, legumes have the unique capacity to fix nitrogen in the soil and therefore improve soil fertility, while at the same time reducing the need to use conventional inorganic fertilisers. Legumes have an important role to play in the transition towards more sustainable farming systems that provide economic, environmental and social benefits and address relevant objectives of the EU biodiversity and farm to fork strategies. In view of the global increase in protein demand, a sustainable diversification of protein sources in the EU and Associated Countries needs to be explored and developed. Legume crops have a significant role to play in this regard. However, for a variety of reasons, legume production in the EU and Associated Countries is not sufficiently developed. Amongst others, a lack of breeding efforts and insufficient use of genetic resources are responsible for the low percentage of arable land currently used for legumes, despite their agronomic and environmental benefits. Closing gaps in breeding (traditional and new varieties) including facilitating knowledge and best practices sharing in legume breeding, can be a key driver for improving the competitiveness of legume crops grown in the EU and Associated Countries.

Proposals should build on the results of relevant EU-funded research projects. Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure adequate involvement of farmers, the breeding sector and other relevant actors of the value chain. This topic is open for the breeding needs of the legume sector in conventional, agroecological and organic farming, and addresses all climate / biogeographical regions in the EU and Associated Countries. In order to achieve the expected outcomes, international cooperation is strongly encouraged. Proposals should include a clear plan to collaborate with other projects selected under this topic. In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

Proposals should develop a catalogue of legume species and varieties and desired characteristics driven by demands in the EU and Associated Countries food and feed chains. Proposals should develop a range of measures to improve legume varieties for different attributes, such as higher and more stable yields, enhanced tolerance to abiotic and biotic stresses, resource efficiency, increased nitrogen-fixing capacity (e.g. enhanced use of plant root-microbiome interactions within rhizosphere layer), and enhanced nutritional quality, food and feed processing, etc., through pre-breeding and breeding activities and tapping into local and traditional varieties where relevant. Proposals should improve screening techniques to better understand genetic relationships, origin and susceptibility to specific attributes. Proposals should build an open repository of breeding methods and breeding research outcomes for different attributes. Proposals should analyse the cost-effectiveness of legume breeding methods and identify the best varieties suited for given uses (e.g. crop rotation,

extensive agricultural livestock systems, etc.). Case studies of innovative engagement of value chain partners in legume breeding initiatives in different contexts should be analysed and key factors of success should be identified. Governance and financial models should be developed to support legume breeding initiatives that are inclusive for all actors in the value chain and that build linkages among those actors, with a view to strengthening legume demand. Proposals should design training packages tailored to the specific needs of different actors in the legume breeding and seed business to strengthen their capacities to achieve breeding gains. Building on existing tools or mechanisms, where relevant, proposals should set up a transdisciplinary EU and Associated Countries wide platform to facilitate trans-national and trans-regional knowledge and best practices sharing in legume breeding, including facilitating cross-regional testing of varieties. Proposals should foster demonstration and testing of legume breeding in different regions, with emphasis in regions where the legume breeding sector is less developed.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-02-03-two-stage: Resilient beekeeping**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:  To ensure a balanced portfolio covering biotic and abiotic factors, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least also to one project within the biotic stressors (i.e. diseases) that is the highest ranked, and one project highest ranked within the abiotic stressors, if the applications attain all thresholds .

Expected Outcome: A successful proposal will support the objective of the biodiversity strategy and the farm to fork strategy to transition to fair, healthy and resilient European agriculture, and contribute to preserve biodiversity and strengthen the resilience and sustainability of specific farming sectors. It will contribute to the impacts related to a better

knowledge of the biodiversity decline and of the interrelations between biodiversity, health and climate, as well as to the practices in agriculture supporting biodiversity and other ecosystem services.

The proposed projects are expected to contribute to a better understanding of agroecosystems practices that can sustain honeybees, to enhanced preservation of honeybee genetic resources and their use in breeding, and to mitigation of impacts of beekeeping activities on wild pollinators.

- Improved resilience of beekeeping against stresses like climate change, nutritional stresses, pathogens and chemicals;
- Support to stakeholders associated with beekeeping, trade, services, monitoring and control through increased knowledge on honeybee immunity and nutrition;
- Improved capacity to deal with relevant honeybee pathogens;
- Robust evidence-based understanding of the importance of diversity within honeybee populations;
- Improved understanding of the impacts of beekeeping activities on wild pollinators and strengthened capacity to address them.

Scope: Resilience of beekeeping is important both for pollination services and for the honeybee production sector. Bees are subject to numerous biotic and abiotic stressors (e.g. loss of feed resources, exposure to various chemicals, invasive species and/or pathogens) and the impact of climate change on honeybees requires further attention. The biology of honeybees, including immunity and nutrition is still poorly understood, as is the role of genetic diversity within honeybee populations and interactions between honeybees and their environment.

The proposals will address relevant areas of research as appropriate:

- Develop technologies and strategies for beekeepers to adapt to climate change and possibly contribute to mitigate climate change, including the design of novel beehives equipment, technologies and management protocols;
- Perform baseline studies on immunity, health, nutrition, and genetic diversity and resistance of honeybees in line with their biological performance;
- Develop tools for assessing potential impacts of beekeeping on wild pollinators at landscape scale, strategies for mitigating those impacts, and tools tailored to public authorities for planning and decision-making with regard to optimal deployment of bee hives at local or regional level, taking into account among others nutrition requirements and landscape factors;
- Address at least Varroa destructor and possibly other honeybee mites, as well as Aethina tumida

- Review the key biological mechanisms of *Varroa destructor*, which determine its multiplication in a hive, including its potential connection with other pathogens, and identify possible novel areas to target with potential new control methods, including bee genetic resistance, especially in light of the experience and limitations of the attempts to fight it in Europe in the last decades;
- Assess the vulnerability and preparedness of the EU honeybee-keeping sector in relation to *Aethina tumida* and *Tropilaelaps* spp. which are exotic or largely exotic to the EU (*A.tumida* is present in southern Italy), scrutinise strategies and practices in other countries (outside of EU) where these appeared recently, identify successful practices and suggest mitigation strategies for and by the beekeepers to live with these pathogens, in case of their eventual spread in the EU.

Proposals should include, if appropriate, a genetic component, looking at both the diversity of honeybee populations and the possibility of breeding and conservation approaches to address the identified challenge.

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure adequate involvement of beekeepers, farmers, agricultural advisory services, manufacturers, the veterinary profession, ecology and nature conservation experts, and other relevant actors.

## **Destination – Fair, healthy and environment-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption**

National, EU and global food systems are facing sustainability challenges, from primary production to consumption, that could jeopardise food and nutrition security. The farm to fork strategy, which is key to the success of the European Green Deal and achievement of the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs), aims to address these challenges and to deliver co-benefits for environment, health, society and the economy, ensuring that actions leading to recovery from the COVID-19 crisis also put us onto a sustainable path going forward. Research and innovation (R&I) are key drivers steering and accelerating the transition to sustainable, safe, healthy and inclusive food systems, from farm to fork, thereby ensuring food and nutrition security for all.

**Sustainable farming** systems provide a number of economic, environmental, social and health benefits, and are the main prerequisite for food and nutrition security. For farmers, who are the backbone of food systems and the immediate managers of natural resources, the Green Deal sets ambitious targets with respect to the sustainability and safety of feed and food production. These targets are included in the core Green Deal policy initiatives, in particular the farm to fork strategy, the biodiversity strategy, zero pollution efforts and climate action. R&I in line with the strategic approach to EU agricultural research and innovation<sup>142</sup> will be key enablers if these challenging targets are to be achieved. They will speed up the transition to sustainable and competitive agriculture by unlocking the potential of agroecology<sup>143</sup>, including improving organic farming as part of the agroecological transition, boosting production of EU-grown plant proteins and advancing digital and data technologies (Destination ‘Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal’). R&I will support farmers to manage land, soil, water and nutrients in new, sustainable ways, in particular through the Horizon Europe mission in the area of ‘soil health and food’. New knowledge and innovative solutions will improve plant and animal health and welfare, prevent interspecies disease transmission through food production and trade systems, and reduce farmers’ dependency on pesticides, antimicrobials and other external inputs. Thanks to R&I, farming systems will maximise provision of a wide range of ecosystem services from more sustainably managed EU agro-ecosystems and landscapes, and help to reverse the loss of biodiversity and soil fertility while ensuring resilient primary production (Destination ‘Biodiversity and ecosystem services’). Farmers will be better equipped to make a significant contribution to climate neutrality and become more resilient to climate change (Destination ‘Land, ocean and water for climate action’). Also, R&I will support the development of policy (in particular the common agricultural policy (CAP)), business models and market conditions enabling transition to sustainable food and farming systems. Effective agricultural knowledge and innovation systems (AKISs) will speed up innovation and the uptake of R&I results from farm to fork (Destination ‘Innovative

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<sup>142</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/news/final-paper-strategic-approach-eu-agricultural-research-and-innovation>

<sup>143</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/i9037en/i9037en.pdf>



governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal’). As a result, farmers will be able to transform their production methods and move to climate- and environment-friendly, and resilient farming systems, thereby contributing to sustainable food value chains that provide producers with fair economic returns and consumers with affordable, safe, healthy and sustainable food (Destinations ‘Biodiversity and ecosystem services’ and ‘Land, ocean and water for climate action’).

**Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture** contribute directly to environment-friendly, inclusive, safe and healthy food production by providing highly nutritional proteins, lipids and micronutrients for a healthy diet. Sustainably produced food from marine and freshwater bodies can and should account for a much bigger proportion of our overall food consumption. The farm to fork strategy seeks to help fishers and aquaculture producers to achieve better climate and environmental results and to strengthen their position in the supply chain. R&I will directly support the common fisheries policy (CFP) and deliver inclusive, diversified approaches to allow fisheries management to adapt to different realities, including in the international context. Sustainable and resilient aquaculture systems, including the use of low trophic species (e.g. algae and herbivores), high animal welfare standards and alternative sources of protein for food and feed, will increase seafood production and reduce its environmental impact while adding economic value to the chain. Seafood security will benefit from a drastic reduction in the current massive pre- and post-harvest losses in seafood biomass. Producers’ and consumers’ awareness, trust and behaviour with respect to the responsible production, consumption and disposal of seafood will contribute directly to the competitiveness and sustainability of the sector. An overarching partnership for a climate-neutral, sustainable and productive blue economy will contribute to food security, added value, blue growth and jobs in Europe through a jointly supported R&I programme in the European seas, coastal and inland waters.

**Transforming food systems for health, sustainability and inclusion** requires robust, system-wide changes at all governance levels (from local to global and vice versa) as food systems are intertwined with all other sectors and are among the key drivers of climate change and environmental degradation. Food systems are to be understood as covering all the sectors, actors, stakeholders, organisations and disciplines relevant to and connecting primary production from land and sea, food processing, food distribution and retailing, food services, food consumption, food safety, nutrition and public health, and food waste streams. The European Green Deal and, in particular, the farm to fork strategy support a shift to more resilient and environmentally, socially and economically sustainable food systems, as required to deliver safe, healthy, accessible and affordable food and diets for all sourced from land and sea, while respecting planetary boundaries. This will involve a better understanding of the multiple interactions between the components of current food systems, to foster solutions that maximise co-benefits with respect to the four priorities of the Commission’s ‘Food 2030’ R&I initiative:

- nutrition and health, including food safety;
- climate and environmental sustainability;

- circularity and resource efficiency; and
- innovation and empowering communities.

R&I will accelerate the transition to sustainable, healthy and inclusive food systems by delivering in various areas: dietary shifts towards sustainable and healthy nutrition; supply of alternative and plant-based proteins; prevention and reduction of food loss and waste; microbiome applications; improving food safety and traceability; fighting food fraud; behavioural change; personalised nutrition; urban food systems (Destination ‘Resilient, inclusive, healthy and green rural, coastal and urban communities’); food systems governance and systems science; and digital and data-driven innovation (Destination ‘Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal’).

R&I activities supporting the partnership for safe and sustainable food systems for people, planet and climate will help identify and deliver innovative solutions providing co-benefits for nutrition, food quality, the climate, circularity and communities.

The EU also aims to promote a **global transition to sustainable food systems**. Targeted R&I activities, in particular under the EU-Africa Partnership on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) and global initiatives involving international research consortia, will contribute to this ambition.

Expected impacts:

Proposals for topics under this destination should set out credible pathways to **fair, healthy, safe, climate- and environment-friendly, resilient food systems from primary production to consumption, ensuring food and nutrition security for all within planetary boundaries in the EU and globally**.

More specifically, proposals should contribute to one or more of the following impacts:

- sustainable, productive, climate-neutral and resilient farming systems providing consumers with affordable, safe, traceable healthy and sustainable food, while minimising pressure on ecosystems, restoring and enhancing biodiversity, improving public health and generating fair economic returns for farmers;
- sustainable fisheries and aquaculture increasing aquatic biomass production, diversification and consumption of seafood products for fair, healthy, climate-resilient and environment-friendly food systems with low impact on aquatic ecosystems and high animal welfare; and
- sustainable, healthy and inclusive food systems delivering co-benefits for climate mitigation and adaptation, environmental sustainability and circularity, sustainable healthy nutrition, safe food consumption, food poverty reduction, the inclusion of marginalised people, the empowerment of communities, and flourishing businesses.

When considering their impact, proposals also need to assess their compliance with the ‘do no significant harm’ principle<sup>144</sup>, whereby R&I projects should not support or involve activities that significantly undermine any of the six environmental objectives of the EU Taxonomy Regulation.

To unlock the full potential of R&I and maximise impacts, participatory approaches, e.g. multi-actor approach, involving input from industry, technology providers, primary producers, the food, drink and hospitality industry, consumers, citizens, local authorities, etc. should be promoted with a view to co-creating innovative systemic solutions in support of food systems’ sustainability.

Topics under this destination should have impacts in the following impact areas of the Horizon Europe strategic plan for 2021-2024:

- sustainable food systems from farm to fork on land and sea
- climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- enhancing ecosystems and biodiversity on land and in waters;
- good health and high-quality accessible healthcare;
- clean and healthy air, water and soil;
- a resilient EU prepared for emerging threats; and
- inclusive growth and new job opportunities.

The following call(s) in this work programme contribute to this destination:

Call	Budgets (EUR million)		Deadline(s)
	2021	2022	
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01	186.00		06 Oct 2021
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01		164.00	15 Feb 2022
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-02-two-stage		66.50	15 Feb 2022 (First Stage) 06 Sep 2022 (Second Stage)
Overall indicative budget	186.00	230.50	

<sup>144</sup> See Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 2020/852 on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment (EU Taxonomy Regulation).



**Call - Fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption**

***HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>145</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>146</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2021		
Opening: 22 Jun 2021 Deadline(s): 06 Oct 2021				
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-01	RIA	4.00	Around 4.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-02	IA	9.00	Around 9.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-03	CSA	2.00	Around 2.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-04	RIA	14.00	Around 7.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-05	RIA	8.00	Around 8.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-06	IA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-07	CSA	3.00	Around 3.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-08	RIA	12.00	Around 4.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-09	RIA	8.00	Around 8.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-10	IA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-11	IA	10.00	Around 5.00	2

<sup>145</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.  
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>146</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-12	RIA	11.00	Around 11.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-13	RIA	12.00	6.00 to 7.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-14	RIA	12.00	Around 12.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-15	RIA	12.00	Around 12.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-16	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-17	IA	11.00	Around 11.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-18	RIA	18.00	Around 6.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-19	RIA	6.00	Around 6.00	1
Overall indicative budget		186.00		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

**Enabling sustainable farming**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-01: Reaching the farm to fork target: R&I scenarios for boosting organic farming and organic aquaculture in Europe**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

Expected Outcome: A successful proposal should support the farm to fork’s strategy objective of a transition to fair, healthy, climate-resilient and climate- and environment-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption, notably the target of at least 25% of the EU’s agricultural land under organic farming by 2030 and a significant increase in organic aquaculture, by evaluating the conditions and proposing scenarios relating to knowledge and innovation for reaching this target.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Support for the implementation of the common agricultural policy (CAP), the EU organic farming regulation and the action plan for the development of the organic sector in the EU;
- Robust evidence on the socio-economic scenarios and market analysis of organic (crops and livestock) farming and aquaculture and food systems across the EU and Associated Countries for reaching the target of at least 25% of the EU’s agricultural land under organic farming by 2030 and a significant increase in organic aquaculture;
- Increased and coordinated research and innovation (R&I) investments in the organic sector;
- Improved exchange of knowledge and best practices on organic (crops and livestock) farming and aquaculture production, and increased availability of advisory services and capacity building, leading to an innovation ecosystem in the EU and Associated Countries that is fit to support the achievement of the farm to fork target on organics.

Scope: The EU is taking a leading role in promoting organic farming and aquaculture and organic food production systems, ensuring high quality standards and developing new value chains. One of the goals of the farm to fork strategy is to reach at least 25% of the EU's agricultural land under organic farming by 2030 and a significant increase in organic aquaculture. This significant increase needs to be accompanied by a similar increase in the organic market. However, the current distribution of organic farming and aquaculture in the EU and Associated Countries is uneven, and there is a need to understand better the obstacles that prevent their development. A number of factors need to be in place for this increase to happen. Among those, research to identify the possible socio-economic impacts on organic producers and on other operators of the value chain, as well as empowering the organic (crops and livestock) farming, aquaculture and food sectors, are essential. Networking and the coordination of research and innovation activities among all relevant actors in the organic farming and aquaculture sectors can ensure the strategic thinking, mobilisation of resources and sharing of knowledge and best practices that are needed to strengthen the organic R&I ecosystem in the EU and Associated Countries, in order to support the achievement of these objectives.

Proposals should evaluate the constraints and lock-ins for reaching the farm to fork strategy target on organics, and the necessary facilitating environment. Proposals should analyse the uptake of organic (crops and livestock) farming and aquaculture across the EU and Associated Countries and the reasons for their varied uptake.

As part of a foresight exercise, proposals should set out scenarios showing where the expected increase can be achieved, and analyse the socio-economic impacts on existing and new organic producers and other market players.

Proposals should assess various actors' knowledge needs when it comes to enhancing innovation towards greater adoption of organic farming and aquaculture, so that the target of the farm to fork strategy can be reached. Proposals should promote capacity building and ensure the necessary sharing of knowledge and best practices among organic (crops and livestock) farmers, aquaculture producers, advisors, scientists and other operators in the value chain, building on existing tools where relevant and available.

In undertaking these activities, proposals should promote close cooperation among relevant research and innovation actors across the EU and Associated Countries, ultimately leading to a more efficient organic production R&I ecosystem. As such, proposals should help to preserve and continue existing communities of research providers and research funders, and widen them to include other public or private actors.

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure a value chain approach, with adequate involvement of the organic farming and aquaculture sectors.

Collaboration should be ensured with other relevant EU-funded research projects and initiatives under Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe, including the relevant Horizon Europe partnerships and networking initiatives.



This topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-02: Developing sustainable and competitive land-based protein crop systems and value chains**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 9.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 5-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: A successful proposal should support the farm to fork’s strategy objective of a transition to a fair, healthy and resilient EU agriculture sector, in particular the goal of fostering EU-grown plant proteins, in line with the “Report on the development of plant proteins in the EU”<sup>147</sup>. Activities should support the transition to sustainable, productive, climate-neutral and resilient farming systems that minimise pressure on ecosystems, while ensuring fair economic returns for farmers and food consumption that is sustainable in terms of both health and the environment.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Identification of the most suitable regional and local transition paths for stimulating sustainable, resilient and economically viable land-based protein crop production for food and feed in the EU and Associated Countries, resulting in increased commercial production of such crops and enhanced food security in the context of protein requirements in the EU and Associated Countries;
- Improved, robust evidence of the social, economic, environmental, climate and health benefits and costs of increasing land-based protein crops production;

<sup>147</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52018DC0757>

- Improved capacities of farmers to cultivate land-based protein crops through innovative advisory tools, improved and wider exchange of knowledge and best practice, adoption of sustainable crop rotation practices and collaboration with other actors in the value chain;
- Stronger innovation ecosystem for land-based protein crop development in Europe through multi-stakeholder and transdisciplinary intra-regional, trans-regional and trans-national collaboration and networking.

Scope: Land-based protein crops<sup>148</sup> are a source of food, feed and environmental services and have an increasingly important role to play in the transition to more sustainable farming systems that provide economic, environmental and social benefits. In view of the increase in protein demand, the sustainable diversification of protein sources in the EU and Associated Countries needs to be explored and developed. Land-based protein crops have a significant role to play in this regard. However, due to a variety of factors, their production in the EU and Associated Countries is not sufficient to cover the growing demand for plant-based proteins. It is becoming necessary to develop and ensure more sustainable and resilient supply chains, and to promote higher consumer acceptance and attractive market opportunities. Specific measures are needed to realise the potential of land-based protein crops in the EU and Associated Countries.

Proposals should build on and expand existing knowledge in order to identify the most suitable transition paths for sustainable land-based protein crop production in different pedo-climatic regions, and to develop strategies for sustainable and competitive regional protein-based crop systems and agri-food and feed chains. Proposals should cover the diversity of available and novel land-based protein crop species with a crude protein content of more than 15%, and consider conventional, agroecological and organic farming systems in all European climate/biogeographical regions. Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and should ensure adequate involvement of farmers and all relevant actors in the value chain for land-based protein crops. Proposals should build on the results of relevant projects and thematic networks funded under Horizon 2020 and include a task to collaborate with the project(s) selected under the following topic in this work programme: *HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-12: Filling knowledge gaps on nutritional, safety, allergenicity and environmental assessment of alternative proteins and dietary shift*. In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

Proposals should identify the most suitable transition paths for the development of sustainable new and existing land-based protein crop farming systems and agri-food and feed chains across the EU and Associated Countries. Proposals should explore the potential for value chain development, taking into consideration opportunities, constraints and impact of different tools, instruments and policies, on different value chain actors, using case studies of

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<sup>148</sup> This topic focuses on protein rich plants with a crude protein content of more than 15 % (oilseeds: rapeseed, sunflower seeds and soya beans; pulses: beans, peas, lentils, lupins etc.; and fodder legumes: mainly alfalfa and clover), accounting for about 1/4 of the total crude plant protein supply in the EU.

existing farms, networks of farms and producer organisations. Proposals should develop and test strategies for sustainable and competitive local and regional land-based protein crop systems that result in improved production techniques, cropping system design that promote crop diversification, feed efficiency, value chain development, reduced environmental impact and improved farmers' organisation, taking into account complementarity across regions and addressing regional imbalances. Proposals should document specific support needs (advice, knowledge and best practice sharing, etc.) for farmers seeking to cultivate protein crops in different regions, assessing the availability of specific tools and developing new, innovative ones. Building on existing tools or mechanisms where available and relevant, proposals should establish a transdisciplinary, multi-stakeholder EU and Associated Countries-wide network to facilitate trans-national and trans-regional sharing of knowledge and best practice in land-based protein supply chain management and agronomic practices, including facilitating cross-regional testing of varieties. Building on existing tools or mechanisms where available and relevant, proposals should establish regional multi-stakeholder networks for advisory services, awareness raising, the sharing of knowledge and best practice, experimentation and demonstration on land-based protein crops species that are best adapted to regional conditions. Proposals should analyse the impact of climate change on land-based protein crops in various farming systems, and their contribution towards climate resilient farming and wider environmental benefits in relation to aspects such as biodiversity, input reduction, closing nutrient cycles, increased soil organic matter and improved soil health. Proposals should develop innovative measures for improving the impact of land-based protein crop production in terms of increased (agro-)biodiversity. Proposals should develop methods and indicators to compare the climate, environmental, social and health benefits and costs of greater land-based protein crop production and its industrialisation, considering the impact of policy measures on land-use changes and implications for farmers, in different farming systems and regions. Proposals should develop indicators to take into account and compare the further industrialisation feasibility and costs of the varieties considered. A method for the systematic collection of data on land-based protein crops for economic and environmental assessment should be developed.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-03: Digitalisation as an enabler of agroecological farming systems**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 2.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following

<i>conditions</i>	exceptions apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
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Expected Outcome: A successful proposal should support the farm to fork’s strategy objective of a transition to a fair, healthy and resilient European agriculture sector, in particular the goal of promoting agroecology, by improving understanding of the potential of digitalisation as an enabler of agroecology, a transformative, sustainable, healthy, resilient and inclusive approach to farming that can minimise farming pressure on ecosystems while generating fair economic returns for farmers.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Robust evidence of existing innovative digital tools and technologies that specifically support the transition to agroecology for different crops, farming systems and pedo-climatic conditions;
- Improved understanding of the barriers, drivers, risks and usability aspects of digital tools that support the implementation of agroecological farming approaches for different crops and farming systems in different pedo-climatic regions;
- Greater awareness among different actors of the cost-effectiveness and the economic, environmental and social performance of digital tools that support the implementation of agroecology, as well as the barriers and incentives for their uptake and deployment;
- Pathways to address research and innovation (R&I) needs as regards digital tools that specifically support the transition to agroecology in the EU and Associated Countries.

Scope: Agroecology<sup>149</sup> is a holistic approach that relies on and maximises the use of ecological processes to support agricultural production. By working more with nature and ecosystem services, it has the potential to increase farms’ circularity, diversification and autonomy, and drive a full transformation of farming systems and agricultural value chains, from input substitution and beyond. Agroecological farming systems therefore have great potential to enhance the sustainability performance of agriculture and agricultural value chains that contribute to the objectives of the EU farm to fork strategy. Compared to industrialised and most conventional agricultural production, agroecology brings a higher level of complexity to farming systems. Digital technologies and agricultural equipment can play a key role in improving the performance of agroecological approaches at farm and territorial level, and boosting their uptake by farmers, *inter alia* by supporting their decision-making on farming practices. These technologies, which include artificial intelligence, geo-spatial technology, advanced image analysis procedures, the internet of things (IoT), robotics and sensors, are available and can be applied to most farming approaches. However, agroecological farming systems are more likely to benefit from tailored digital technologies

<sup>149</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/i9037en/i9037en.pdf>

and technology portfolios that enable, for instance, ongoing monitoring of the transition of farming practices and their performance through databases of in-situ data, or support for farmers' decision-making through the integration of the different elements of an agroecological farming system in a holistic, system-based approach. The cost-effectiveness and performance of these solutions need to be evaluated in order to ensure they contribute to the effectiveness and sustainability of agroecological systems and to farm and/or landscape management. Activities should contribute to road-mapping for the improved productivity and sustainability performance of agroecological farming systems by assessing the availability of digital, data-based solutions tailored to agroecological farming and the potential to adapt "standard" digital technologies used in agriculture to the specific requirements of agroecological approaches for farm and landscape management. Due attention should be paid to aspects relating to security in the use of data, interoperability and the extent to which farmers and other actors in the food chain accept and are able to use these solutions.

Proposals should ensure that any data produced in the course of the project comply with the FAIR principles. Proposals should build on the results of relevant projects funded under Horizon 2020 and ensure collaboration with projects funded under the following calls in this work programme: *HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-05: Agroecological approaches for climate change mitigation, resilient agricultural production and enhanced biodiversity* and *HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-02-01-two-stage: Agroecological approaches for sustainable weed management*.

Proposals should evaluate the need for such tools, and their implementation capacity for different crops and farming systems in different pedo-climatic zones, taking account of local natural habitat types. Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure adequate involvement of the farming sector.

Proposals should document specific needs for digital technologies to support agroecological farming approaches, at farm, territorial and regional / national level. Building on existing data bases of digital technologies for agricultural production, proposals should assess the availability of tools tailored to agroecological approaches and identify gaps and needs for the adaptation of existing technologies or the development of new, innovative solutions to serve the needs of agroecological farming systems. Proposals should evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the solutions proposed, and assess their potential performance in agroecological farming systems for different crops, farming systems, biogeographical regions and pedo-climatic conditions. Proposals should analyse barriers to and incentives for the uptake and effective deployment of these tools, including analysis of cost effectiveness, risks, usability and affordability for farmers, as well as social and cultural obstacles. Based on this information, proposals should compile an open repository of available digital tools to address the specific needs of agroecological farming systems, including organic, under different pedo-climatic conditions. In collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, including farmers, the private and public sector as well as consumer representatives, proposals should develop a roadmap for R&I on digital technologies to support agroecology in the EU and Associated Countries.

## **HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-04: Tackling outbreaks of plant pests**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 14.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <p>The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p>

**Expected Outcome:** In line with the farm to fork strategy, for a transition to fair, healthy and resilient EU agriculture and forestry, including an ambitious target for the reduced use of plant protection products<sup>150</sup>, proposals will support research and innovation (R&I) to help the agricultural / forestry sectors to remain productive and contribute to sustainable agriculture and/or forest health.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Find adequate responses to EU quarantine plant pests;
- Enhance capacities to prevent, monitor and (bio)control important plant pests;
- Support to relevant EU and Associated Countries' plant health policies.

**Scope:** Proposals should target one or more plant pest(s)<sup>151</sup> that are either Union quarantine plant pests<sup>152</sup> present in the EU or Union quarantine pests which are priority pests<sup>153</sup> in the EU, and that are of concern for agriculture and/or forestry. They should improve methods and strategies for surveillance and control, and extend the range of tools for integrated and effective pest management.

<sup>150</sup> The farm to fork strategy sets the target to reduce by 50% the overall use and risk of chemical pesticides and reduce use by 50% of more hazardous pesticides

<sup>151</sup> A pest is defined here as any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent injurious to plants or plant products (EU legislation, Regulation 2016/2031)

<sup>152</sup> See part B of Annex II to Commission Implementing Regulation 2019/2072 for pests known to occur in the Union territory

<sup>153</sup> See Annex to Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/1702 for priority pests.

Proposals should:

- Contribute to the understanding of the drivers of plant pest spread and establishment including the influence of climate change, ecosystem degradation, and globalisation.
- Develop efficient surveillance methods and strategies for early-detection and (bio)control of the pest(s).
- Extend the range of tools and technologies available for the development of economically and environmentally sound solutions for effective pest management in farming and forestry in line with the principles of integrated pest management.
- Analyse the social and economic implications for farmers affected by the plant pest(s) and developing approaches whereby those affected can best cope with the situation.
- Analyse the ecological impact of plant pest(s) spread and establishment.

International cooperation with countries affected or threatened by the same pest(s) is strongly encouraged. Proposals should consider both the conventional and the organic sectors. Proposals must implement the “multi-actor approach” including a range of actors to ensure that knowledge and needs from various sectors such as research, plant health services and farmers/foresters are brought together.

The possible participation of the JRC in the project will consist of supporting the analysis of social and economic implications for farmers affected by the plant pest(s) and developing approaches on how to best cope with the situation when affected.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-05: Animal welfare 2.0**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the

	multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
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Expected Outcome: In line with the farm to fork strategy, for a transition to fair, healthy and resilient livestock production systems, including the improvement of animal welfare and reduction of anti-microbial usage, a successful proposal will support research and innovation (R&I) to help policy makers and other actors (e.g. economic operators) monitor and improve animal welfare in intensive and extensive systems, thus contributing to sustainable agriculture.

The project results are expected to contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- Improved capacity to evaluate and monitor the state of animal welfare in a region/country or in relation to a group of operators;
- Enhanced capacity to further improve animal welfare by business operators or decision makers, through provision of best practices and innovative tools and
- Enhanced capacity to integrate the environmental and socio-economic impact of proposed practices and innovations.

Scope: Farming and food production data are collected at different stages of the production process of terrestrial livestock, mostly to improve economic efficiency, disease control, food safety and quality. Few data collected on farms or during subsequent processing (e.g. in slaughterhouses or dairies) are used to monitor the welfare state of the animals and the different levels of welfare. This can be done through a combination of diverse sources of data already collected and more intensive collection through automatic systems, or routine sampling. At present, even where data are used for animal welfare purposes, they are often exploited only at individual farm level or for just a few operators. The development of algorithms to interpret the various types of data that are collected could increase their value in relation to animal welfare. This would be beneficial both at farm level and in broader contexts, e.g. among groups of operators, or at regional, national, or EU levels.

Proposals should address all of the following areas of research in terrestrial livestock:

- Identification of the data and appropriate indicators that enable assessment of animal welfare on farms, during transport and at the time of slaughtering/killing;
- Development of innovative ways of automatically collecting data pertaining to welfare and related sustainable farming techniques;
- Standardisation of data collection for a population of operators along the supply chain;
- Development of algorithms integrating heterogeneous data from a population of operators in order to evaluate the level of animal welfare within the population concerned;



- Development of best practices associated with statistically meaningful improvements in animal welfare (i.e. associated with improved indicators at population level);
- Evaluation of the environmental and socio-economic impacts of best practices for animal welfare, including marketability;
- Development of monitoring tools and smart models to improve the scope of the data collection both quantitatively (population size) and qualitatively (quality of data collected and impacts measured); and
- Development of innovative ways to estimate the impact of past detrimental conditions on welfare.

The choice of the population of operators should take into account their economic and social relevance for the EU policy and regulatory framework, and potential animal welfare issues (to be addressed both quantitatively and qualitatively). The choice of data studied should take into account complementarity, frequency and ease of collection (automation or routine sampling). It should also take account of the various dimensions of animal welfare (feed and water, comfort, health, behaviour, etc.). Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure adequate involvement of the farming sector, the veterinary profession, agricultural advisory services and other relevant actors along the food chain.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-06: Vaccines and diagnostics for priority animal diseases**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: In line with the farm to fork strategy, for a transition to fair, healthy and resilient livestock production systems, including the reduction of anti-microbial usage, a successful proposal will support research and innovation (R&I) to help policy makers and economic operators reduce the burden of infectious animal diseases, thus contributing to a sustainable livestock industry and public health (food safety, zoonoses, anti-microbial resistance).

The project results are expected to contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- Enhanced capacity to prevent or control relevant priority diseases, through the provision of innovative tools and products to policymakers, the veterinary profession and business operators; and
- Increased knowledge of virulence factors, mechanisms of infection and protection and identification of protective antigens needed for effective vaccine development.

Scope: Vaccines and diagnostics are essential components of the toolbox for preventing and controlling infectious animal diseases and limiting their impact, including the potential reduction of anti-microbial usage. The development or improvement of vaccines for regulated diseases may not be attractive for the pharmaceutical industry and public support may be needed because of market failure. It is important that the toolbox includes early, fast and reliable diagnostics, which may go hand in hand with vaccination (e.g. DIVA tests). New developments in science and technology (e.g. genomics, artificial intelligence) enable a fresh approach to vaccine and diagnostic development.

Proposals should address, for terrestrial livestock and relevant wildlife, improvements in vaccine technologies (e.g. adjuvants, stability and administration), products (e.g. new/improved vaccines, vaccines addressing multiple pathogens), underpinning knowledge (virulence factors, infection and protection mechanisms, protective antigens necessary for effective vaccine development) and related diagnostics, and look into the feasibility of vaccine production based on existing or novel vaccine platforms. Use of artificial intelligence to decipher target antigens is encouraged.

Diagnostics for infectious diseases in terrestrial livestock and related domains is recommended, for instance to set animal-specific clinical breakpoints for susceptibility of key veterinary pathogens for which disease-specific breakpoints are unavailable and generic breakpoints based on antimicrobial concentrations in serum are not relevant. Point-of-care and multi-pathogen diagnostic tools are particularly helpful for strengthening surveillance and capacity to respond to threats.

The choice of infectious agents / diseases should take into account their importance for EU policy and regulation, e.g. by virtue of being responsible for epizootic diseases such as African swine fever, African horse sickness, or being priority zoonotic diseases, contributing to anti-microbial resistance, or having serious socio-economic impacts more generally. Proposals may use priorities identified under OIE<sup>154</sup>, in EU animal health law, or by the

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[https://www.oie.int/fileadmin/SST/adhocreports/Diseases%20for%20which%20Vaccines%20could%20reduce%20Antimicrobial%20Use/AN/AHG\\_AMUR\\_Vaccines\\_Apr2015.pdf](https://www.oie.int/fileadmin/SST/adhocreports/Diseases%20for%20which%20Vaccines%20could%20reduce%20Antimicrobial%20Use/AN/AHG_AMUR_Vaccines_Apr2015.pdf) and [https://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/International\\_Standard\\_Setting/docs/pdf/SCAD/A\\_SCAD\\_Sep2018.pdf](https://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/International_Standard_Setting/docs/pdf/SCAD/A_SCAD_Sep2018.pdf) (annex8 p;46)

SCAR Collaborative Working Group on Animal Health and Welfare<sup>155</sup>, Discontools<sup>156</sup>, or the STAR-IDAZ International Research Consortium<sup>157</sup>.

Participation of industry is highly recommended.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

International research cooperation with institutions outside the EU is welcome insofar as it brings clear added knowledge, value and expertise to the project and maximises the impact.

Proposed research should take into account other EU funded projects, including those funded under ICRAD ERA-NET<sup>158</sup>.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-07: Research & innovation roadmap for blockchain technologies in the agri-food sector**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  Legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action.

**Expected Outcome:** In line with the farm to fork strategy and the headline ambitions of a ‘digital age’ and ‘economy that works for people’, leaving no one behind, the successful proposals will support increased traceability and transparency in food supply chains and support the implementation of sustainability schemes. They will therefore contribute to the ambition of developing sustainable, productive and climate-neutral, biodiversity-friendly, and resilient farming systems providing consumers with affordable, safe, healthy and sustainable food, minimising pressure on ecosystems, improving public health and generating fair economic returns for farmers through the exploration and development potential of the use of blockchain in the agri-food sector.

<sup>155</sup> [https://www.scar-cwg-ahw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Final-Report-CWG-AHW-CASA\\_updated-EU-AH-SRA.pdf](https://www.scar-cwg-ahw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Final-Report-CWG-AHW-CASA_updated-EU-AH-SRA.pdf)

<sup>156</sup> [www.discontools.eu](http://www.discontools.eu)

<sup>157</sup> [www.star-idaz.net](http://www.star-idaz.net)

<sup>158</sup> <https://www.icrad.eu/>

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- enhanced transparency and traceability in agri-food supply chains, including “green supply chains” through blockchain technologies;
- contributing to increasing competitiveness and market power of producers, including through smart contracts;
- reduce transaction costs and administrative burdens in the field of agri-food management for public and private actors through blockchain technologies and dedicated tools;
- capacity building in Research & Innovation (Infrastructure), in the agri-food sector and public administration for the development, assessment and application of blockchain technologies in the field of agri-food;
- excellence in research and innovation in blockchain technologies in the agri-food sector in Europe through networking of actors and initiatives.

Scope: The potential of blockchain technologies across sectors and fields of application has been widely acknowledged and is driven in private and public domains. Also in the area of agri-food, blockchain technologies have raised interest, but are not yet applied in mainstream mode. On the one hand, the area of agri-food induces special challenges to the application of blockchain technologies, such as the nature of products; on the other hand, the sector is predestinated for tracking technologies. As pointed out in the European Commission’s Green Deal, and the farm to fork strategy in particular, transparency and sustainability efforts in the food supply chain are to be increased and power between actors to be balanced. Blockchain technologies can not only support traceability ambitions, but also support the implementation of organic or other (sustainability-related) labelling schemes as well as sustainable finance and climate mitigation and/or biodiversity-friendly schemes, and smart contracts, track information for consumers, and reduce administrative burdens for the public administration

A new level of ambition is needed to tackle research and innovation (R&I) in the field of blockchain technologies in the agri-food sector, thereby generating the necessary knowledge and solutions to enhance the development and application of blockchain technologies in the agri-food sector in the private and public domain and develop the relevant capacities to foster this R&I objective in the short, medium, and long term. Experiences from the application of blockchain technologies in others sectors and areas are to be capitalised.

Activities should create an effective framework for action, which is expected to allow pooling resources, coordinating efforts and developing a coherent portfolio of R&I activities in the wider area of blockchain technologies in the field of agri-food following an integrative and de-fragmented systemic approach. This should include:

- mapping and assessing existing blockchain technologies related European and international R&I activities and promoting their coordination in the field of agri-food; where relevant, initiatives and approaches developed in / for other sectors / fields of

application with the potential of being transferred to the agri-food sector might be mapped as well;

- assessing the extent of application of blockchain technologies in the agri-food sector in the EU and globally including the extent to which blockchain technologies meet EU and international regulatory requirements, and draw lessons learnt, benefits and shortcomings/ disadvantages;
- analysing the needs for R&I on blockchain technologies in agri-food as expressed through stakeholder consultation and on-going research projects;
- identifying gaps, priority areas and types of action for intervention;
- proposing methodologies to monitor and review a portfolio of blockchain technologies related R&I activities in the field of agri-food.

Funded activities are expected to increase European capacities (technical, organisational) for implementing a major R&I programme on blockchain technologies in the agri-food sector. This results in:

- a roadmap for R&I on blockchain technologies in the agri-food sector in Europe developed following the concept of "co-creation" with a wide range of stakeholders, including the private and public sector as well as consumer representatives;
- improved coordination with existing activities in Europe and globally, thereby raising visibility and effectiveness of R&I funding going beyond EU-funded initiatives and including e.g. also nationally or regionally or privately supported actions;
- identification of potential "flagships" for testing and demonstrating solutions on key actions from a producer, processor, consumer, investor and public administration perspective under consideration of experiences gained/ approaches developed in other sectors;
- informed development of policies, supported development of relevant policies, and facilitated harmonisation and coordination between decision-making levels.

Proposals should cover all of the following aspects:

- development of innovative, cost-effective and resource-efficient blockchain-based approaches (including systemic approaches) to increase the traceability of agricultural products taking local, regional, national, European and global supply chains as reference point considering private and open blockchain networks.
- development of innovative approaches reflecting on the environmental, socio-economic and practicability implications of the application of different blockchain approaches considering at least the situation in the EU and developing countries.

- giving special attention to the capacities of (small) farmers and processors and actors in third countries in the deployment of blockchain technologies, as well as to private and public (sustainability-related) labelling schemes, organic and climate- and biodiversity-friendly production, sustainable finance, food safety, food safety emergencies, detection of non-authorised substances, border controls and consumer benefits, and fraud prevention.
- identification of possible new application areas for blockchain technologies in the area of agri-food; possible spill-over effects to related application fields, such as bio-based value chains.
- development of innovative resource efficient approaches to reduce transaction costs and administrative burden for producers and the administration (for organic products).
- development of suitable R&I programmes to deliver the knowledge, technologies and practices needed to achieve the aforementioned expected outcomes.
- establishment of links to relevant actors and organisations, including to Digital Innovation Hubs, the European Blockchain Partnership and the EU Blockchain Observatory.

Proposals are expected to demonstrate how to liaise with Cluster 4 activities as regards the development of cross-sectoral technological developments of blockchain solutions and reflect on their potential for the agri-food sector, e.g. in the fields of blockchain-based Internet of Things network management, authentication and access controls methods and novel decentralised analytics.

International cooperation is strongly encouraged.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-08: Uncovering lock-ins and levers to encourage farmers to move to and stay in sustainable, climate-neutral and biodiversity-friendly farming systems: from experiments to systemic mechanisms**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the

	consortium selected for funding.
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Expected Outcome: In line with the Green Deal, notably the farm to fork and biodiversity strategies, climate action, zero pollution ambition and the common agricultural policy (CAP), the successful proposals should support the development of policies, business models and market conditions that enable sustainable, productive and climate-smart agricultural systems. The farming systems should provide consumers with healthy and sustainable food affordable for all, improving public health, minimising pressure on ecosystems, enhancing biodiversity, and generating fair economic returns for farmers.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- improved understanding of challenges and opportunities for the development of sustainable, climate-neutral, biodiversity-friendly farming systems at the farm and landscape levels;
- improved understanding of farmers' individual (behavioural/decision-making) and systemic 'lock-ins' and 'levers' for moving to and staying in sustainable, climate-neutral and biodiversity-friendly farming systems;
- improved understanding of consumers' behaviour (decision-making) and market segmentation with regard to buying food from sustainable, climate-neutral and biodiversity-friendly farming systems;
- improved understanding of behaviour (decision-making) of upstream and downstream operators in agri-food value chains and other relevant actors across food systems with regard to hindering/facilitating transition to sustainable, climate-neutral and biodiversity-friendly production and consumption systems;
- better design and implementation of relevant policies, in particular the CAP, the farm to fork and biodiversity strategies, that effectively incentivise large-scale and long-term behavioural shifts by farmers to sustainable, climate-neutral and biodiversity-friendly farming systems;
- improved farm advice, business strategies and relationships building on common interests among relevant food systems operators and actors across sectors, helping farmers to produce in a more sustainable manner, contributing to climate neutrality and reversing biodiversity decline; and
- improved capacities of researchers in behavioural and experimental research, and systems thinking.

Scope: Although the EU has made strides in improving the sustainability of agriculture, substantial efforts are still needed to achieve the ambitious targets of the European Green Deal, in particular the farm to fork strategy and the objectives of the future CAP. Many

emerging approaches, such as agroecology<sup>159</sup> (including organic farming), etc., have the potential to make farming systems more sustainable in climate, environmental, economic and social terms. However, multiple ‘lock-ins’ are preventing farmers from scaling the transition up and out to more sustainable production systems. Policy and business shifts are needed to help them escape from the ‘lock-ins’ and change at the requisite pace. An in-depth understanding of farmers’ ‘lock-ins’ and ‘levers’ is key to spurring large-scale and lasting shifts to sustainable farming systems. Behavioural and experimental research that unpacks the decision-making involved in adopting sustainable practices holds significant potential when it comes to identifying ‘lock-ins’ and ‘levers’, thereby improving the effectiveness of the CAP and contributing to the successful implementation of the farm to fork strategy. In addition to unpacking the pieces of the behavioural (decision-making) puzzle, it is important to compile a wider, more comprehensive picture of the food systems in which farmers operate and of their governance, structures, mechanisms and dynamics that lock them into unsustainable practices or incentivise them to take and stay on a sustainable path.

Proposals should investigate farmers’ decision-making (behaviour) and the broader food systems in which they have to operate (and/or create collective action), so as to uncover what locks them into unsustainable practices and what incentivises them to move to and stay in sustainable production systems. Attention should be paid to the full range of decision-making factors (e.g., behavioural, economic/regulatory, knowledge, biophysical, gender, cultural, etc.) and food systems’ structures, mechanisms and dynamics (e.g., feedback loops, trade-offs and synergies, etc.).

Proposals should take a comprehensive behavioural approach and investigate proximal and distal factors to understand farmers’ behaviour (decision-making) better, in order to inform the design and implementation of policies (in particular the CAP) and the European Green Deal initiatives (in particular farm to fork and biodiversity strategies). Extensive experimental research should cover, for instance (but not limited to) ‘nudges’, voluntary schemes or mandatory regulation, to fill gaps in policy-oriented research and support effective, evidence-based policy design and implementation.

It is also important to analyse behaviour (decision-making) of other food system actors and their role in/influence on hindering or incentivising farmers’ decisions as to whether to adopt and maintain sustainable practices in the long-term. To this end, proposals should thoroughly analyse consumers’ preferences (habits, choices), decision-making and shopping behaviour, in particular looking at market segmentation and willingness to pay *versus* buying acts, in various contexts. This knowledge should be shared broadly with farmers, so that they can respond better to changes in consumer demand, which is a strategic CAP objective. In addition, proposals should explore the behaviour (decision-making) and actions of downstream and upstream operators in agri-food value chains (e.g., input industry, food companies, retailers, hospitality industry, etc.) and other relevant food system actors that lock farmers in unsustainable practices or enable/encourage them to adopt sustainable practices and stimulate or hinder consumer demand for more sustainable food.

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<sup>159</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/i9037en/i9037en.pdf>



With an interdisciplinary lens, proposals should also consider the ‘whole-systems’ in which farmers operate and analyse the systemic mechanisms, structures and dynamics that lock farmers (and landowners) into unsustainable states and ways to break away, build collective interest for and incentivise them to move to and remain in sustainable farming systems.

Concurrent research should be conducted using the same (or similar) methods in a variety of settings representative of the diversity in agri-food systems and conditions in the EU and Associated Countries (e.g., a wide range of farm typologies, diverse farming systems, including (but not limited to) various agroecological approaches and organic farming, sectors/value chains, collective actions, regions and communities, etc.) in order to be able to derive meaningful conclusions on the general validity of decision-making (behavioural) factors and systemic insights across countries and contexts.

Proposals should also explore and propose ways to engage diverse food system operators and actors (e.g., through innovative policies, improved farmers’ organisation, social innovation or new business models, etc.), in enabling farmers to move to and stay in sustainable farming systems.

Based on the research results, proposals should formulate and disseminate widely to relevant actors:

1. policy recommendations and innovative policy options, in particular for the CAP, environmental policies, and relevant Green Deal initiatives; and
2. business strategies (including the identification of end markets for sustainable products on a cross-sectoral basis);

for encouraging farmers to lastingly adopt sustainable practices and progressively raise their sustainability performance.

The possible participation/contribution of the JRC in the project would consist of being involved in the selection of policies, business models and market conditions to be tested, the design of the experiments and the formulation of the policy recommendations.

Proposals should build and expand on the achievements of past and current research and innovation (R&I) projects, e.g., those funded under topic SFS-29-2017<sup>160</sup>. Collaboration with future projects to be selected under topic HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-09 is encouraged. This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-09: Towards an EU approach to assess and internalise positive and negative externalities of food for incentivising sustainable choices**

<b>Specific conditions</b>
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<sup>160</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/sfs-29-2017>

<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <p>The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p>

**Expected Outcome:** In line with the European Green Deal, in particular the farm to fork and biodiversity strategies, climate action and zero pollution ambition, the successful proposals should help to speed up the transition to sustainable, biodiversity-friendly, zero pollution, climate-neutral and resilient farming and food systems on land and at sea. They should do so by supporting the development and implementation of policies, business models and market conditions that better internalise the external costs and benefits of food, thereby make the most sustainable food the most available and affordable for consumers, while generating fair economic returns in the supply chain, in particular for primary producers and SMEs.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- better understanding by policymakers, businesses and other actors in farming and food systems on land and at sea, of challenges and opportunities in relation to the internalisation of climate, environmental, social and health externalities of food at various levels (e.g., policy, product, organisational, farm, and investment) and in different contexts;
- well-informed policy at local, regional, national and EU levels on the possible ways of steering primary producers', businesses' and consumers' decision-making towards sustainable options by assessing and valuing the externalities of food (including using subsidies, taxes, incentives, etc.);
- widespread use by policymakers, farmers and businesses of improved and harmonised approaches to identify, measure and value the positive and negative climate, biodiversity, environmental, social and health impacts of food; and
- better internalisation of the positive and negative climate, biodiversity, environmental, social and health externalities of food, so that the most sustainable and healthy food

becomes the most affordable and available for consumers, while generating fair economic returns in the supply chain, in particular for primary producers and SMEs.

Scope: Better internalisation of positive and negative climate, biodiversity, environmental, social and health externalities of food has emerged in the policy debates as one of many options for improving the availability and affordability of sustainable food for consumers and generating fair economic returns for sustainable producers. However, the advantages and disadvantages of the internalisation externalities of food are widely discussed. In addition, the attribution, assessment and valuation of these externalities are complex and challenging tasks. Interest and research around the internalisation of externalities of food have been growing in recent years. A number of initiatives and collaborations are building at various levels, from local to global. Accordingly, various frameworks, methods and approaches to operationalise the internalisation of externalities related to food have been developed and researched (e.g., true cost accounting). Nevertheless, the concept remains more theoretical than practical and it requires development and adaptation over time.

Proposals should follow a ‘multi-actor approach’, pilot a ‘community of practice’ and convene policy dialogues engaging researchers, policymakers and other relevant actors from across farming and food systems on land and at sea (e.g., farmers, fishers, downstream and upstream businesses, retailers, hospitality operators, consumers, financial institutes, NGOs, etc.) that are involved on the ground in identifying, measuring and putting a monetary value on the positive and negative climate, biodiversity, environmental, social and health externalities of food. A balanced coverage of the EU contexts and the inclusion of a wide range of viewpoints (i.e., from ‘believers’ to ‘sceptics’) and relevant projects/initiatives at different levels, from local to global, are essential.

Based on an in-depth review of the state-of-the-art (including scientific evidence, diverse projects and initiatives, and, for example, existing natural capital accounting), proposals should scrutinise various approaches to:

- identifying, assessing and monetarising positive and negative climate, biodiversity, environmental, social and health externalities of food; and
- measuring degrees of internalisation (i.e., what parts of various costs and benefits are already internalised in the current context).

Proposals should explore possible ways to improve, harmonise and operationalise these approaches in practice. They should also map and analyse gaps in existing databases, and collect data needed to assess the externalities, in such a way that they can be used for several purposes (e.g., footprint analysis). Proposals may identify a comprehensive set of case studies (e.g., based on a comprehensive ‘hotspot’ analysis) and demonstrate the usefulness of various approaches and databases in practice.

Proposals should also identify various possible strategies for elevating internalisation of externalities and embedding it in decision-making of primary producers, businesses and consumers. They should analyse these strategies in order to inform policymakers and

businesses about the various possible options (e.g., taxing negative externalities and/or rewarding positive externalities across food value chains, from input industry through production to consumption) and their effectiveness, costs, benefits and risks.

All work should cover a wide range of food products sourced from different types of farming systems on land and at sea (including agroecological and organic), supply chains, processes, contexts and levels (e.g. farm, product, policy, investment, organisational, etc.). Attention should also be paid, *inter alia*, to legal issues (especially in relation to fiscal policy) and distributional effects, the international dimension (e.g., how to deal with feed and food produced outside the EU) and the whole spectrum of impacts along value chains (e.g., in relation to deforestation, land-grabs and rights violations, leakage of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, etc.), in line with the principles of due diligence and systems thinking.

Policy recommendations and business strategies should be derived from the insights generated, and then widely communicated and disseminated. Proposals should encourage networking, sharing of knowledge and good practices, as well as building the necessary expertise and competencies among policymakers and businesses, including primary producers and SMEs. As a result, taking into account the various approaches and viewpoints, a consensus should be reached in the policy debate on the feasibility, implications and next steps for developing and implementing a harmonised EU approach for assessing and internalising externalities of food. Depending on the results, proposals may also develop an action plan for policymakers and businesses, and a roadmap for future research and innovation (R&I) to operationalise in practice the assessment and internalisation of externalities of food.

The possible participation of the JRC in the project would consist of a contribution to a holistic assessment, including footprints (e.g., with the MAGNET model). This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines. In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

### **Enabling sustainable fisheries and aquaculture**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-10: Sea to fork transparency and consumer engagement**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.

<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal objectives, the farm to fork strategy for a fair healthy and environmentally friendly food system, the EU bioeconomy strategy and blue growth strategy, the successful proposal will support consumer engagement to a more sustainable, environmentally friendly, inclusive, safe and healthy seafood consumption through innovative information strategies and tools.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Sustainably fished or farmed nutritious seafood with a low ecological and carbon footprint is well-communicated, well-accepted and preferred by consumers.
- Identification of key bottlenecks to achieve a fully transparent seafood value chain in Europe, including the assessment of criteria for consumers' non-acceptance.
- A lasting cooperation on data and information sharing between fishers, aquaculture producers, industry, retail sector, public authorities, scientific or knowledge centres, digitalisation companies and consumers, implementing innovative tools, including labelling in support of and complying with the current relevant legal framework and the future EU framework for food sustainability labelling. Full life cycle analyses that include environmental impact with an extended variety of monitored and communicated indicators on the environmental and climate footprint of seafood products supported by digital transition.
- Growth, in the medium and long-term, of sustainable aquaculture in the EU and increased competitiveness of European seafood in global markets.
- Increase public awareness and education to reaching and engaging more citizens to achieve a carbon footprint reduction in the seafood supply chain.
- Social innovation for short-chain slow seafood solutions. Promotion of traditional or indigenous knowledge and skills or cultural culinary heritage and short-food chains with potential integration in ecotourism.

Scope: Transparency in the seafood chain is fundamental to create trust and improve acceptance by the consumers. A wealth of information is already available on seafood supplies to guide consumers and retailers in their purchasing choice. However, knowing when

and where fish are caught in the vastness of the ocean is challenging and requires innovative and cost-efficient approaches. Additionally, farmed fish and shellfish grow in relatively controlled conditions, but producers do not always find the way to demonstrate this benefit. A lot of seafood is consumed processed and this adds downstream steps before reaching consumers' table through logistics and retail. Often, consumers are faced with fish and shellfish of little-known origin with little information about fishing gear, feed, welfare issues, processing and transport details. This adds to an already existing important lack of trust in seafood, especially farmed seafood. Therefore, the level of awareness and demand among consumers and retailers is still far from sufficient to achieve a fully sustainable seafood sector and to efficiently promote consumption of the products with nutritional benefits and the lowest ecological and carbon footprint.

Research in this topic is expected to contribute to improving our understanding and developing new approaches and tools (e.g. new methods to trace origin, interoperable data technologies) to provide fully traceable records on how seafood is produced, processed and transported. The environmental performance of seafood production and consumption needs to be based on a complete set of criteria that can be efficiently ranked, monitored and integrated in transparent labelling of seafood in support of and complying with the current relevant legal framework and the future EU framework for food sustainability labelling. Issues of biology, feeding, disease, pathology, environmental sustainability (including issues related to organic aquaculture) among others should be addressed.

Innovations should lead to a change in the seafood consumption behaviour towards a preference for nutritious and sustainable seafood with a low ecological and carbon footprint.

Proposals should significantly increase the visibility of sustainably fished or farmed seafood and the engagement of consumers with these products through improved monitoring approaches, analytical methods and communication and marketing strategies, and the development and optimization of web-based and digital tools. Traceability should be ensured. Moreover, the tool can show information on the seafood species life cycle, nutritional values and the fishing or production and processing methods.

The use of social innovations for short-chain slow food solutions to reach and engage more citizens should be considered. Underused caught or produced species with very low ecological or carbon footprint can also be promoted. Traditional or indigenous knowledge and skills or cultural culinary heritage should be taken into account where relevant and appropriately assessed for environmental and food safety, and integrated in ecotourism developments. Special attention should be paid to the younger generation.

Cooperation activities with projects funded under other seafood-related topics are encouraged. Engaging with managing authorities of European Structural and Investment Funds during the project would help increase implementation of the project outcomes.

Active co-creation with stakeholders and end-users, including from third countries that export seafood to the EU is also key for the achievement of traceability in all seafood consumed in the EU.

International co-operation with partners from non-associated third countries is strongly encouraged as a win-win scenario, while contributing to the European competitiveness and resilience.

Where relevant, proposals may seek synergies and capitalise on the results of projects funded under Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, its continuation European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, and other funding streams.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines. Social innovation<sup>161</sup> is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-11: Digital transition supporting inspection and control for sustainable fisheries**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

**Expected Outcome:** In line with the European Green Deal objectives, Common Fisheries Policy, the farm to fork strategy for a fair healthy and environmentally friendly food system, and the blue growth strategy, the successful proposal will support better fisheries management through data and technological development.

Project results are expected to contribute to some or all of the following expected outcomes:

- Advancing the digital transition for fisheries inspection and control and deliver data for fisheries science, management and monitoring in a cost-efficient way to fully achieve the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).
- Delivering innovative technological solutions such as machine learning and artificial intelligence and advance sensing technologies to support biologically complex data analysis
- Devise new monitoring and control strategies to stop illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) and promote sustainable fisheries in the EU and globally.

<sup>161</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/policy/innovation/social\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/policy/innovation/social_en)

- Create a new generation of jobs in the EU requiring digital and high-tech know-how applied to fisheries.
- Improve the professional skills and competences of those working and being trained to work within the blue economy.

Scope: The CFP aims to ensure that fisheries are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable and provide a source of healthy food for EU citizens. The CFP adopts a cautious approach, which recognises the impact of human activity on all components of the ecosystem. It seeks to make fishing fleets more selective in what they catch, to phase out the practice of discarding unwanted fish and to fight IUU vigorously. These illegal practices deplete fish stocks, destroy marine habitats, distort competition, put honest fishers at an unjust disadvantage and weaken coastal communities, particularly in developing countries. The EU is working to close the loopholes that allow illegal operators to profit from their activities. To be successful, the EU needs to have in place a technologically advanced and effective fisheries control system. Fighting IUU requires global cooperation, namely through regional fisheries organisations, to foster synergies by adopting innovative control technologies and data standards by fishing, coastal, port and consumer states.

Despite the advances attained since its inception, important challenges remain to ensure that the CFP aims are fully met. The availability and quality of fisheries data should be improved and more needs to be done to ensure that these data are shared systematically between all relevant entities, including fisheries scientists. In the EU, current control measures are only partially effective at ensuring the enforcement of the landing obligation, and of fully documented fisheries more generally. Accurate recording and accountability of by-catches of sensitive species, such as birds and mammals, and of marine biological resources are essential for an ecosystem approach to fisheries and for a sound stock assessment, which are in turn the foundation of responsible and sustainable fisheries management. The control and monitoring of vessels operating outside EU waters (long-distance fleet) as well as the small-scale fleet and recreational fisheries need particular attention.

Moreover, in order to ensure that EU fish imports come from sustainable fisheries and to promote the eradication of IUU worldwide it is necessary to cooperate with third-countries and international organisations to strengthen and promote the use of similar cost-efficient control technologies and data standards. The digital revolution has to contribute to ensure accurate catch registration data, including from weighing at landing, the verification of measures on fishing capacity applicable to vessels engine power, better traceability of fisheries products and improved catch certification schemes.

Digitisation and advanced tools applied to fisheries, such as Remote Electronic Monitoring Systems (REMs), artificial intelligence, machine learning tools, sensor data and high-resolution satellite imagery, have enormous potential to optimise fishing operations and enhance our ability to collect and analyse data, as well as improve monitoring and control capabilities and ultimately support a sustainable management of marine biological resources.



Research and innovation under this topic should review existing and develop new technological solutions to improve: (i) detection of illegal discards; (ii) checks on weighing, weighing systems and accurate catch registration; (iii) data management and reporting and third-party reporting based on remote electronic monitoring systems on vessels; (iv) risk management applied to fisheries; (v) monitoring and control of small-scale, recreational and long-distance fleet, (vi) electronic marking of fishing gear, (vii) identifying IUU activities as well as fisheries products stemming from those activities, (viii) promoting data standards and protection, remote access to data and automatic data exchange protocols, and (ix) innovative tools to assess compliance with technical requirements and measures applicable to fishing vessels, such as continuous engine power monitoring.

Research under this topic should be cross-disciplinary bringing together marine scientists, maritime (including fisheries) surveillance and control authorities, IT specialists and governance experts.

Where relevant, proposals may seek synergies and capitalise on the results of projects funded under Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, its continuation European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, and other funding streams.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**Transforming food systems for health, sustainability and inclusion**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-12: Filling knowledge gaps on the nutritional, safety, allergenicity and environmental assessment of alternative proteins and dietary shift**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 11.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 11.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.  The following additional eligibility criteria apply:

	The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
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Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal priorities, the farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environment-friendly food system, and the EU's climate ambition for 2030 and 2050, the successful proposal will support R&I to promote the production, provision and safe consumption of alternative sources of protein, and dietary shifts towards sustainable healthy nutrition, contributing to the transformation of food systems to deliver co-benefits for climate (mitigation and adaptation), biodiversity, environmental sustainability and circularity, sustainable healthy nutrition and safe food, food poverty reduction, empowerment of communities, and thriving businesses.

The farm to fork strategy states that '[a] key area of research will relate to (...) increasing the availability and source of alternative proteins such as plant, microbial, marine and insect-based proteins and meat substitutes'.

While information already exists on the environmental and climate-related benefits of a dietary shift to alternative proteins, more R&I is needed to obtain a comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of the environmental footprint and sustainability performance of alternatives (e.g. plant-based, microbe-based, ocean-based (i.e. fish, algae, invertebrates), fungus-based, insect-based, cultured meat) compared to conventional sources of protein (e.g. meat and dairy) and dietary shifts. There is also a need for further research on the positive and negative impacts of alternative protein sources in European diets on human health (e.g. food allergies) and their bioavailability (along with other characteristics such as structure, colour, taste and flavour). It is presumed that a shift to alternative proteins should lead to healthier and overall more sustainable diets, but this depends on the nature of the shift (e.g. shifting from processed meat to another nutrient-poor, highly processed protein source might not provide the desired health benefits).

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- informing a systemic approach to integrated food policy development and informing sectoral policies (e.g. on food safety, public health, agriculture, aquaculture and the environment) through additional, up-to-date information and knowledge on alternative sources of protein and dietary shift; and
- providing solutions and assessing their potential for fighting climate change (through adaptation and mitigation), halting biodiversity loss and improving ecosystem services, promoting the circularity of the food system and improving people's health and well-being through more nutritious, healthier and overall sustainable food systems and food choices.

Scope: Many studies (e.g. IPCC, EAT-Lancet) have highlighted the large environmental impact of traditional livestock production and consumption of products thereof, and the need for and benefits of a dietary shift to alternative protein sources. For example, switching from meat and dairy to alternative sources of protein could lead to savings in land use (plant

alternatives need less land per unit of protein; aquatic animals generally have a high production per area), better animal welfare and less deforestation for food production. Excessive consumption of livestock-derived products could also lead to a decline in health. The World Health Organization (WHO) has classified processed meat as carcinogenic to humans and red meat as probably carcinogenic to humans. An Oxford University model specifies that switching to diets made of alternative protein sources (e.g. algae, insects, plants, fungi) reduces diet-related mortality by 5-7%, due to increased consumption of dietary fibres<sup>162</sup>. However, a concern regarding novel foods (especially those containing proteins) is the likelihood of food allergies.

Proposals are expected to address the following:

- consider all alternative sources of protein (e.g. plant-based, microbe-based, ocean-based (i.e. fish, algae, invertebrates), fungus-based, insect-based, cultured meat), including their processing, and avoid focusing on only one, so as to enable comparison;
- fill knowledge gaps and improve our understanding of the positive and negative impacts of each type of alternative protein and the overall dietary shift with respect to the environment, natural resources, biodiversity and climate (considering global aspects, pedo-climatic and biogeographical conditions, pollution pressure and trade issues);
- fill knowledge gaps on the characteristics of each type of alternative protein, including nutritional quality (e.g. bioavailability, the quality of the protein itself and of combined protein sources), alone and in the context of its introduction in European diets (taking into account the cultural aspects of diets and national dietary advice in the EU);
- fill knowledge gaps on the health impact of alternative proteins and overall dietary shift in the European Union, in particular for those sources of proteins for which limited information on health impacts is available, such as (but not limited to) invertebrates or insects-based proteins (e.g. allergies, compliance with nutrient-based and food-based dietary guidelines and recommended dietary patterns), while considering gender aspects, and other safety aspects (e.g. not cytotoxic, no toxic aggregates or excessive amount of toxic substances);
- conduct a comparative systemic analysis of conventional and alternative proteins. New Product Environmental Footprint (PEF)-based categories should be created and health effects should be included in diet assessment frameworks. Non-linear effects should be studied, with regard to both consumption and production;
- highlight the need for new future-proof technologies and anticipate potential issues in relation to resource availability, pollution and societal acceptability;
- create or contribute to a data space to gather knowledge, information and results of studies, and share them openly (open science) among research communities, interested

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<sup>162</sup> World Economic Forum, Oxford Martin School, Oxford University (2019), *Meat: The future of series – Alternative proteins*.

parties and the public (dietary data hub). Seek interactions and complementarities with the data space for R&I and the European Open Science Cloud, and contribute to increasing the level of FAIRness (Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability and Re-usability) of dietary data;

- clearly explain how they will contribute to the farm to fork objectives and deliver co-benefits on each of the Food 2030 priorities: nutrition for sustainable healthy diets, climate and environment, circularity and resource efficiency, innovation and empowering communities (e.g. meeting the needs, values and expectations of society in a responsible and ethical way); and
- implement the multi-actor approach by involving a wide range of food system actors and conducting inter-disciplinary research. Proposals should also promote international cooperation. Where relevant, activities should build and expand on the results of past and ongoing research projects (especially the four projects funded under topic *LC-SFS-17-2019: Alternative proteins for food and feed*). Projects should have a clear plan as to how they will collaborate with other projects selected under this topic (if funding of more than one project is possible) and topic *HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-02: Developing sustainable and competitive land-based protein crop systems and value chains*. They should participate in joint activities, workshops, focus groups or social labs, and common communication and dissemination activities, and show potential for upscaling. Applicants should plan the necessary budget to cover these activities. The possible participation of the JRC in the projects will also ensure that the proposed approach will be compatible with and/or improve existing databases and tools used at the European Commission with regard to the environmental aspects, and ensure open access to data.
- This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-13: Evidence-based decision-making to change social norms towards zero food waste**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 6.00 and 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply:

	The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 (according to the activity) by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal priorities, the farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system, and the EU's climate ambition for 2030 and 2050, the successful proposal will support R&I to prevent and reduce food loss and waste, contributing to the transformation of food systems to deliver co-benefits for climate (mitigation and adaptation), biodiversity, environmental sustainability and circularity, dietary shift, sustainable healthy nutrition and safe food, food poverty reduction and the empowerment of communities.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all the following outcomes:

- More timely and responsive decision-making on food waste prevention and reduction by any actor seeking to implement a food waste prevention or reduction initiative, based on new, comprehensive and easily accessible evidence of the impact and cost-effectiveness of different measures and behaviours at different levels and across different sectors, including consumers;
- Food companies engage more and more effectively in food waste prevention and reduction activities.

Scope: Food loss and waste has negative impacts on society, the environment and the economy: it contributes to food insecurity and hinders nutrition; generates greenhouse gas emissions and creates pressure on land and water, including deforestation, degradation of natural habitats and biodiversity loss; it is also responsible for great economic losses. Such negative impacts are exacerbated in times of crisis (e.g. COVID-19), when food supply-chain disruptions generate additional food losses and wastes.

Reducing the amount of food intended for human consumption that is eventually lost or wasted represents a complex challenge, as it involves changing established business practices and people's habits, while guaranteeing the safety of food. As demonstrated by UNEP Food Waste Index Report 2021<sup>163</sup>, food is wasted mainly towards the end of the supply chain (particularly at consumption level, in households and food services). Here, consumer behaviour and the lack of awareness and coordination between actors in the supply chain play a key role. An additional issue directly linked with loss and waste is the amount of packaging that is eventually discarded with – or without – the food.

Successful proposals are expected to address two complementary areas:

Area A:

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<sup>163</sup> <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/unep-food-waste-index-report-2021>

Developing a comprehensive evidence-based analysis of food loss and waste prevention actions, with the overall aim of informing decision-making. In particular, this should involve an impact assessment and cost-benefit analysis of existing food waste prevention actions in the EU and its associated countries, and of their economic, environmental and social impacts. This should include developing a database of actions and tools for preventing and reducing food waste and loss, which will help inform future interventions by different stakeholders and promote replicability across countries.

The development of sector-specific guidance sharing the key success factors, barriers and data for an effective prevention and reduction of food losses and waste is also recommended.

Area B:

Supporting research (i.e. development of an evidence base) and innovation (with a special focus on open and social innovation) on existing social norms responsible for food waste, so as to foster appropriate changes in consumer behaviour and business practices (e.g. marketing standards, retail and trade practices, restaurant portion sizes).

This will involve gathering new evidence on the feasibility of innovations that are tailored to specific contexts.

On consumer behaviour, the investigation should include analysis of current trends and correlations as regards:

- Food waste and convenience food (i.e. ready to eat);
- Food waste at household level and food services (i.e. eating out/take away);
- Food waste, obesity and malnutrition;
- Food waste and crisis response policies (e.g. case of COVID-19).

As regards food businesses, this activity should support innovative and/or improved business practices in large companies and SMEs that:

- Effectively signal the value of food, so as to reduce food waste;
- Redesign portion sizes to reduce food waste;
- Operationalize food waste reduction and prevention through internal corporate policies and business strategies with supply chain actors.

The expected behavioural change should also be supported by new or specifically adapted technologies in both of the following areas: date marking and sustainable and smart food packaging.

Successful proposals should build on the work of the Commission's Joint Research Centre in support of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste, and be in line with the

Commission’s environmental footprint method<sup>164, 165</sup>, especially as regards to the life-cycle assessment.

Successful proposals should deliver on food waste reduction and prevention across the food system. They should explain how they will deliver co-benefits to the Food 2030 priorities (nutrition for sustainable healthy diets, climate and environment, circularity and resource efficiency, and innovation and empowerment of communities).

The required multi-actor approach (see eligibility conditions) will be implemented by conducting inter- and trans-disciplinary research and involving a wide range of food system actors, with special attention to consumers and civil society organisations.

Proposals should develop compelling communication products, potentially two-way communication activities for each relevant food system actor and an innovative science education package for schools. They are encouraged to build on past or ongoing EU-funded research and collaborate with relevant initiatives, including the Commission’s Platform for Food Losses and Waste. They should set out a clear plan on how they will cluster with other proposals selected under this and any other relevant topic, e.g. by participating in joint activities, workshops, and common communication and dissemination activities.

Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

Proposals should address inequalities, be they due to gender, race or other social categories. This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-14: Microbes for healthy and sustainable food and diets**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 12.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the

<sup>164</sup> [JRC - Assessment of food waste prevention actions. Development of an evaluation framework to assess the performance of food waste prevention actions](#)

<sup>165</sup> [Calculator for impacts of food waste prevention actions](#)

	multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part. International organisations with headquarters in a Member State or associated country are exceptionally eligible for funding.
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Expected Outcome: The successful proposal will be in line with the European Green Deal priorities and the farm to fork strategy for a fair healthy and environmentally friendly food system, as well as with the EU's Climate ambition for 2030 and 2050. It will support R&I to foster advances in research related to microorganisms for safer, healthier and more environmentally friendly food processing. This is along with contributing to the transformation of food systems to deliver co-benefits for climate (mitigation and adaptation), biodiversity, environmental sustainability and circularity, dietary shift, sustainable healthy nutrition and safe food, food poverty reduction and empowerment of communities, and thriving businesses.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- A furthering of open access provision for the necessary standardisation, identification, and mapping techniques of existing and potential beneficial microorganisms, and microbial consortia for use in food processing, which providing an assessment of their benefits with respect to nutrition, health, food safety, circularity, and sustainability.
- Knowledge from the assessment of the economic, societal and environmental importance of fermented foods and of their role in transition from animal to vegetable proteins.
- Advanced knowledge on what can be considered a healthy human microbiota and the conditions (for example diet and treatments) under which this equilibrium is disrupted.
- Further knowledge on fermentation-based solutions for food products and processes, such as improved nutritional, structural, and functional properties, and enhanced food preservation.

Scope: There is evidence that beneficial bacteria and other microorganisms can lead to a healthy animal and human gut microbiome, that microbiomes can improve food quality and safety (incl. tailored food) as well as the nutritional value of aliments/food, contributing to more sustainable food systems. The rupture of the human microbiome symbiotic relationship could also be associated to more health disorders and the cause of chronic diseases, and that food is an essential lever to maintain symbiosis by promoting optimal intestinal microbial diversity and restoring healthy microbiome profiles and functionality. An expected outcome of this topic is the further scientific underpinning, verification and elucidation of these investigative pathways through evidence driven research and innovation.

In this context food based on microbial fermentation needs further investigation as it currently accounts for 5 to 40% of our diet (country depending) yet we still know little of its role in the human digestive system after ingestion. Further research should provide sustainable dietary strategies based on microbe-fermented foods aiming to improve human health and sustainability of dietary patterns, and help in determining any possible role in metabolic



disease control. Food fermented by microorganisms and food ingredients produced by them also have huge innovation potential, in particular for SMEs, for local development, and as a way of minimizing food waste from non-optimal raw material, waste products from food manufacturing, or seasonal overproduction.

Activities should develop applicable solutions, in particular for the food processing industry, and in the utilisation of fermentation potential. New products may seek EU market regulatory approval, thus proposals should consider and address relevant regulatory requirements as well as EFSA guidance documents for specific safety testing and risk assessment protocols.

Proposals are expected to address the following:

- Understand the interaction of microbial biodiversity, mechanisms between fermented foods, different types of food microbiomes, and the human microbiomes in order to determine the role of fermented food in nutrition, health and diet diversification.
- Develop applicable solutions for the food processing industry utilizing microbial potential in the production of food ingredients, and nutrients including formulation into food products.
- Develop new tests to evaluate the condition of the symbiosis between humans and microbiotas used routinely in pro- and diagnostics.
- Using microbes to reduce food packaging, food processing inputs (e.g.: energy, water), chemicals used in food (production), while ensuring the increased lifespan and safety of the products and the benefits to human and animal health.
- Activate societal engagement with relevant stakeholders (e.g. farmers, civil society organisations, regulatory bodies, citizens and media outlets) in order to ensure product acceptability and labelling in compliance with the relevant legal framework.

Proposals should explain how they will deliver co-benefits to the four Food 2030 priorities: nutrition for sustainable healthy diets, climate and environment, circularity and resource efficiency, innovation and empowerment of communities as well as those relevant to different socio-economic and cultural groups.

Proposals must implement the multi-actor approach by involving a wide diversity of food system actors and conducting inter- and trans-disciplinary research engaging consumers, consumer organizations and civil society organisations and including local and indigenous knowledge of soils. Proposals are encouraged to build on past or ongoing EU-funded research, research infrastructures and collaborate with relevant initiatives, including the Horizon Europe Soil Health and Food Mission. International cooperation (such as the International Bioeconomy Forum) is highly recommended. Proposals should include a clear plan on how they will collaborate with other proposals selected under this and any other relevant topic, by participating in joint activities, workshops, as well as common communication and dissemination activities. Proposals should plan the necessary budget to cover these activities.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-15: Transition to healthy and sustainable dietary behaviour**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 12.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal priorities, the farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environment-friendly food system, and the EU’s climate ambition for 2030 and 2050, the successful proposal will support R&I to facilitate the transition towards healthy and sustainable dietary behaviour. It will contribute to the transformation of food systems to deliver co-benefits for climate (mitigation and adaptation), biodiversity, environmental sustainability and circularity, dietary shift, sustainable healthy nutrition and safe food, food poverty reduction and empowerment of communities, and thriving businesses.

The main objective of this topic is to understand better, and measure, factors influencing dietary behaviour. It also seeks to support the development of innovative, effective tools and strategies to facilitate the transition towards healthy and sustainable dietary behaviour and self-management of dietary habits.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- improved knowledge and understanding of the factors influencing the dietary behaviour of different target groups (in particular vulnerable groups) across Europe, including barriers and constraints;
- identification of effective means whereby each food system actor can foster behavioural change;
- enabling consumers to make informed food choices;

- a scientific basis for dietary advice to support policymakers and Member States that will empower individuals to adopt healthy and sustainable dietary behaviours, choices and lifestyles, as a win-win for their health and the environment, building on the advice of competent bodies at national, EU and international levels; and
- a better scientific basis on which policymakers could develop communication strategies that would increase the acceptability of food and health policy interventions by all actors and sectors that aim to support a shift towards healthy and sustainable diets for all, bearing in mind that education and dietary advice is a national competence.

Scope: Changes in food production, processing and consumption patterns have contributed to diet-related health problems worldwide<sup>166</sup>. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), cancer, obesity, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes account for 71% of all deaths. NCDs are largely preventable through effective interventions that tackle shared risk factors such as unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use and the abuse of alcohol. According to the EAT-Lancet Commission, a shift from current diets to healthier diets is likely to benefit human health substantially, averting about 11 million deaths per year. Long-lasting, healthy and sustainable dietary behaviour needs to be given high priority from an early age, as good eating habits are usually formed in childhood.

The change of dietary behaviour is a complex challenge subject to manifold influences that should be better understood at individual and system levels, and through public engagement and inter-/trans-disciplinary approaches. The development of new approaches/strategies/tools requires a systemic approach involving all the main actors at different levels, who can ensure acceptance of and better adherence to healthy and sustainable dietary behaviour. These include governmental and public authorities, healthcare providers, education systems from schools to universities, (local) producers, the food industry, retailers, hospitality and food services, non-governmental consumer and patient organisations, the general public, policymakers and the media.

Proposals should consider a range of geographical, socio-economic, behavioural and cultural factors and aim to produce innovative and effective strategies, tools and/or programmes promoting sustainable and healthy dietary behaviours and lifestyles to be used by policymakers, and monitoring approaches for measuring progress towards these goals if policymakers decide to implement such strategies, tools and/or programmes. The gender dimension (possible physical and behavioural differences) should also be investigated. Data collected and integrated by the private and public sectors should be broken down by gender and age.

Where relevant, activities should build and expand on the results of past and ongoing research projects, and input from national, EU and international competent bodies. Selected projects under this topic (and under the topic HORIZON-HLTH-2022-STAYHLTH-01-05-two-stage: *Prevention of obesity throughout the life course*) are strongly encouraged to participate in

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<sup>166</sup> Scientific Advice Mechanism, Group of Chief Scientific Advisors: Towards an EU Sustainable Food System, Scientific Opinion n°8 (March 2020).

joint activities as appropriate, possibly in the form of project clustering, workshops, etc. Proposals are expected to demonstrate support for common coordination and dissemination activities. Applicants should plan the necessary budget to cover such activities.

Proposals are expected to address the following:

- map and monitor dietary patterns at national/regional/rural/(sub)urban levels relevant to different genders, socio-economic and cultural groups, including the most vulnerable, to provide a snapshot of the situation across Europe;
- identify, involve and analyse different population groups, in particular the most vulnerable, and the health and environment impact of their choices, in order potentially to enable them to benefit from the outcome of the project;
- understand and measure the impacts of the factors and incentives influencing individual and collective dietary choice and behaviour across Europe;
- improve our understanding of the barriers and enabling factors affecting food system actors' efforts to improve food environments and to produce, process, promote and provide healthier and environmentally, socially and economically sustainable food products/processes/services to respond to citizens' needs/demands;
- for specific groups, develop innovative actions/approaches/interventions for different countries, region, urban and rural areas that policymakers could use to facilitate the transition towards healthy and sustainable dietary behaviour and lifestyle, and evaluate the effective impact if those would be implemented;
- develop innovative and effective tools to improve education, communication, engagement and training on sustainable healthy nutrition and diets, and on sustainable food systems, adapted to different population groups in respect of cultures, needs and gender at different levels (e.g. public authorities, health care providers, education systems). The tools should be available to the responsible national authorities, to support their efforts on health promotion, disease prevention and care;
- develop science-based tools for translating the scientific evidence base into easy-to-understand food-based dietary guidelines by national competent authorities that take account of local, seasonal, cultural, social, ethical, health and environmental factors and help consumers to make informed, responsible and easy choices;
- fill knowledge gaps and update the scientific evidence base to provide support for national authorities developing dietary guidelines for specific population groups (using the basis provided by national, EU and international competent bodies);
- provide recommendations for policymakers, underpinned by scientific evidence, to facilitate the transition towards healthy personalised management and sustainable dietary behaviour and lifestyle; and

- provide evidence-based cost-benefit analysis of the proposed measure(s).

The multi-actor approach (see eligibility conditions) will be implemented by involving a wide range of food system actors and conducting inter-/trans-disciplinary research. Proposals should bring together multiple types of scientific expertise in health and natural sciences, and social sciences and humanities. This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-16: Identification, assessment and management of existing and emerging food safety issues**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal priorities, the farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environment-friendly food system, and the EU’s climate ambition for 2030 and 2050, the successful proposal will support R&I on integrated approaches throughout the food system for detecting, assessing and mitigating relevant food safety risks. It will contribute to the transformation of food systems to deliver co-benefits for climate (mitigation and adaptation), environmental sustainability and circularity, dietary shift, sustainable healthy nutrition and safe food, food poverty reduction and empowerment of communities, and thriving businesses.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- reduced risks from biological and chemical hazards throughout the food system;
- administrations’ ability to anticipate and mitigate emerging food safety risks, capacity and expertise for risk assessment activities including holistic risk assessment (risks in

combination with benefits) and best-fitting control measures for biological and chemical hazards across the food system;

- improved support for food systems regulatory science (integrated risk-benefit assessment, cost-benefit assessment) through robust holistic risk assessment;
- improved use of ‘big data’ to predict and prevent emerging food related threats; and
- long-term anticipation and prevention of emerging risks for food and feed safety, plant, soil and animal health, and nutritional quality through better trend tracking and characterisation systems.

Scope: Food-borne diseases are a significant cause of morbidity and mortality, and a significant impediment to socio-economic development worldwide, but the full extent and burden of unsafe food, and especially the burden arising from chemical and biological hazards, is still largely unknown<sup>167</sup>.

Successful proposals are expected to address both of the following areas (area A and area B):

#### Area A

- develop methods for early identification and monitoring of drivers of (re)emerging food safety risk and threats (e.g. global environmental changes, globalisation, technological innovations, policy changes, changes in values, perceptions and sensitivity, change in economic models, etc.);
- develop methods and devices for the characterisation of emerging risks, with the aim of anticipating and possibly mitigating/preventing impacts (preparedness);
- develop educational material/curricula to help strengthen existing food safety risk analysis teaching with an inter-/trans-disciplinary systems dimension;
- engage authorities and the general public throughout Europe in early warning and the identification of emerging risks through a coordinated citizen science approach, and food safety awareness-raising efforts;
- develop guidance on how to integrate food safety considerations in the design phase of innovations such as circular economy, by identifying possible emerging risks, in liaison with relevant initiatives that would benefit from the results;
- develop methods to guarantee food safety in local food systems from farm to fork, in particular in small-scale businesses, and local cooperatives; and
- develop holistic risk-benefit assessment methods and tools, and adapt these for use in a regulatory setting.

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<sup>167</sup> WHO estimates of the global burden of foodborne diseases: foodborne disease burden epidemiology reference group 2007-2015. [http://who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/199350/9789241565165\\_eng.pdf](http://who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/199350/9789241565165_eng.pdf)

Area B

- improve knowledge on the persistence of pathogens (including viruses) in food matrices and food processing environments for improved microbe control;
- develop data, indicators and tools to address and tackle the risks associated with new and food-borne pathogens (including viruses);
- develop and validate detection methods for new hazards and develop methods and devices for early identification of risks for food safety and threats;
- develop more robust and responsive models for food safety crisis management, taking into account socio-economic and environmental factors;
- analyse drivers of risks (globalisation, urbanisation, environmental degradation, climate change, etc.) to support the long-term anticipation and possible prevention of emerging risks; and
- develop scientific evidence to support assessment of the risk posed to susceptible human subpopulations (including gender in the research context) and ecosystems and the underlying risk drivers.

Successful proposals should deliver support for evidence-based policymaking and related risk assessment activities and implementation needs, in particular for the development of effective regulatory control and enforcement aspects in the area food safety. Engagement with risk managers and risk assessors is expected for priority-setting and to deliver impactful results.

Proposals should explain how they will deliver co-benefits to the four Food 2030 priorities.

The multi-actor approach (see the eligibility conditions) must be implemented by involving a wide range of food system actors and conducting inter-disciplinary research. Proposals are encouraged to follow the One Health<sup>168</sup> approach and to build on past or ongoing EU-funded research and cooperation with relevant initiatives (such as the One Health' European joint programme<sup>169</sup>). They should have a clear plan on how they will collaborate with other projects selected under this topic (if funding of more than one project is possible). They should participate in joint activities, workshops and common communication and dissemination activities. Applicants should plan the necessary budget to cover these activities.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-17: Increasing the transparency of EU food systems to boost health, sustainability and safety of products, processes and diets**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 11.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed

<sup>168</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/one-health>

<sup>169</sup> One Health European Joint Programme: <https://onehealthejp.eu/>

<i>project</i>	appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 11.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-7 (according to the activity) by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:  Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 300 000 in order to cover the expenses for developing and piloting crosscutting and systemic solutions that improve transparency with regards to one or several of the six objectives mentioned in the topic.

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal priorities and the farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environment-friendly food system, the successful proposal will support R&I to increase transparency across food systems to boost health, sustainability and safety of products, processes and diets, contributing to the transformation of food systems to deliver co-benefits for climate (mitigation and adaptation), environmental sustainability and circularity, dietary shift, sustainable healthy nutrition and safe food, food poverty reduction and empowerment of communities, and thriving businesses.

Advances in R&I to upgrade transparency will provide multiple benefits relevant to improving food safety, fighting food fraud and addressing growing public concern in the EU as regards the climate, biodiversity and environmental impacts of food and diets in practice.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all following expected outcomes:

- accelerate the deployment of transparency innovations and solutions in EU food systems, especially among micro-enterprises and SMEs, to boost health, sustainability, and safety of products, processes and diets, and drive climate action; and
- ensure that future transparency innovations and solutions are demand-driven, systemic and cost-effective, and support the objectives of the EU farm to fork strategy and the EU Green Deal.



Scope: Despite technological progress and the emergence of new approaches, solutions and methodologies, recent literature<sup>170</sup> highlights continuing challenges in increasing the uptake of transparency solutions among food system actors. These include concerns about connectivity, interoperability, privacy, cost-efficiency and low consumer confidence in the technologies being deployed. In addition, many point to the fragmentation and complexity of food systems, the high number of SMEs and micro-companies, and the cross-cutting and systemic nature of transparency innovations as important reasons for the slow deployment of the solutions.

Transparency (defined in supply chains as access to non-distorted, factual, relevant and timely information about supply chain products<sup>171</sup>) is a critical component of modern food systems. Transparency of food production from farm to fork is crucial to inform consumers, authorities and food system actors on product characteristics such as origin, production method, ingredients and safety, and on sustainability and ethical aspects of products and processes. It is also a crucial factor in ensuring food traceability and authenticity.

Proposals should accelerate the deployment of transparency solutions in EU food systems, especially among micro-enterprises and SMEs, to boost health, sustainability and safety of products, processes and diets in the period to 2030, and drive climate action. In particular, proposals should facilitate innovations that increase transparency in support of six objectives:

1. Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of traceability;
2. Making it easier for people to adopt healthy and sustainable diets with a lower environmental and climate impact, by advancing innovations that provide and process transparency data across the food chain to support the implementation of the future EU framework for sustainability labelling;
3. Making it easier for farmers and food businesses to increase the sustainability of their products and processes, and make them more nutrition-sensitive;
4. Drastically improving the efficiency and effectiveness of food safety processes and procedures, within companies and beyond;
5. Increasing the authenticity of products, and reducing food fraud; and
6. Increasing the capacity of authorities and policymakers that deal with food safety, sustainability, nutrition and health to monitor the performance of different parts and processes of the food system.

Proposals should build a network of expertise that can act as an EU hub for knowledge sharing and the demonstration and piloting of systemic solutions relating to transparency. The network should be governed by a wide range of experts and stakeholders, including primary producers, processors, retailers, food service providers, consumers, public and private institutions (governmental institutions, civil society, including NGOs, and industry), investors, entrepreneurs and policymakers.

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<sup>170</sup> E.g. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tifs.2019.07.024>

<sup>171</sup> <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aei.2010.06.001>

Proposals should create an inventory of validated technologies (such as IoT, blockchain, artificial intelligence, 5G/edge, and ‘big data’), open data, approaches and methodologies based on past research and emerging best practice. They should demonstrate the use of these technologies to address the above objectives using existing or emerging data infrastructures across the food chain. They should make a particular effort to valorise relevant past EU-funded research.

Proposals should consolidate the state of play as regards approaches for dealing effectively with cross-cutting challenges (e.g. connectivity, privacy, interoperability, consumer acceptance, cost-effectiveness, skills) and address the lack of such approaches where needed and in line with the relevant legal frameworks.

Proposals should widely disseminate and communicate expertise among primary producers, processors, retailers, food service providers, public and private institutions (governmental institutions, NGOs, industry), investors, entrepreneurs and policymakers. In this way, they should build awareness, education and skills on at European level in a way that supports solution development in practice in major food categories, by taking into account EU, national, regional and sectoral contexts and needs (health, food & nutrition policies, environmental, socioeconomic, cultural, gender-related, behavioural and dietary).

Proposals should develop methodologies, tools and approaches to enable the clients of the network of expertise to engage actively with end-users of transparency solutions (e.g. retailers, public authorities), a broad range of food system actors, technology and infrastructure providers and policymakers, to make sure that new transparency solutions are demand-driven, systemic, in line with the relevant legal frameworks, and cost-effective, and that they support the objectives of the EU farm to fork strategy, including the implementation of the future food sustainability labelling framework. Proposals are encouraged to assess the merits of existing and future citizen-science initiatives that can help build or uptake transparency solutions.

Proposals should help clients to apply systems thinking to identify challenges linked to the above objectives and possible innovative systemic solutions. They should help them understand and assess how transparency solutions will be used and how they will generate benefits and incentives for consumers and food businesses by enabling policy development (including the implementation of a future EU framework for sustainability labelling). They should stimulate mutual learning across parts of food systems, scientific disciplines, geographies and languages.

Proposals should perform these tasks using a business model that guarantees the functioning of the network and its services beyond the lifespan of the project.

In addition, proposals should develop and pilot cross-cutting and systemic solutions that improve transparency as regards one or more of the six objectives, while respecting the relevant legal frameworks and national competence in the area of diet and health, to complement and support the above tasks. The pilots should advance solutions that can benefit a wide range of micro-enterprises and SMEs. For the purpose of the pilots, proposals may

involve financial support for third parties in the form of grants, typically in the order of EUR 100 000 to 300 000 per party. These amounts are deemed sufficient to ensure that solutions are demand-driven, systemic and cost-effective, and support the objectives of the EU farm to fork strategy and the EU Green Deal. Up to 20% of the EU funding requested by the proposal may be allocated to the purpose of financial support for third parties.

Proposals should explain and map how the pilots will achieve co-benefits relevant to the Food 2030 priorities (nutrition for sustainable healthy diets, climate and environment, circularity and resource efficiency, innovation and empowerment of communities).

Proposals should set out a clear plan on how they will collaborate with other projects selected under this and any other relevant topic, by participating in joint activities, and common communication and dissemination activities. Proposals are encouraged to link with relevant smart specialization platforms.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

### **Targeted international cooperation**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-18: One Health approach for Food Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA)**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 18.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <p>Due to the specific challenge of this topic, in addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the General Annexes, consortia must include at least five independent legal entities established in Africa. The places of establishment of at least four of these legal entities must be in the same geographical region of Africa (as defined by the African Union: <a href="https://au.int/en/member_states/countryprofiles2">https://au.int/en/member_states/countryprofiles2</a>)</p> <p>Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in all member states</p>

	<p>of the African Union are exceptionally eligible for Union funding.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <p>The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p> <p>International organisations with headquarters in a Member State or associated country are exceptionally eligible for funding.</p>
<p><i>Technology Readiness Level</i></p>	<p>Activities are expected to achieve TRL 5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.</p>

**Expected Outcome:** The EU’s relationship with Africa is a key priority for the EU. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the growing urgency of the climate crisis put pressure on both domestic/local food production and on ecosystems that generate higher health risks for plants, animals and humans with the emergence of new pest and diseases.

In line with the farm to fork strategy, and the development of Green Alliances on sustainable food systems, successful proposals will provide a comprehensive and integrated response to current and future challenges benefiting people, nature and economic growth in Europe and in Africa.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of following expected outcomes:

- EU – Africa jointly tackle climate change and environment-related challenges and meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement on climate change, and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals;
- develop nature-based solutions to plant nutrition, plant health and animal health addressing human health, with innovative methods and technologies that optimize, and limit when necessary, the use of external inputs and helps farmers in the implementation of regulated deficit strategies;
- strengthened transdisciplinary research and integrated scientific support for relevant EU policies and priorities (the EU strategy for Africa, European Green Deal objectives, etc.);
- In line with the EU priorities, proposals should take into consideration the objectives of the European One Health Plan against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)<sup>172</sup> that aim at making the EU a best practice region, boosting research, development and innovation and shaping the global agenda.

**Scope:** The “One Health” approach to plant and animal health is based on a systemic perspective linking the health of ecosystems, animals and humans. It requires interventions at different level (local, territorial, value chain) and coherent public policies. ‘One Health’ can be applied to establish a transformative approach to increasing sustainable practices in

<sup>172</sup> The European One Health Plan Against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) can be found at: [https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/antimicrobial\\_resistance/docs/amr\\_2017\\_action-plan.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/antimicrobial_resistance/docs/amr_2017_action-plan.pdf)

agriculture and improving the overall health and well-being of humans, animals, and natural ecosystems.

There is a need to fill knowledge gap regarding interactions with different components and especially between human and animal and plant health and strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems to prevent the emergence and spread of pest and diseases with nature-based solutions.

Proposals should build on existing and new knowledge, data, models (including in situ calibration measurement) and available tools to:

- identify local farm animals and crops in the different agro-ecological zones in Africa to maintain/increase productivity, resilience and nutritional quality taking into account the interactions between plants, animals, diseases, pests, zoonosis and ecosystems under conditions of limited external inputs and increased abiotic and biotic stresses;
- develop innovative means including innovative methodologies for risk assessments and practices to tackle current and emerging plant pests and diseases, pests and zoonosis (including transboundary infectious livestock diseases) taking into account the interactions between plants, livestock health and the natural ecosystems;
- develop sustainable and systemic integrated approaches to plant and animal health from farm to international scales in line with a greener agriculture by optimising resource efficiency, minimising production losses and avoiding geographical spread of diseases/pathogens (i.e. control of locusts or other migratory pests, development of vaccines) including animal breeding and being responsible/respectful of natural ecosystem integrity, goods and services;
- establish a multidisciplinary team that works together to achieve these outcomes and bring together experts from academic, government, public, and private institutions to achieve meaningful change in public awareness, policies, and practices that support implementation of sustainable agricultural practices.

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure adequate involvement of the farming sector and, as relevant, bio-based industry active in rural areas.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-19: EU-China international cooperation on integrated pest management in agriculture**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and

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	selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:  Grants awarded under this topic will be coordinated with the Ministry of Science and Technology, China (MOST).
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:  Grants awarded under this topic will be linked to the specific grants awarded by the Ministry of Science and Technology, China (MOST) to the Chinese partners.  The respective options of the Model Grant Agreement will be applied.

Expected Outcome: In line with the farm to fork strategy, the successful proposals will help to promote a global transition to sustainable food systems. They will therefore help to ensure sustainability of agri-food systems, catering for the needs of a growing population and support the development and implementation of integrated pest management practices. They will strengthen international cooperation with actors from China in the areas of integrated pest management.

Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- reduce the use of pesticides for crops of importance to the EU, Associated Countries and China which dependency on chemical pest management is currently high;
- increase on-farm use and implementation of integrated pest management practices;
- develop integrated pest management training for farmers/growers and extend the range of applications through incentives to increase the uptake of integrated pest management practices;

- raise awareness of integrated pest management practices and improve product quality and food safety by decreased residue concentrations of pesticides in crops and lower environmental impact.

Scope: A high percentage of food crops is lost to plant pests and diseases annually. At the same time, concerns are mounting over the impact of pesticides used in agriculture on the environment, non-target organisms and human health. Proposals should support the development and implementation of integrated pest management practices for crops where the dependency on conventional chemical pesticides is the highest, and where the exchange of information, best practices and technologies is of benefit to the EU, Associated Countries and China.

Proposals should:

- enlarge the range of tools available for integrated pest management practices, such as crop diversification leading to more functional diversity, effective cropping techniques, appropriate species and varieties resistant to pests, the development of biological control agents, the preservation and enhancement of natural enemies of pests etc.;
- develop technologies enabling the prevention, modelling and monitoring of pest emergence allowing timely and appropriate intervention in line with the principles of integrated pest management;
- develop risk assessment methods for assessing the risks and environmental impacts of these technologies;
- support capacity building, training and education enabling farmers/growers to adopt sustainable agricultural practices in pest management and the establishment of a reward/incentives system.

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure adequate involvement of the farming sector. Practical solutions for farmers/growers, close to the market, should be facilitated by the involvement of industry, including SMEs, to promote the transfer of technology relating to integrated pest management.

Actions will contribute to implementing the EU-China Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology (FAB) flagship initiative, which aims to ensure sustainability of agri-food systems, catering for the needs of a growing population, the reduction of food and agricultural losses and waste, and the provision of safe and healthy foodstuffs.

Due to the scope of this topic, international cooperation is strongly encouraged, in particular with China. This topic is envisaged to be implemented as a coordinated call but if no agreement is reached with the Ministry of Science and Technology China (MOST) on the co-funding of Chinese partners, it will be implemented as a normal call. Updates will be published on the Funding & Tenders Portal.

**Call - Fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption**

***HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>173</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>174</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2022		
Opening: 28 Oct 2021 Deadline(s): 15 Feb 2022				
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-01	RIA	7.00	Around 7.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-02	RIA	6.00	Around 6.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-03	RIA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-04	IA	8.00	Around 4.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-05	RIA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-06	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-07	IA	12.00	Around 12.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-08	RIA	14.00	Around 7.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-09	RIA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-10	RIA	11.00	Around 11.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-11	RIA	10.00	Around 10.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-12	RIA	28.00	Around 7.00	4

<sup>173</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.  
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>174</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.



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HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-13	RIA	11.00	Around 11.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-14	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-15	CSA	3.00	Around 3.00	1
Overall indicative budget		164.00		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

**Enabling sustainable farming**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-01: Risk assessment of new low risk pesticides**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 7.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome: In line with the farm to fork strategy, for a transition to fair, healthy and resilient EU agriculture and forestry, including an ambitious target of the reduced use of plant protection products, the successful proposal will support research and innovation (R&I) to help agriculture / forestry sectors to remain productive and contribute to sustainable agriculture and forest health.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- improve risk assessment of new so-called low-risk substances and plant protection products with the use of relevant methods;
- foster EU regulatory science and risk assessment of new low-risk pesticides for agriculture;
- ensure the safety of new low-risk pesticides used in agriculture through robust and transparent risk assessment;
- increase the availability of safe and environmentally friendly methods for plant protection and weed control to reduce risks to the environment, non-target organisms and human health.

Scope: Concerns are mounting over the effects of pesticides on the environment, non-target organisms and human health. Member States and EU policies seek to reduce the reliance on chemical pesticides for crop protection through the design and implementation of approaches that are more integrated and include restrictions on the use of several active substances. To ensure the lowest risk to human health and the environment, the development of so-called low-risk substances<sup>175</sup> is encouraged by several regulatory incentives in the EU. However, the changing nature of low-risk plant protection products requires increased capacities in risk assessment. The plant protection products approval and authorization process has to keep pace with scientific and technological developments aiming to advance assessment methods of new low-risk plant protection products.

New products may seek EU market regulatory approval, thus proposals should need to consider and address relevant EU regulatory requirements as well as relevant guidance documents that are to be followed for the specific hazard characterisation and exposure assessment to achieve an appropriate risk assessment.

Proposals should contribute to:

- improve the risk assessment of newly proposed or specifically adapted low-risk pesticides such as new species/strains of microorganisms, ds-RNA-based pesticides,

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<sup>175</sup> Low-risk active substances for plant protection are defined according to criteria outlined in Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market and repealing Council Directives 79/117/EEC and 91/414/EEC. They are subject to specific provisions for their approval and the authorisation of low-risk plant protection products containing them outlined in this Regulation and its implementing Regulations.

pheromones, plant extracts, and/or microbiome solutions or a new mode of application with the use of relevant methods;

- develop and advance the integration of different tools, technologies and methodologies to support the comprehensive and consistent risk assessments of new low-risk pesticides to ensure safety and sustainability;
- contribute to understanding the biological effects of these new substances and/or products;
- assess the impacts and risks of these new substances and/or products;
- assess and improve the level of certainty in risk assessments of new low-risk pesticides;
- identify the relevant additional studies required for assessing these new low-risk pesticides in order to establish that they have a hazard profile compatible with their classification as low-risk substances and plant protection products;
- contribute to the standardisation and validation of the developed tools, technologies and methods for risk assessments.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-02: Socio-economics of pesticide use in agriculture**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:                      The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p>

**Expected Outcome:** In line with the farm to fork strategy, the successful proposal will support integrated pest management practices facilitating the progress towards the ambitious target of reduced use of plant protection products while supporting the agricultural / forestry sectors to

remain productive and contribute to sustainable and biodiversity friendly agriculture and/or forest health.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Identify opportunities and barriers to increase the uptake of integrated pest management and low-pesticide-input pest management across the diversity of EU and Associated Countries farming systems;
- Increase the capacity to understand the impact of current pesticide use practices and proposed alternatives on the agricultural sector;
- Develop a thorough understanding of farmers' decision-making, governance aspects and consumption patterns behind integrated pest management and low pesticide use practices;
- Support the design of relevant related policies to achieve the targets of the farm to fork and biodiversity strategies;
- Strengthened transdisciplinary research and integrated scientific support for relevant EU policies and priorities (Sustainable Use Directive<sup>176</sup>, common agricultural policy (CAP), Green Deal objectives, European pillar of social rights, etc.).

Scope: Research has shown that well-designed integrated pest management programmes can control pests in an ecologically friendly manner; however, farming today relies on chemical treatments to ensure farm profits and yield. A better understanding of the social, economic and policy factors that can hinder or promote the uptake as well as evidence of the economic performance of integrated pest management/ low pesticide practices are needed to identify measures that can enhance its adoption and encourage the involvement of all relevant actors across the value chain. Project funded under this topic should ensure synergies and collaboration with other relevant ongoing Horizon 2020 projects.

Proposals should:

- Improve understanding of the reasons for the limited uptake of reduced pesticide use/integrated pest management practices and/or shift towards low-risk pesticides and bio-control agents and practices. This should include a deeper analysis of the evolution since the whole agricultural sector may be impacted by a reduction of pesticide use.
- Improve understanding of the impact (including direct and indirect effects) of current pesticide use practices and proposed alternatives at various scales, from fields to landscape and rural areas.
- Analyse the sociological and economic drivers and unintended consequences, such as the switching of crops and/or pesticides when a plant protection product becomes unavailable.

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<sup>176</sup> Directive 2009/128/EC on the sustainable use of pesticides

- Analyse the consequences of the ongoing development of resistances to the use of pesticides (both in qualitative and quantitative terms), on productivity, on the economic performance of farms, on natural habitats and biodiversity and the environment.
- Analyse the competitiveness of goods produced using chemical pesticide-free/low-pesticide agriculture.

Proposals should cover a wide range of farm typologies, sectors and systems representative of the diversity of farming in the EU and Associated Countries, including both conventional and organic. Proposals must implement the “multi-actor approach” including a range of actors to ensure that knowledge and needs from various sectors such as research, social partners, plant health services and farmers/foresters are brought together.

The possible participation of the JRC in the project will consist of the use of a farm-level modelling tool to contribute to the assessment of the socio-economic impacts of alternative pesticide use practices, as well as to the evaluation of different policy scenarios to incentivise the uptake of alternative pesticide strategies. Additionally, the JRC could contribute to the analysis of possible survey data dealing with socio-economic impacts of current and alternative pesticide use practices.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-03: Enhancing biosecurity in terrestrial livestock production**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

Expected Outcome: In line with the ‘farm to fork’ strategy for a transition to fair, healthy and resilient livestock production systems, including the reduction of anti-microbial usage, a successful proposal will support research and innovation (R&I) in helping policy makers and economic operators to prevent and control infectious animal diseases, thus contributing to sustainable agriculture and to public health.

The project results are expected to contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- improving the capacity of policy makers, members of the veterinary profession, business operators and other relevant actors to prioritise and implement biosecurity measures in different production systems on farms and other places where animals are handled;
- gaining a better understanding of the costs and efficiency of certain biosecurity measures.

Scope: Biosecurity refers to a set of management and physical measures designed to reduce the risk of introduction, establishment and spread of diseases, infections or infestations to, from and within a population<sup>177</sup>. Biosecurity can prevent or minimise the risk of transmission of infectious diseases not only to animals, but also people (zoonoses), and contributes to the fight against antimicrobial resistance. Where no vaccine is available nor authorised, like for African swine fever or other new and emerging diseases, the control of infectious diseases relies heavily on biosecurity and no disease prevention, eradication or control programme can work without it. Proposed projects should address biosecurity at primary production, at least on farms and where animals are handled, but may also address relevant sectors like the feed industry. Effective biosecurity requires constant attention by those implementing it. Biosecurity can more easily be performed in enclosed facilities, like for indoor livestock farming, than in outdoor production, which may facilitate direct or indirect contacts with wildlife and subsequent transmission of a pathogenic infectious agent to livestock, although risks from outdoor farming may not always be higher than indoor. General principles of external and internal biosecurity are known, not least at farm level, but may not be equally applicable to all farms, production systems and species and protect equally well against all relevant diseases. The costs and efficiency of different measures are not always known, and guidelines are not common yet.

The proposals should:

- address different terrestrial animal species and production systems, and different situations where livestock are handled;
- address the main diseases or groups of diseases against which biosecurity measures are effective, taking into account epidemiology of the diseases and related risks (e.g. wildlife);
- collect and disseminate best practices, and develop guidelines where appropriate;
- develop validated applicable methods or refine tools to assess biosecurity measures on farms or other places where livestock is handled;
- select certain measures, evaluate their efficiency, where appropriate by testing, and estimate their cost.

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<sup>177</sup> <https://www.oie.int/en/standard-setting/terrestrial-code/access-online/?htmfile=glossaire.htm>

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement. Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure adequate involvement of the farming sector, the veterinary profession, advisory services and other relevant actors.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-04: Innovative solutions to prevent adulteration of food bearing quality labels: focus on organic food and geographical indications**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

**Expected Outcome:** The farm to fork strategy aims to accelerate the transition to sustainable farming and food systems by, *inter alia*, promoting the growth of organic farming with a view to achieve the target of at least 25% of the EU's agricultural land under organic farming by 2030. Moreover, the strategy envisages the strengthening of geographical indications (GIs), by including specific sustainability criteria, where appropriate. One of the strategy's main priorities is to combat food fraud along the food supply chain. The successful proposals should therefore contribute to preventing food fraud of products with quality labels, in particular organic and GIs. In this way, they should facilitate progress towards the strategy's challenging target for organic farming and strengthen the GIs scheme.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- a wider use of new and improved tools and field-deployable methods and approaches for rapid and cost-effective verification of claims related to food products of plant and animal origin with quality labels, in particular organic and GIs;

- unlocked potential of new technologies and other innovative approaches (e.g., business models) fit for farmers and food businesses (especially small-scale farmers and small and medium-sized enterprise (SMEs)) as well as policymakers, which cost-effectively enable traceability and transparency along the supply chains of quality labelled food, in particular those with organic and GIs labels;
- improved functioning and effectiveness of the control systems in Member States and Associated Countries and the EU's legislative framework for organic and GI food products;
- increased data availability, interoperability and use, and improved analytical capacity for enhanced traceability and transparency along the supply chains of quality labelled food, in particular organic and GIs;
- well-informed decision-making by farmers, food businesses and policymakers to improve climate, environmental, economic and social sustainability along the supply chains of quality labelled food, in particular organic and GIs.

Scope: Quality labelled food products, such as organic and GIs, are generally more expensive than their counterparts. Therefore, foods with such quality labels are particularly prone to fraud. Illegal practices can considerably harm the quality schemes, as they can undermine consumer confidence, thus damaging the farmers and food businesses who respect the rules. The main challenge is that it is difficult for consumers and operators across supply chains to visually distinguish genuine from false organic or GI products. Traditional methods of determining food quality are time consuming and usually require special laboratory analyses, which are often costly and may not be sufficient to guarantee a product's authenticity and traceability. In addition, as organic and GI food supply chains become more complex, the need to ensure product traceability and transparency along the entire chain increases. Existing traceability and control systems help track products throughout the food supply chain and improve transparency. However, the organic and GI sectors rapidly change due to, for example, widespread use of e-commerce, and given the expected growth of these sectors, the risk of fraud may increase. Therefore, it is important to continuously innovate and upgrade the approaches to prevent fraudulent practices. Diverse new technologies and other innovative solutions (e.g., business models; participatory certification; local, short or mid-tier supply chains; etc.), are emerging to improve the authentication and traceability of quality labelled food products, in particular those with organic and GI labels, as well as to increase transparency of supply chains, thereby contributing to combating fraud. These innovative solutions need to be developed/improved, tested, demonstrated and deployed.

Proposals should investigate the current fraud practices affecting quality labelled food products, in particular organic and GI, and analyse the root causes/drivers of these practices and obstacles and ways to eradicate them. Based on these insights and building on the state-of-the-art in research and innovation, proposals should develop/improve, test, demonstrate and pilot promising innovative low-cost methods, tools and approaches to authenticate and/or trace quality labelled food products, especially organic and GIs, as well as to improve



transparency of their supply chains from farm to fork. They should explore the potential of various technological and non-technological innovative solutions (e.g., digital (such as photonics, artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, internet of things (IoT), machine learning, etc.), new business models (in particular involving and suitable for small-scale farmers and SMEs), suitable reference materials, rapid and field-deployable, non-destructive testing methods, technologies to improve cybersecurity, etc.), and their combinations. The heterogeneity of products and sectors, as well as the diversity of supply chains and contexts should be taken into account. Proposals should also investigate the barriers and incentives to scaling up the use of the innovative solutions as well as assess the positive and negative impacts on the different operations and actors in the organic and GI food value chains, particular attention should be paid to small-scale farmers, SMEs and consumers, as well as the control systems used in Member States and Associated Countries. Proposals should also develop a system to increase availability of and access to relevant data, promote data harmonisation and improve the ways in which data are stored. In addition, they should explore ways to advance the analysis, use, interoperability and security of data to enhance fair transparency and support better decision-making, to improve sustainability along organic and GI food supply chains.

The innovative solutions should be widely disseminated and recommendations for relevant actors in the public sector and business should be provided. Close involvement and consultation with project advisory board members is recommended. Projects should use the 'multi-actor approach', ensuring adequate involvement of all relevant actors, including input suppliers, farmers and SMEs. Proposals may build on existing research infrastructures, where relevant. Proposals are encouraged to build on past and ongoing EU-funded research and innovation projects, and are strongly encouraged to cluster with upcoming projects under the *HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-10*, *HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-11* and *HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-17* topics. They are also encouraged to cooperate with actors working on related initiatives, including the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) Knowledge Centre for Food Fraud and Quality, which provides expertise in food science, authenticity and quality of food supplied in the EU. The possible participation/contribution of the JRC in the project would consist of ensuring that the project deliverables are compatible with and/or improve existing databases and tools used at the European Commission and fostering open access to project results via dissemination through the European Commission Knowledge Centre for Food Fraud and Quality.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines. For this topic, the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

### **Enabling sustainable fisheries and aquaculture**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-05: Integrated and sustainable freshwater bioeconomy: Combining aquaculture, biodiversity preservation, biotechnology and other uses**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 3-6 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal objectives, the farm to fork strategy for a fair healthy and environmentally friendly food system, the EU bioeconomy strategy and blue growth strategy, the successful proposal will support freshwater aquaculture products/processes and/or environmental services sustaining the health of freshwater ecosystems and their bioeconomy sectors.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Improvement of the environmental footprint and resource efficiency of freshwater aquaculture and stimulation of its diversification and growth in the framework of an integrated freshwater bioeconomy strategy.
- Preservation of freshwater biodiversity by reducing the freshwater aquaculture impacts (e.g. with appropriate spatial planning) and assessment of its potential for biotechnological applications
- Stimulation of sustainable economic growth and jobs creation in the freshwater bioeconomy sector for people living in lakeside and riverside areas in Europe.
- Improvement of the professional skills and competences of those working and being trained to work within the blue economy.

Scope: Freshwater systems host an immense biodiversity and support a multitude of activities providing livelihoods to inland populations. Lakes, ponds and rivers require a transition to more sustainable and environment-friendly productive ecosystems through optimal water management and planning, mutually benefiting the different ecosystem services by developing economic activities in rural areas, maintaining the biodiversity, and increasing resilience to climate change and water crises.

Aquaculture, in particular integrated multi-trophic or recirculating aquaculture systems, can be key for the development of lakeside and riverside areas as it can be combined with other bio-based activities, such as farming, livestock and the use of hitherto unused naturally produced biomass. Addressing environmental concerns, such as the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive, are essential for sustainable growth of freshwater aquaculture. Preserving biodiversity, including health and biosecurity issues, is also key for potential biotechnological applications that should also be explored under this topic.

The Strategic Working Group on Fisheries and Aquaculture (SCAR-Fish) of the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR) highlighted in a recent study<sup>178</sup> several issues that urgently need to be explored by research and addressed by innovation, such as climate change-related issues and issues of profitability. Research in this topic should consider the priorities of the SCAR-Fish study.

Strong and active involvement of stakeholders and end-users, including industry and NGOs, in a co-creation approach, is key for the success of the projects that will be selected.

International co-operation with partners from non-associated third countries is strongly encouraged as a win-win scenario, while contributing to the European competitiveness and resilience.

Where relevant, proposals may seek synergies and capitalise on the results of projects funded under Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, its continuation European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, and other funding streams

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-06: Biosecurity, hygiene, disease prevention and animal welfare in aquaculture**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 3-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

<sup>178</sup> SCAR-Fish (2020) Evaluation of the freshwater aquaculture research needs in Europe. Edited by P. Lengyel. [https://scar-europe.org/images/FISH/Documents/Freshwater\\_aquaculture\\_research\\_Europe\\_final\\_04022020.pdf](https://scar-europe.org/images/FISH/Documents/Freshwater_aquaculture_research_Europe_final_04022020.pdf)

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal objectives, the farm to fork strategy for a fair healthy and environmentally friendly food system, the EU bioeconomy strategy and the blue growth strategy, the successful proposal will support research and innovation on animal health and welfare in aquaculture to contribute to an environmentally friendly, inclusive, safe and healthy seafood production, including from freshwaters.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Advancement of knowledge about how farmed fish react to farming conditions and their effects on their welfare and growth.
- Development of innovative and less invasive disease prevention, monitoring, control and treatment approaches for a more sustainable production.
- Healthier seafood production through improvement in farming practices and thus contribute to increase its competitiveness.
- Improve the professional skills and competences of those working and being trained to work within the blue economy.

Scope: Aquaculture is the food production sector with the fastest growth globally, but in the EU it is stagnant. Fish and mollusc disease remain an important constraint on productivity and its prevention and management are essential for the sustainability of the European aquaculture industry. Parasites, viruses and microbes often have devastating effects when they infect fish or shellfish farms. The great variety of species cultured and production systems used hinders the implementation of good husbandry practices tailored to each aquatic species. The aquaculture sector falls short of codes of good practice and technologies for the early detection, prevention and control of aquatic diseases. There is also a need for alternatives to pharmaceutical treatments: antimicrobials and antiparasitic drugs are limited and expensive, environmentally impacting and raise consumers concerns on the safety of seafood. The Strategic Working Group on Fisheries and Aquaculture (SCAR-Fish) and the Collaborative Working Group on Animal Health and Welfare (SCAR-AHW) in the frame of the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR), highlighted in a recent study<sup>179</sup> several fish pathology issues that need urgently to be explored by research and addressed by innovation, such as rapid tests for diagnosis and DNA vaccines at the level of hatchery, bloodstock, cage, pond, etc. Research in this topic should consider the priorities of the SCAR-Fish study.

A similar SCAR-Fish and SCAR-AHW study<sup>180</sup> revealed major gaps related to fish welfare, such as a striking lack of welfare indicators, and a strong interest from the industry to improve fish welfare for more and better production. Main gaps presented by this study should be included in the research under this topic.

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<sup>179</sup> SCAR-Fish & SCAR AHW (2019). Disease Prevention In Farmed Fish New Developments and Research Needs. [https://scar-europe.org/images/FISH/Documents/CASA\\_Fish\\_Disease\\_Final-Report.pdf](https://scar-europe.org/images/FISH/Documents/CASA_Fish_Disease_Final-Report.pdf)

<sup>180</sup> SCAR-Fish & SCAR AHW (2018). Strengthening fish welfare research through agap analysis study. [https://scar-europe.org/images/FISH/Documents/Report\\_CWG-AHW\\_CASA\\_FISH-welfare.pdf](https://scar-europe.org/images/FISH/Documents/Report_CWG-AHW_CASA_FISH-welfare.pdf)

Codes of good practices are crucial for fish and shellfish sustainable production. Research under this topic should develop innovative aquaculture approaches to achieve the highest possible health standard in production, including breeding, nutrition, alternative disease control methods or increased biosecurity. A holistic approach should be applied, considering the interaction with the environment, the reservoirs, wild and farmed fish interaction or the importance of co-existing pathogens simultaneously infecting the same hosts. Modelling of aquaculture health economics should be covered in the study.

Strong and active involvement of stakeholders and end-users, including industry and NGOs, in a co-creation approach, is key for the success of the projects that will be selected.

International co-operation with partners from non-associated third countries is strongly encouraged as a win-win scenario, while contributing to the European competitiveness and resilience.

Where relevant, proposals may seek synergies and capitalise on the results of projects funded under Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, its continuation European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, and other funding streams

### **Transforming food systems for health, sustainability and inclusion**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-07: Building alternative protein-friendly sustainable and healthy food environments**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 12.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal priorities, the farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system, and the EU's climate ambition for 2030 and 2050, the successful proposal will support R&I to promote the production, provision and consumption of alternative sources of proteins as well as dietary shifts towards sustainable healthy nutrition. This will contribute to transforming food systems so that they can deliver co-benefits for climate (mitigation and adaptation), biodiversity, environmental sustainability and circularity, dietary shifts, sustainable healthy nutrition and safe food, food poverty reduction and empowerment of communities, and thriving businesses.

The EU's farm to fork strategy states that: "European diets are not in line with national dietary recommendations, and the 'food environment' does not ensure that the healthy option is always the easiest one".

The food environment, which makes the link between food supply and diets, is one of the determinants of consumer choices and food production. As such, food environments are essential to enabling a dietary shift towards less livestock-based and less highly processed food (e.g., more fresh and minimally processed fruit and vegetables, plant-based and aquatic food to tackle the over-consumption of meat and dairy). Much more R&I is needed on food environments to ensure that environmental sustainability and health objectives can be achieved.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of food environments to ensure that people, including the most vulnerable groups, have choices in terms of alternative proteins (e.g. plant-based, microbe-based, ocean-based (i.e. fish, algae, invertebrates), fungus-based, insect-based), to foster a dietary shift (accessibility and availability).
- Ensuring an overall improvement in public health as a result of this shift, with a shift towards healthy, sustainable and diversified dietary patterns in line with national dietary advice.
- Reducing the environmental burden of European diets, including but not limited to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, air pollution and impact on ecosystems, improving circularity (e.g. food waste and by-products), providing new, sustainable and healthy products made of alternative sources of proteins to consumers.

Scope: According to studies carried out by Milford et al. (2019)<sup>181</sup> and Castellani et al. (2017)<sup>182</sup>, consumer choices depend on the food environment that ensures the availability of and access to food. The behavioural sciences suggest that, to achieve a meaningful dietary shift, a choice architecture should be designed to promote healthy and sustainable food preferences.

Proposals are expected to address the following:

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<sup>181</sup> Milford, A.B., et al. (2019). Drivers of meat consumption. *Appetite* 141 (2019) 104313.

<sup>182</sup> Castellani, V., et al. (2017). Consumer Footprint - Basket of Products indicator on Food. JRC Technical reports.

- Empowering the ‘middle part’ of the food system, including for example industry, processors, retailers, food services, cooks and caterers to shape the food environment toward sustainability EU-wide, through the provision of a diverse diet based on alternative protein sources, including through training/skills-building among different actors in order to produce and provide alternative protein food.
- Working on diversifying the offering, particularly in terms of alternative protein sources, and ensuring easier access to and affordability of sustainable and healthy (as defined in national dietary recommendations) foods and diets everywhere (urban, peri-urban and rural areas) for everybody (including the most vulnerable).
- Developing industry-ready processes to sustainably produce food based on alternative proteins whose sensory characteristics (e.g. colour, taste, structure) and nutritional value will be accepted by consumers.
- Developing a typology of food environments across Europe and identifying the enabling factors for positive transformative change to healthy sustainable diets.
- Assessing the tools and instruments (e.g. policy measures, incentives, existing and new promotion and marketing approaches, pricing policies) necessary to increase and vary the provision of alternative protein foods, which would lead to overall healthy and sustainable dietary patterns in line with national recommendations.
- Taking into account several key elements for the provision of alternative protein sources, e.g. shelf life, food handling, affordability (including externalities in prices of unhealthy and unsustainable diets), trade-offs between various food provision routes, developing new varieties of protein sources and rediscovering/valorising old varieties, traceability, and preserving flavour and natural resources (this would therefore be linked to the outcome of projects funded under the *HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-12 topic: Filling knowledge gaps on the nutritional, safety, allergenicity and environmental assessment of alternative proteins and dietary shift*). Gender aspects could also be considered.
- Exploring how the food environment can become ‘crisis-proof’ (whether something can be learnt from or has changed with the COVID-19 pandemic): creating resilient local, regional or European food systems that provide food and nutrition security for Europeans in a way that protects against future disruptions in supply chains. One way of doing this is by diversifying diets and providing people with alternative sources of protein.
- Clearly explain how the proposal will deliver co-benefits to each of the Food 2030 priorities: nutrition for sustainable healthy diets, climate, biodiversity and environment, circularity and resource efficiency, innovation and empowering communities (e.g. meeting the needs, values and expectations of society in a responsible and ethical way).

- Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.
- Implementing the required multi-actor approach (see the eligibility conditions) by involving a wide diversity of food system actors and conducting trans-disciplinary research. Proposals should also promote international cooperation. Where relevant, activities should build and expand on the results of past and ongoing research projects (especially the four projects funded under the LC-SFS-17-2019 topic: Alternative proteins for food and feed). Projects should have a clear plan on how they will work with other projects selected under this topic (if funding of more than one project is possible). They should participate in joint activities, workshops, focus groups or social labs, as well as organise common communication and dissemination activities and show potential for upscaling. Applicants should plan the necessary budget to cover these activities.
- This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-08: Research and innovation for food losses and waste prevention and reduction through harmonised measurement and monitoring**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 14.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:                      The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p>
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve up to TRL 6 (according to the activity) by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Procedure</i>	<p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>To ensure a balanced portfolio, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least also to one project within the area A that is the highest ranked, and one project highest ranked within the area</p>



	B, provided that the applications attain all thresholds.
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Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal priorities, and in particular the farm to fork strategy for a fair healthy and environmentally friendly food system, as well as with the EU's climate objectives, the successful proposals should support prevention and reduction of food losses and waste. They should therefore contribute to creating sustainable, healthy and inclusive food systems that deliver co-benefits for climate mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity, environmental sustainability and circularity, sustainable healthy nutrition and safe food consumption, food poverty reduction and empowerment of communities, and thriving businesses.

Projects results are expected to contribute to some of the following expected outcomes:

- Successful implementation of the harmonisation of food waste measurement across Europe, supported by the development of new tools across the food system on land and at sea, from farm to fork, producing reliable and comparable data on food and waste (area A);
- With respect to food losses at the primary production stage:
  - o robust measurement of the magnitude of food losses at the primary production stage (i.e., agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture) at Member States and the EU levels for various commodities and at aggregated level, thereby contributing to the prevention and reduction of such losses (area B);
  - o better understanding of the drivers (root causes) of food losses at the primary production stage and identification of ways for policymakers and primary producers to prevent and reduce them (area B).
- Well-informed and more effective policy and business strategies for preventing and reducing food losses and waste across the food system on land and at sea, from farm to fork (area A and B).

Scope: Each year, a substantial amount of food is lost or wasted all along the food value chain, from primary production to final consumption. Food losses and waste have negative impacts on the society, the environment and the economy. They contribute to food insecurity and hinder nutrition, generate GHG emissions and create pressure on land and water, including through habitat degradation and biodiversity loss, and are responsible for great economic losses. Such negative impacts are exacerbated in times of crisis such as the current COVID-19 pandemic, when additional food losses and wastes are generated by disruptions in food supply chains.

Preventing and reducing the amount of food intended for human consumption that is eventually lost or wasted is a complex challenge. The robust and reliable measurement and monitoring of food losses and waste is key to tracking progress made over time and informing the development and implementation of effective strategies and actions.

The recent adoption of the EU Commission Decision (EU) 2019/1597 set a common method and minimum quality requirements for the uniform measurement of levels of food waste at the national level. However, since thoroughly assessing food losses at the primary production stage is difficult, time-consuming and costly, the common EU method excludes measurement of food losses at this stage. In addition to this lack of information about the levels of food losses at the primary production stage, there is also insufficient understanding of the root causes and drivers behind these losses, and this is key to developing effective strategies for preventing and reducing them.

Proposals responding to this topic should address one of the two complementary areas:

- A. Develop cost-efficient food waste-relevant data collection, integration and analyses based on a large number of varied sources (e.g. households, food services, other small business), as well as on food discarded through wastewater, in order to improve the mapping of current food waste profiles at European and national level. To this end, proposals should speed up the innovation process and develop and test new technologies and tools along the food systems – from farm to fork, on land and at sea.
- B. Develop and validate new tools and methods to measure and estimate food losses at the primary production stage, including storage of products originating from agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture. These new tools and methods should be applied and food losses at primary production stage measured across a large enough sample of diverse farms/production systems and value chains (including organic and agroecological), for a wide range of the most important commodities produced in the EU, across several years and in all Member States. This should generate robust measurement/estimation of food losses at the primary production stage for different commodities, at the Member State and EU levels, and at an aggregated level. Where relevant, measurements from Earth observation platforms may be used. To minimise data collection bias, each Member State should create a pool of trained researchers who are able to use the method and directly measure the food losses at the primary production stage. In addition to measurement, the direct and indirect drivers and root causes of food losses at primary production stage should be thoroughly investigated. Particular attention should be paid to the identification of market driven food losses at the primary production stage, to assess the potential for a reduction strategy based on marked demand shifts. Generated insights should also allow for identification of possible ways to prevent and reduce food losses at the primary production stage.

Proposals should provide recommendations for policymakers and best practice guidelines / business strategies for researchers and relevant operators across the various diverse terrestrial and aquatic food value chains.

Proposals should build on the work done by the Commission's Joint Research Centre in support of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste and be aligned with the environmental footprint method developed by the Commission. The possible participation of the JRC in the project would consist of gathering data collected in the projects into a consistent framework for modelling food losses and waste, integrating life cycle assessment

considerations in the projects, in particular in the assessment of food losses and waste prevention intervention and food innovation, helping translating results into policy relevant outputs.

Proposals should deliver on the food waste reduction and prevention targets relevant to the farm to fork strategy, across the food systems. In addition, in area A, they should also explain how they will deliver co-benefits on the four Food 2030 priorities: nutrition for sustainable healthy diets, climate and environment, circularity and resource efficiency, and innovation and empowerment of communities.

In area A, the required multi-actor approach must be implemented by conducting inter- and trans-disciplinary research and involving a wide diversity of food system actors, with special attention paid to consumers and civil society organisations.

Proposals are encouraged to build on past or ongoing EU-funded research and work together with relevant initiatives including the European Commission Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste. They should set out a clear plan on how they will work with other proposals selected under this and any other relevant topics, e.g. by participating in joint activities and workshops, or by running common communication and dissemination activities.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines. Proposals should take into account and address inequalities, whether they be due to gender, race or other social categories.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-09: Microbiomes in food production systems**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part. International organisations with headquarters in a Member State or associated country are exceptionally eligible for funding.

Expected Outcome: The successful proposal will be in line with the European Green Deal priorities and the farm to fork strategy for a fair healthy and environmentally friendly food

system, as well as with the EU's Climate ambition for 2030 and 2050. It will support R&I to foster advances in microbiome-related research for more sustainable agricultural food production. This in turn will contribute to the transformation of food systems to deliver co-benefits for climate (mitigation and adaptation), biodiversity, environmental sustainability and circularity, dietary shift, sustainable healthy nutrition and safe food, food poverty reduction and empowerment of communities, and thriving businesses.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- More nutritious and diverse plant-based food produce and products, based upon diverse microbiomes.
- Knowledge that leads to microbiome based understanding as needed by the industry on the interaction of plants (e.g. secondary metabolites) and of plant microbiomes with animal and human microbiomes. This is within the context of animal/human health effects, and of plants hosting plant/human/animal pathogens or other microorganisms causing quality and safety problems.
- Enhanced "translational research", which generates and applies knowledge that can improve human health and environmental practices and contributes to yield stability and food and nutrition security.
- Strengthened relationships between all actors involved in our food systems (e.g. farmers, and consumers) by offering transparency of business strategies, including related integrated assessments and decision support tools.

Scope: Diversity is increasingly important and is fundamental to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2, 3, 12, 13, 14 and 15. To introduce such diversity there is a need to implement research and innovation, education, communication, regulation and policy at (multi-)national and European level addressing existing food systems-related microbiome research gaps from laboratory to the field to food production ecosystems. This includes the interaction of food chain microbiome components from the soil to the plant/animal to the plate. We require a better understanding of the interaction of microbial biodiversity of plant/animal/human microbiomes and other biological processes in the larger food and animal/human health context. This is based upon an understanding that plant/animal/human microbiome/ microbiota comprises all microorganisms, including pathogens, and beneficial microorganisms.

The scope covers plant/animal/human/food microbiome interactions that can provide healthier food and reduce human health and environmental risks, and contribute to restoring biodiversity, enhanced circularity, and climate change adaptation.

A better understanding of the potential (direct or indirect) interactions between plant/animal/human/food microbiomes should be achieved. Successful proposals should directly link their R&I coverage with other related intervention actions developing microbiome products and knowledge. In the medium term, food products grown and processed under

optimised conditions favouring positive interactions with the microbiome must be harvested and delivered at comparable costs to those originating in today's conventional farming or intensive agriculture systems. This should be achieved while ensuring that the microbiome-solutions have low risk for consumers, farmers and other users, and the environment, maintaining the economic balance of production facilities and preventing dramatic economic losses, in particular to primary producers. New products may seek EU market regulatory approval, thus proposals should address relevant EU regulatory requirements as well as EFSA safety guidance and risk assessment and health outcomes verification.

Proposals are expected to address the following:

- The characterisation and development of microbiomes and their downstream products providing dietary diversity for improved human and animal health, and resilient food production systems.
- Mapping and provision of the arising co-benefits relevant to the four Food 2030 priorities: nutrition for sustainable healthy plant-based food and feed as well as those relevant to different socio-economic and cultural groups.
- Increasing knowledge and understanding of the biological and ecological processes involved in the assembly and dynamics of plant microbial communities, particularly microbial invasion and persistence, all along the production chains to deploy microbiota shaping-based strategies to improve the quality and safety of food products.
- Designing multi-objective multi-region microbiome/diet transition pathways for EU food systems, gathering all aspects of sustainable food systems and diets, health and safety parameters, biodiversity climate and environmental factors, circularity and resource efficiency, innovation and empowerment of communities, traditional and cultural resources.
- Seek international cooperation (such as with the International Bioeconomy Forum, the 'one planet sustainable food systems' programme, etc.), along with early and wide communication of microbiome science and applications.
- Address food industry needs, particularly personnel training in classical microbiology and modern microbiome skills; the closing of regulatory loopholes for microbial products; and the demarcation of research levels providing better differentiation to the companies developing the products.

The required multi-actor approach (see eligibility conditions) must be implemented by involving a wide diversity of food system actors and conducting inter- and trans-disciplinary research engaging consumers and civil society organisations. Proposals are encouraged to build on past or ongoing EU-funded research, research infrastructures and collaborate with relevant initiatives, including the Horizon Europe mission in the area of soil health and food international cooperation, the International Bioeconomy Forum, the 'one planet sustainable food systems' programme, etc. The proposals should set out a clear plan on how it will

collaborate with other related proposals selected under this and any other relevant topic/call, by participating in joint activities, workshops, as well as common communication and dissemination activities.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-10: Integrated surveillance system to prevent and reduce diet-related non communicable diseases (NCDs)**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 11.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 11.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal priorities and the farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system, as well as with the EU's climate ambition for 2030 and 2050, the successful proposal will support R&I aiming to reduce diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs). It will contribute to the transformation of food systems to deliver co-benefits for climate (mitigation and adaptation), environmental sustainability and circularity, dietary shifts, sustainable healthy nutrition and safe food, food poverty reduction and empowerment of communities, and thriving businesses.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- Improving public health by introducing improved NCDs biomarkers.
- Better understanding of human (male and female) physiology, metabolic regulation and the links between all aspects of nutrition and health, microbiome and disease development.
- Robust and reliable knowledge base on variations in human health in response to nutrition and other relevant factors. Translation of this knowledge into innovative and effective food and nutrition solutions to improve people's health and wellbeing in ways that are adapted to women and to men, while simultaneously taking into account other dimensions of sustainability such as climate and the environment.

- Comprehensive evidence base on links between nutrition/health and disease by conducting hypothesis-driven studies and adopting more integrated research approaches.
- Improved public awareness and a healthier diet which will reduce NCDs in particular in vulnerable population groups across Europe, addressing health inequalities.

Scope: Unsustainable and unhealthy diets, with an increased demand for livestock products and calorie-dense and nutrient-poor foods that are often highly processed (high in calories, sugars, sodium/salt, saturated fat and alcohol, and low in wholegrains, fruits and vegetables, legumes, nuts and seeds), are the leading NCD risk factor and a driver of high obesity rates. In Europe, at present, more than half of the adult population is overweight or obese, and children and population groups of lower socio-economic status are the most severely affected. NCDs such as cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes are responsible for the deaths of 41 million people each year, equivalent to 71% of all deaths globally<sup>183</sup>. NCDs have a negative impact on both lives and health budgets but are largely preventable through effective interventions that tackle shared risk factors (such as unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, tobacco use and alcohol abuse).

The complexity of the interactions between diet and human health requires multi-level engagement and inter- and transdisciplinary approaches to improve public health and reduce Europe's major health and economic burden. The development of new societally acceptable approaches/strategies/tools for healthy and sustainable diets that reduce diet-related NCDs requires a systemic approach involving a wide diversity of actors and sectors at different levels (from local to international). These include policy makers and public authorities, health care providers, schools and higher education establishments, food producers and processors, retailers, hospitality and food services (e.g. restaurants, canteens), researchers, non-governmental consumer and patient organisations, science brokers and private individuals.

Proposals should consider a range of diet-related NCDs, geographic, socio-economic, behavioural and cultural factors. The gender dimension of the research is particularly important for this topic. Data collected and integrated by the private and public sectors should be broken down by gender and by socio-economic groups.

Where relevant, activities should build and expand on the results of past and ongoing research projects. Selected projects under this topic (and under the HORIZON-HLTH-2022-STAYHLTH-01-05-two-stage topic: *Prevention of obesity throughout the life course*) are strongly encouraged to participate in joint activities as appropriate, possibly in the form of project clustering, workshops, etc. Proposals are expected to show support for common coordination and dissemination activities. Applicants should plan the necessary budget to cover such activities.

Proposals are expected to address the following:

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<sup>183</sup> IPES FOOD 2019. Towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union: The policy reform and realignment that is required to build sustainable food systems in Europe. International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food systems;  
[ECIPE.Europe's Obesity Challenge.2016](#)

- Mapping and monitoring of the diet-related NCD situation (e.g. cardiovascular and heart diseases, obesity, diabetes, cancer and allergies) at the EU level, based on a literature review to better understand the relationship between lifestyle (including diet, nutrition and alcohol, physical activity), physiological and genetic parameters including the human microbiome, gender and sex, geographical placement (national/regional/neighbourhood and rural/urban zone), socio-economic, cultural and environmental (with particular reference to the human exposome) factors, biological parameters (including genomics and microbiomes), and the risk of NCDs.
- Development of standardised methods for collecting (missing) data, using existing data/studies/cohorts and increasing the use of big data and artificial intelligence to elucidate the complex interactions between diet and human health.
- Development of advanced and easy-to-use biomarkers of risk/response for NCDs, including non-invasive and microbiome-based ones.
- Assessment and monitoring of the impact of existing measures/interventions/policies in the EU on reducing NCDs.
- Investigating and generating a strong evidence base for the key physiological processes involved in the development of NCDs and how they may be affected by nutrition (from specific nutrient, dietary components to foods and dietary patterns) and other factors (e.g. geographical, biological, socio-economic, cultural, environmental, educational), taking into account individual genotype-phenotype status.
- Development of a strong evidence base on the risks of unhealthy diet and unhealthy food (high in calories, sugars, sodium/salt, saturated fat and alcohol, low in wholegrains, fruits and vegetables, legumes, nuts and seeds, and often highly processed) within the development of NCDs versus healthy food/products.
- Identifying high risk/vulnerable populations across Europe, better understanding their predisposition to diet-related diseases, and designing specific hypothesis-driven research and well-controlled intervention studies with very strict conditions to reduce dietary and health inequalities in different countries, regions, rural and urban areas.
- Developing more targeted recommendations for effective and cost-efficient integrated policies (such as social, fiscal, regulatory, marketing) in the short-, medium- and long term. These are to support Member States and associated countries and policy makers in designing effective and cost-efficient policies that focus on prevention and promote healthy diets to reduce diet-related NCDs, taking into account environmental, gender, social and economic sustainability aspects.
- Undertaking risk/benefit cost analyses for the different options proposed to better predict and understand effective and long-term impacts and facilitate informed policy decisions and societal debate.



The required multi-actor approach (see the eligibility conditions) must be implemented by involving a wide diversity of food system actors and conducting inter- and trans-disciplinary research.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-11: Effective systems for authenticity and traceability in the food system**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 10.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <p>The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p>
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Actions developing tools and models are expected to reach TRL 7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

**Expected Outcome:** In line with the European Green Deal priorities and the farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system, the successful proposal will support R&I in improving traceability and combating food fraud along the food supply chain. It will contribute to the transformation of food systems to deliver co-benefits for climate (mitigation and adaptation), environmental sustainability and circularity, dietary shifts, sustainable healthy nutrition and safe food, food poverty reduction and empowerment of communities, and thriving businesses.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- A robust knowledge base of the underlying reasons for/drivers of food fraud (e.g. economic and social) and the extent of food fraud.
- Innovative strategies and solutions (tools and devices) to prevent fraudulent practices by improving traceability and safeguarding authenticity, and fostering solutions for fraud prevention.

- Improved assistance to control bodies and authorities in fraud prevention.
- Improved transparency through digital solutions (such as IoT, artificial intelligence, blockchain and distributed ledger technologies) that meet consumer demand for food transparency, with a focus on demonstrating authenticity of food as a way to reduce food fraud and boost consumer confidence in food origin and quality.
- Contribution to further development of policies for food authentication and traceability and for fighting food fraud/food crime.
- Support official control by providing guidance on detection and mitigation of fraudulent practices.

Scope: To contribute to the goals of the farm to fork strategy, the EU will scale up its fight against food fraud to create a level playing field for operators and strengthen the powers of control and enforcement authorities. The new EU Official Controls Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2017/625) includes key provisions in relation to food fraud. Recently, the issue of food fraud has been thrust into the spotlight and is of increasing concern to society and to the food industry. It can have very different impacts on consumers, ranging from direct health threats (e.g. consumption of toxic adulterants and contaminants) to violation of consumer rights (e.g. mislabelling). With the complexity of the global market and the addition of e-commerce, the safety risks of food fraud are likely to increase. Therefore, there is a constant need for sensitive and accurate authentication methods and innovative traceability methods to prevent food fraud and help the industry and official control authorities. Maintaining the integrity of European foods is vital to protect both consumers and the legitimate producers, industry and retail, and foster consumer confidence in the authenticity of all food products.

Successful proposals are expected to address both areas (area A and area B):

Area A:

- Take stock and determine the current state-of-the-art, identify gaps, and suggest short-, medium- and long-term strategies for closing gaps in research addressing various aspects of fraud such as societal and economic drivers, fraud opportunities, mitigation and prevention measures.
- Quantify the economic dimension of the food fraud problem and understand the behaviour of food criminals perpetrating food fraud.
- Carry out translational research on fraud detection methods to provide the required evidence base for harmonisation and standardisation of methods and harmonisation of strategies for regulatory use.
- Develop and validate rapid food fraud detection tools and real-time in-situ/on-line analytical methods for testing authenticity and quality.

- Develop and implement new food fraud detection models (based on data, by applying artificial intelligence techniques) and tracing methods through the use of new and emerging technologies, such as blockchain and smart labelling tools.
- Build common platforms and tools for sharing information among stakeholders.

Area B:

- Support the development of an early warning system (EWS) for detection and possible further prevention of fraudulent practices and an efficient use of artificial intelligence, taking into consideration the data protection rules in place.
- Evaluate the utility of different food-authenticity-related databases existing in Member States and the EU institutions, and create a central database/data portal for further use of these data by authorised users to improve fraud detection and enforcement actions by the competent authorities.
- Develop tools that increase consumers' confidence in the authenticity and quality of the food supply, in line with the relevant legal frameworks.
- Investigate food chain stakeholders' attitudes towards adulterated food to understand better their motivation to commit fraud and trade-in inferior quality goods.

The required multi-actor approach (see the eligibility conditions) must be implemented by involving a wide diversity of food system actors and conducting inter-disciplinary research. Proposals should bring together major stakeholders and scientific expertise to protect consumers and industry from food fraud.

Projects relevant to this topic should support policymaking and implementation relevant to fighting food fraud.

Proposals should explain how they will contribute to achieving the objectives of the farm to fork strategy and deliver co-benefits to the four Food 2030 priorities.

Proposals should involve a wide diversity of actors and implement an inter- and trans-disciplinary approach. They are encouraged to build on past and ongoing EU-funded research, and are strongly encouraged to cluster with upcoming projects under the HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-04 topic: *Innovative solutions to prevent adulteration of food bearing quality labels: focus on organic food and geographical indications*. They are also strongly encouraged to work with existing research infrastructure and collaborate with relevant initiatives, including specifically the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) Knowledge Centre for Food Fraud and Quality, which provides expertise in food science, authenticity and quality of food supplied in the EU. The possible participation of the JRC in the project will ensure that the project deliverables are compatible with and/or improve existing databases and tools used at the European Commission and foster open access to project results via dissemination through the European Commission Knowledge Centre for Food Fraud and Quality, particularly to the competent authorities of the EU Member States.

Proposals should set out a clear plan on how they will work with other projects selected under this and any other relevant topic, by participating in joint activities and running common communication and dissemination activities. Applicants should plan the necessary budget to cover these activities.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

### **Targeted international cooperation**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-12: Agro-ecological approaches in African agriculture systems**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 28.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in all member states of the African Union are exceptionally eligible for Union funding.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply: Due to the specific challenge of this topic, in addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the General Annexes, consortia must include at least eight independent legal entities established in Africa. The places of establishment of at least five of these legal entities must be in the same geographical region of Africa (as defined by the African Union: <a href="https://au.int/en/member_states/countryprofiles2">https://au.int/en/member_states/countryprofiles2</a>)</p> <p>International organisations with headquarters in a Member State or associated country are exceptionally eligible for funding.</p>

<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:  To ensure a balanced portfolio covering the agro-geographical regions of Africa, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least also to one project per geographical region that is the highest ranked, provided that the applications attain all thresholds.

Expected Outcome: In line with the farm to fork strategy, and its promotion of global transitions on sustainable food systems, successful proposals will provide a comprehensive and integrated response to current and future challenges benefiting people, nature and economic growth in Europe and in Africa.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- EU – Africa jointly tackle climate change and environmental-related challenges (e.g., biodiversity loss, natural habitats alteration, landscape degradation) and meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement on climate change, and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular ensuring food and nutrition security and decent livelihoods.
- Identification of optimal combinations of agro-ecological practices that increase the climate change mitigation and adaptation of different farming systems in different agro-ecological zones in Africa while ensuring the financial viability of businesses.
- Quantification and assessment of socio-economic and environmental performance of agro-ecological strategies contributing to sustainable agriculture practices, supporting small farmers and access to local and international markets.
- Increased end-user adoption and implementation of agro-ecological practices by farmers supporting rural communities, ensuring farm resilience and viability at individual and system levels.
- Strengthened transdisciplinary research and integrated scientific support for relevant EU policies and priorities (EU strategy for Africa, Green Deal objectives, etc.).

Scope: The EU’s relationship with Africa is a key priority for the EU. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the growing urgency of the climate crisis put pressure both on domestic/local food production and on ecosystems that generate higher health risks with the emergence of new pest and diseases for plants, animals and humans.

The implementation of agro-ecological approaches will alleviate the pressure that agri-food production places on natural ecosystems, contributing to resilience of agri-food systems and

facilitating nature-based responses to current and future agri-food risks and threats. Agro-ecological transitions of food systems requires strong food governance with interventions at different level (local, territorial, and value chain) and coherent public policies.

Proposals should build on existing and develop new knowledge, data, models (including indicators) to:

- Identify and evaluate the most suitable agro-ecological strategies for various farming systems in different agro-ecological zones, in Africa.
- Deliver a method to identify the best combination of agro-ecological practices for different farming systems, identifying barriers to and drivers of (socioeconomic and ecological) its wide implementation and the conditions, means and tools to support agro-ecological transitions at individual, territorial and systems levels, and including prospective related to access to local and international markets.
- Develop indicators to monitor and measure the qualitative and quantitative impacts of these strategies for different farming systems, the climate neutrality potential and trade-offs, nutrients flows, biodiversity and improvement of in farm socio-economic resilience.
- Support farmers, advisory services and actors in value chains in implementing agro-ecological practices by stablishing communities to support capacity building, knowledge exchange, and share best practices across different human communities in relation to agro-ecological practices that contribute to mitigating climate change and other environmental impacts.
- Identify approaches and methods to enhance the demand for food products resulting from agro-ecological practices, from local, national, regional and international markets.

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure adequate involvement of the farming sector and, as relevant, bio-based industries active in rural areas.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-13: AU-EU Combatting all forms of malnutrition**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 11.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 11.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:          Due to the specific challenge of this topic, in addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the General Annexes, consortia must include at least five independent legal entities established in Africa. The places of establishment of these legal entities must cover at least three different specific regions in Africa (as defined by the African Union: <a href="https://au.int/en/member_states/countryprofiles2">https://au.int/en/member_states/countryprofiles2</a>).</p> <p>Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in all member states of the African Union are exceptionally eligible for Union funding.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:          The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p>
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants.</p> <p>The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.</p>

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal priorities and the farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system, as well as with the EU's climate objectives for 2030 and 2050, the EU's "Comprehensive Strategy with Africa" calls for the EU to "partner with Africa to maximise the benefits of the green transition and minimise threats to the environment". It states that: "The EU and Africa must join efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goal of zero hunger and address the challenges of nutrition and food security by boosting safe and sustainable agri-food systems." In support of this strategy, the EU and the African Union are implementing a ten-year roadmap (2016-2026) on research and innovation in food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture to which the successful proposal will contribute. This will help to transform food systems to deliver co-benefits for climate (mitigation and adaptation), environmental sustainability, biodiversity and circularity, dietary shift, sustainable healthy nutrition and safe food, food poverty reduction and empowerment of communities, and thriving businesses. An estimated 821 million people are currently undernourished, and 151 million children under five years of age are stunted. At the same time, the number of overweight and obese people is increasing rapidly in Europe and Africa, with no signs of slowing.

This research and innovation action (RIA) will build on the international dimension of the farm to fork strategy. It relates to evidence presented by the EAT Lancet report and the 2020 Global Nutrition Report. It contributes to the agenda and follow-up of the 2021 UN World Food Systems Summit.

A successful proposal will develop and test approaches to innovations that improve nutrition through a deeper understanding of the unmet nutritional needs, aspirations, behaviours and preferences of consumers who remain underserved by markets and face limited access to affordable nutritious foods.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Better informed nutrition policies that can be scaled-up by initiatives such as SUN (scaling-up nutrition).
- Improved nutrition in African countries reducing all forms of malnutrition through safe, healthy and affordable diets, including dietary shifts, that reduce the pressure of food production on land and water use and reduces the climate footprint of downstream activities from farm to fork.

Scope: Proposals are expected to address the following:

- Mapping and monitoring of dietary patterns at national/regional/rural/urban levels relevant to different socio-economic and cultural groups, including low-income settings, the most vulnerable, rural food environments and for those in conflict or protracted-crisis situations to better understand what people are eating and how they make food choices.
- Contribute to standardised metrics and tools to measure the food environment. In many food systems the absence of formal channels to acquire food lead to a dynamic, self-sufficiency and unregulated retail food environment with a large proportion of informal food vendors. This results in enormous variety in metrics in terms of reference points (i.e. food accessibility), media coverage (i.e. food promotion) and level of implementation (i.e. policies).
- Improved knowledge and measurement of the factors influencing dietary behaviour in selected African countries, and development of effective means for each food system actor to share food knowledge and improve food behaviour.
- Assessment of the value of and potential for scaling-up of sustainable traditional food knowledge based on access to biodiverse agro-ecological situations.
- Assessment of innovations to improve nutrition, driven by a deep understanding of the unmet nutritional needs, aspirations, behaviours and preferences of consumers who remain underserved by markets and face limited access to affordable nutritious foods.
- Innovative and effective tools to improve education, communication, engagement and training on sustainable healthy nutrition and diets, and more generally on sustainable food systems adapted to different population groups in respect of their age, culture and needs and considering gender.



- Provision of a scientific basis for sharing food knowledge and developing dietary advice to support policy makers to empower individuals to adopt healthy and sustainable food behaviour, as a win-win for both their health and the environment.
- Supporting the development of new integrated policy-making and implementation efforts such as the scaling-up nutrition initiative within and across countries (at multiple levels). This will support healthier and sustainable dietary behaviours and lifestyles with the provision of innovative, efficient, effective, evidence-based and ready-to-use tools/strategies including cost-benefit assessment of the different options proposed.
- Contributing to the mapping and monitoring of mycotoxin effects in unsafe foods and diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs) to better understand the relationship between lifestyle (including mycotoxin levels, diets, nutrition and alcohol), gender, geographical, socioeconomic and environmental factors, biological parameters, and the risk of development of diet related NCDs.
- Development of innovative and effective policies/strategies/tools contributing to reduce dietary and health inequalities as precursors of NCDs, in particular in vulnerable population groups.
- A space for mentoring and acceleration of innovative business concepts, including social innovation and upscaling for promising approaches using cascading funding opportunities.
- When relevant, creating links to and using the information and data of the European Earth observation programme Copernicus, the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and the global Earth observation system of systems (GEOSS).
- Include a clear plan on collaboration with other projects selected under this topic, other nutrition related EU projects and similar projects funded under the EU-AU HLPD-FNSSA priority from different funding sources including Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe, ERA-Nets, African Union research grants, DeSIRA or PRIMA. They should contribute to the work of the FNSSA-working group (WG) by linking to the LEAP4FNSSA project supporting the FNSSA-WG secretariat. They should participate in joint activities, workshops, and communication and dissemination activities and show potential for upscaling. Applicants should plan the necessary funding to cover these activities.
- Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake. This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-14: African food cities**

<b>Specific conditions</b>
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<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:          Due to the specific challenge of this topic, in addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the General Annexes, consortia must include at least five independent legal entities established in Africa. The places of establishment of these legal entities must cover at least three different specific regions in Africa (as defined by the African Union: <a href="https://au.int/en/member_states/countryprofiles2">https://au.int/en/member_states/countryprofiles2</a>).</p> <p>Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in all member states of the African Union are exceptionally eligible for Union funding.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:          The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p>
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants.</p> <p>The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.</p>

**Expected Outcome:** In line with the European Green Deal priorities and the farm to fork strategy for a fair healthy and environmentally friendly food system, as well as with the EU's climate objectives for 2030 and 2050, the EU's "Comprehensive Strategy with Africa" calls on the EU to "partner with Africa to maximise the benefits of the green transition and minimise threats to the environment". In support of this strategy, the EU and the African Union are implementing a ten-year roadmap (2016-2026) on research and innovation in food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture to which the successful proposal will contribute. It will also contribute to the transformation of food systems to deliver co-benefits for climate (mitigation and adaptation), environmental sustainability and circularity, dietary shift, sustainable healthy nutrition and safe food, food poverty reduction and empowerment of communities, and thriving businesses.

Urban areas contribute significantly to global food-system related emissions and food waste. Urban growth often happens at the expense of natural resources. Urban areas are increasingly

affected by the double burden of malnutrition: high prevalence of undernourishment and undernutrition and increasing obesity and the spread of non communicable diseases.

A successful proposal will build on initiatives like the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), on the FAO urban food agenda and upon the recommendations of the Task Force Rural Africa report. It will address big, intermediate and small cities and towns. It will address the fact that poorly planned urban food systems lack opportunities to link rural and urban food producers, markets and consumers, and limit the access of vulnerable groups to safe and healthy nutrition.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all or some of following expected outcomes:

- A shift to food security and improved nutrition in five African cities (could encompass rural urban centres and cities) through a shift to healthy and affordable diets that reduces the pressure of food production on land and water use and reduces the climate footprint of downstream activities from farm to fork.
- Reducing the food-system-related environmental footprint, improving circularity (e.g. food and packaging waste), and providing citizens with new, sustainable and healthy products.

Scope: Proposals are expected to address the following:

- Understanding: promoting multi-stakeholder collaborations in assessing data on food challenges (including harmful marketing and advertising and unequal access to healthy food for the urban poor), and identifying opportunities and indicators in developing urban food policies.
- Engaging: mobilising a wide diversity of food system actors (from farm to fork, the public and private sector, and society, organic and conventional); in particular higher education institutions and research centres to work with local actors in support of evidence-based food policy development and to help provide local solutions to integrated food system challenges.
- Mutual learning: reinforcing or creating new networks of African cities and towns to share good practices and learn from and support each other. This implies also involving cities (in Africa, Europe or elsewhere) with well-developed food policies to provide guidance and lessons learned, as well as new forms of collaboration/twinning.
- Innovation: proposals should envisage a space for mentoring and accelerating innovative business concepts, including social innovation and upscaling in view of African or European food business entrepreneurs with special consideration of women and the diaspora using cascading funding opportunities. Proposals may involve financial support to third parties e.g. to academic researchers, start-ups, SMEs and other multidisciplinary actors, to, for instance, develop, test or validate developed assessment approaches or collect or prepare data sets or provide other contributions to achieve the project objectives. A maximum of EUR 60 000 per third party may be granted. Conditions for

third parties support are set out in Part B of the General Annexes. Consortia need to define the selection process of organisations, for which financial support will be granted. A maximum 20% of the EU funding can be allocated to this purpose. The financial support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants.

- Where relevant, creating links to and using the information and data of the European Earth observation programme Copernicus, the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and the global Earth observation system of systems (GEOSS).
- Exploring how the food environment can become crisis-proof (whether something can be learnt from or has changed with the COVID-19 crisis) and how to create resilient local, regional food systems with border regimes, which do not disrupt supply chains.
- Governance: developing and evaluating innovative multi-actor urban food systems governance processes and capacities for science-backed integrated policy making and implementation actions that deliver on the international collaboration dimension of the farm to fork strategy objectives and Food 2030 co-benefits for health, environment, climate, circularity and inclusion, while minimizing trade-offs.
- EU-AU partnership: proposals should have a clear plan on how they will collaborate with other projects selected under this topic and similar projects funded under the EU-AU HLPD-FNSSA priority from different funding sources including Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe, ERA-Nets, African Union research grants, DeSIRA or PRIMA. They should contribute to the work of the FNSSA-working group (WG) by linking to the LEAP4FNSSA project supporting the FNSSA-WG secretariat. They should participate in joint activities, workshops and as common communication and dissemination activities and show potential for upscaling. Applicants should plan the necessary funding to cover these activities.
- Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake. This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01-15: Support for international research on infectious animal diseases**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action.</p> <p>International organisations with headquarters in a Member State or associated country are exceptionally eligible for funding.</p>
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Expected Outcome: In line with the farm to fork strategy, for a transition to fair, healthy and resilient livestock production systems, including the reduction of anti-microbial usage, a successful proposal will support research and innovation (R&I) to help research funders, policy makers and business operators in decreasing the burden of infectious animal diseases, thus contributing to sustainable agriculture and to public health at global level. Considering the transboundary nature of infectious animal diseases and relate issues such as anti-microbial resistance, providing support to the work of the STAR-IDAZ International Research Consortium (IRC) will facilitate international coordination of research in these domains. Such a support will enhance and leverage capacity to prevent and control diseases not only globally, but also in the EU and associated countries, to reduce the risk to human health arising from infectious animal diseases and anti-microbial resistance, and to contribute to global food security.

At EU level, this will contribute to supporting the objectives of the ‘farm to fork’ strategy for a transition to fair, healthy and resilient European livestock production systems, including the reduction of anti-microbial usage while improving the efficiency and competitiveness of livestock production,

Project results are expected to contribute to all following outcomes:

- ensuring public access to and active dissemination of pertinent information on research activities, needs, and research outputs on priority infectious animal diseases, including zoonoses, and related issues; and
- fostering the delivery of new or improved prevention, control and surveillance tools or strategies.

Scope: Infectious animal diseases and related issues can cause serious social, economic and environmental damage and in a number of cases threaten human health (zoonoses, anti-microbial resistance). These diseases do not respect borders and can often spread quickly through out the globe. These global threats, the diversity of pathogens and livestock species and the scarce resources available for animal health research make the case for international cooperation on priority diseases and issues, in order to expedite the development of better prevention and control methods, ensure the sustainability of livestock industries and protect human health and the environment. This initiative should consolidate and deepen international research cooperation in the area of infectious animal diseases and related issues such as anti-microbial resistance. It should support the activities of the STAR-IDAZ International Research Consortium (Star-IDAZ IRC), aiming to strengthen the global network of research

programme owners and funding organisations in order to achieve specific targets relating to the prevention and control of priority infectious animal diseases, including zoonoses, and related issues such as anti-microbial resistance and new emerging threats. The action should (i) facilitate the work of the Executive and Scientific Committee and the working groups, (ii) organise research gap analyses as appropriate, (iii) maintain the necessary tools and other work resources, (iv) disseminate pertinent information and results to stakeholders and users, (v) organise interaction with relevant projects and initiatives, and (vi) organise activities to leverage resources and enlarge the network as appropriate. In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**Call - Fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption**

***HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-02-two-stage***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>184</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>185</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2022		
Opening: 28 Oct 2021				
Deadline(s): 15 Feb 2022 (First Stage), 06 Sep 2022 (Second Stage)				
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-02-01-two-stage	RIA	14.50	Around 5.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-02-02-two-stage	RIA	7.00	Around 7.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-02-03-two-stage	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-02-04-	IA	15.00	Around	3

<sup>184</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>185</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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two-stage			5.00	
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-02-05-two-stage	IA	18.00	Around 6.00	3
Overall indicative budget		66.50		

**General conditions relating to this call**

<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

**Enabling sustainable farming**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-02-01-two-stage: Agroecological approaches for sustainable weed management**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 14.50 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
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Expected Outcome: A successful proposal should support the farm to fork's strategy objective of a transition to a fair, healthy and resilient European agriculture, notably its objective to promote agroecology, and the target to reduce the overall use and risk of chemical pesticides<sup>186</sup>, by unfolding the potential of agroecology to provide alternative weeding strategies that reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides used as herbicides. This will support the transition to sustainable, safe, productive, climate-neutral and resilient farming systems that minimise the pressure on ecosystems while ensuring fair economic returns for farmers.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Evidence of optimal and innovative combinations of holistic alternative weeding techniques based on agroecological approaches in different European pedo-climatic conditions for a wide range of crops and farming systems, including conventional, organic and mixed farming;
- Quantitative and qualitative evidence of the social, economic and environmental sustainability and performance, as well as trade-offs, of different alternative weeding strategies across Europe at farm, landscape and regional levels, and in the medium to long term;
- Robust evidence of factors influencing farmers' decision-making and improved knowledge co-creation and feedback among actors in the food value chain, resulting in ease of use, end-user acceptance and increased implementation of alternative and holistic weeding strategies based on an integrated use of agroecological approaches;
- Improved, open access to data on current weed management practices and use of herbicides across several representative European agro-ecosystems.

Scope: Herbicides have become the foundation of weed management in EU farming systems. Given that herbicides can have harmful effects on the environment, non-target organisms, and animal and human health, reducing reliance on these products has become a policy objective. Sustainable and effective non-chemical alternatives to reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides are largely lacking for most crops and farming systems in the EU. Weed-related challenges can be better addressed as a part of broad-based, holistic strategies such as agroecology<sup>187</sup> that, by relying on and maximising the use of ecological processes to support agricultural production, have the potential to advance ecosystem sustainability while ensuring

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<sup>186</sup> The farm to fork strategy sets the target to reduce by 50% the overall use and risk of chemical pesticides and reduce use by 50% of more hazardous pesticides

<sup>187</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/i9037en/i9037en.pdf>



profitability of the farming activity. Agroecology is a holistic approach that relies on and maximises the use of ecological processes to support agricultural production. By working more with nature and ecosystem services, agroecology has the potential to increase the circularity, diversification and autonomy of farms, and drive a full transformation of farming systems, from input substitution and beyond. In parallel, progressing towards digitalisation or the implementation of new digital technologies is one of the main ambitions facing EU agriculture. The development and promotion of alternative weed management techniques and strategies that do not only rely on chemical herbicides are required. Moreover, factors such as soil and climatic conditions, as well as the type of crop and the farming system can largely determine the spatial and temporal development of major weeds and, therefore, the effectiveness and efficiency of these strategies. Agroecological or nature-based principles can provide systemic, sustainable, context-specific and socially acceptable alternatives to address these challenges.

Activities should advance knowledge, build capacities and deliver innovative systemic and holistic solutions to reduce and eventually eliminate the use of chemical pesticides used as herbicides, and will address the needs of a wide range of crops (arable and permanent) and farming systems, both conventional and organic. Proposals should cover all EU and Associated Countries biogeographical/pedo-climatic regions. Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and should build on and expand the achievements of relevant past and ongoing EU-funded research projects.

Proposals should include a clear plan on how they will collaborate with other projects funded under this topic. Projects should ensure collaboration with projects funded under the following topics in this work programme: HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-05: *Agroecological approaches for climate change mitigation, resilient agricultural production and enhanced biodiversity* and HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-03: *Digitalisation as an enabler of agroecological farming systems*. Proposals should identify optimal combinations of agroecological solutions for socially, economically and environmentally sustainable alternative weed management strategies that reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides. They should do so by capitalising on the opportunities offered by cropping system design, mechanical weed management techniques, soil management practices, breeding, bio-based herbicides, precision and site-specific weeding and digitalised weed monitoring, including by using technology and knowledge of weed biology. Proposals should test and evaluate the sustainability, performance and profitability of these strategies *versus* classical chemical weed management approaches in the medium- to long-term and at farm, landscape and regional levels, undertaking qualitative and quantitative estimates of trade-offs, and identifying gaps and needs towards non-chemical weed management. Proposals should undertake comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic aspects involved in the adoption of alternative weeding strategies based on agroecological approaches and of the factors influencing farmers' decision-making, including consumer and market aspects, like risk perception and acceptance of food produced with new weed management strategies. Proposals should develop and test strategies involving all relevant actors for knowledge co-creation and feedback to demonstrate and accompany farmers in implementing and/or switching to

agroecological weed management. Proposals should develop a repository of current weed management practices and use of herbicides in several representative EU and Associated Countries agro-ecosystems.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-02-02-two-stage: Emerging and future risks to plant health**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 7.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:                      The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p> <p>The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.</p>

Expected Outcome: In line with the farm to fork strategy for a transition to fair, healthy and resilient European agriculture and forestry, including an ambitious target of reduced use of plant protection products<sup>188</sup>, the successful proposal will support research and innovation (R&I) to help the agricultural / forestry sector to remain productive and contribute to sustainable agriculture and/or forest health.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Find adequate responses to new and/or emerging plant pests;
- Improve the understanding of drivers of plant pest emergence including the influence of climate change, ecosystem degradation and globalisation;
- Develop economic and environmentally sound solutions for effective pest management in farming and forestry in line with the principles of integrated pest management;
- Support to relevant plant health policies in the EU and Associated Countries.

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<sup>188</sup> The farm to fork strategy sets the target to reduce by 50% the overall use and risk of chemical pesticides and reduce use by 50% of more hazardous pesticides

**Scope:** Proposals should target one or more new or emerging<sup>189</sup> plant pests<sup>190</sup> (regulated, non-regulated, introduced or native) that are causing or likely to cause, significant (socio) economic and/or environmental losses to agriculture and/or forestry in the EU and/or Associated Countries. Within the scope of this topic are pests exhibiting an altered and higher probability of entry and spread in a new area that might be the result of changes in their biology or changes in agriculture or forestry pest management practice or rapid spread in new areas<sup>191</sup>. The choice of target pest(s) should consider the potential threat in terms of development and spread, its potential exacerbation under climate change as well as the potential impact on agricultural production, forestry, trade and the wider environment (including soil and water). Activities should consider both the conventional and the organic sectors.

Proposals should:

- Increase knowledge of the biology, pathways of entry, behaviour in the plant-soil system where relevant, and drivers of spread including the influence of climate change and globalization of pest(s);
- Improve methods and strategies for prevention, early detection and surveillance;
- Develop and uptake rapid and effective tools for the prevention of entry, spread and establishment, early detection, surveillance, treatment and (bio) control of plant pests for a sustainable and integrated pest management;
- Identify and introduce resistance traits to support the long term sustainability of agriculture and forestry in the EU and/or Associated Countries;
- Assess the social and economic implications for farmers and ecological impacts of the plant pest(s) and the development of approaches on how to best cope with these situations;
- Integrate citizen science as a tool to monitor emerging pests.

International cooperation with countries affected or threatened by the same pest(s) is strongly encouraged. Proposals must implement the “multi-actor approach” including a range of actors to ensure that knowledge and needs from various sectors such as research, plant health services and the farming/forestry sector are brought together. In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

The possible participation of the JRC in the project will consist of support on the analysis of the potential impact of the studied pests and the development of economic and

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<sup>189</sup> EFSA Scientific Colloquium XVI

<sup>190</sup> A pest is defined here as any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent injurious to plants or plant products (EU legislation, Regulation 2016/2031)

<sup>191</sup> EFSA Scientific Colloquium XVI

environmentally sound solutions for effective pest management in farming and forestry in line with the principles of integrated pest management in particular their acceptance by farmers.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-02-03-two-stage: Ecology of infectious animal diseases**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome: In line with the ‘farm to fork’ strategy for a transition to fair, healthy and resilient livestock production systems, including the reduction of anti-microbial usage, a successful proposal will support research and innovation (R&I) to help policy makers and relevant actors (e.g. business operators) in the prevention and control of infectious animal diseases in a changing environment, thus contributing to sustainable agriculture and to public health.

The project results are expected to contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- improving the capacity for risk-based surveillance thanks to a better understanding of sources and pathways of emergence and spread of animal diseases, including habitat destruction;
- increasing the capacity to prevent and control diseases in animals, and their potential impact in human population; and
- improving understanding of the impact of climate change on pathogen ecology and animal diseases to predict them and possibly define appropriate countermeasures.

Scope: The emergence, persistence and spread of diseases is the result of a number of factors linked to the dynamic biological or ecological interplay among and between the infectious agents, the hosts (intermediary or definitive), the community of hosts (intermediary or definitive, including wildlife), vectors in the case of vector-borne diseases, the environment, including other living organisms found in agro-ecosystems, and human activity. Understanding this interplay, at various spatial scales (herd, farm, landscape), in particular the capacity of infectious agents, vectors or hosts to persist in different agro-ecosystems, to circulate between them, or to evolve and potentially become more pathogenic or jump between species is often incomplete for known diseases, and virtually non-existent for new diseases, like the emergence of Coronavirus infections highlighted.

The proposals should address relevant areas of research in terrestrial livestock, and related wildlife as appropriate and should contribute to:

1. understanding the population dynamics of pathogens in and outside hosts, including interactions within and between humans and animals;
2. understanding the drivers of pathogen evolution (e.g. mutations) and their impact on virulence and cross-species transmission;
3. understanding the impact of the host immune response on pathogen adaptation / evolution;
4. understanding the mechanisms of behaviour/persistence of pathogens in animals, animal products, vectors and outside the host (e.g. environment, fomites);
5. inactivation of pathogens in a changing environment;
6. understanding antimicrobial resistance development, where relevant.

The choice of the infectious agent / diseases should take into account their importance for the EU policy and regulatory framework, not least for epizootic diseases such as African swine fever, avian influenza or African horse sickness, or for zoonotic pathogens, or major diseases, including production diseases, responsible for high antimicrobial usage and potential transfer of resistance to human pathogens or microbiota. Where appropriate for the diseases targeted, cooperation with relevant professionals outside the animal health domain (e.g. public health, environment) is recommended, as highlighted by the ‘one health’ approach. The gender aspects should be considered, where relevant, e.g. in pathogen transmission.

Proposals may use priorities identified under the SCAR<sup>192</sup> Collaborative Working Group on Animal Health and Welfare<sup>193</sup>, Discontools<sup>194</sup>, or STAR-IDAZ International Research Consortium<sup>195</sup>. They should draw on lessons learned from other EU funded projects on selected diseases and clearly underline how they will bring new knowledge and impacts. International research cooperation with non-EU countries where selected diseases are endemic is encouraged to maximise the impact.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-02-04-two-stage: Smart solutions for the use of digital technologies for small- and medium-sized, farms and farm structures**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and

<sup>192</sup> Standing Committee on Agricultural Research

<sup>193</sup> [https://www.scar-cwg-ahw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Final-Report-CWG-AHW-CASA\\_updated-EU-AH-SRA.pdf](https://www.scar-cwg-ahw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Final-Report-CWG-AHW-CASA_updated-EU-AH-SRA.pdf)

<sup>194</sup> [www.discontools.eu](http://www.discontools.eu)

<sup>195</sup> [www.star-idaz.net](http://www.star-idaz.net)

	selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: In line with the farm to fork strategy and the Headline ambitions of a Digital Age and Economy that works for people, leaving no one behind, and the biodiversity strategy, the successful proposals will support the development of small- and medium sized farms to benefit from digital technologies and strengthen their capacities to their effective and efficient deployment. Projects will therefore contribute to the development of sustainable, productive and climate-neutral and resilient farming systems providing consumers with affordable, safe, healthy and sustainable food, minimising pressure on ecosystems, improving public health and generating fair economic returns for farmers through the development of smart solutions for the use of digital technologies for small- and medium-sized, farms and farm structures. Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- Innovative solutions for the use of digital technologies (fostering soft- and hardware) tailored to the needs of small- and medium-sized farms and farm structures, including crop- and livestock production;
- Increased uptake of innovative digital technologies by farmers;
- Contribution to avoiding an increased digital divide between small and large farms;
- Increase in the environmental and economic performance of small- and medium-sized farms in the EU and Associate Countries.

Scope: Despite the potential of digital technologies to increase the economic and environmental performance of the agricultural sector, there is still need to increase the uptake

of precision farming tools, particularly among small- and medium-sized farms. An increase in the digital divide between small and large farms is to be avoided.

While one main reason for this circumstance is – as for many investments in agricultural equipment – investments in digital technologies frequently only become cost-effective, if a critical mass of production volume is given. In addition, small- and medium-sized farms and farms structures have in some areas specific needs and strengths, because of e.g. a small average parcel seize, which should be considered in the development of digital solutions for the sector.

Proposals should cover all of the following aspects:

- Development and piloting of cost-effective digital solutions for small- and medium-sized farms and farm structures for at least grass land and arable crops under representative consideration of the diverse environmental, climatic and socio-economic conditions across the EU and Associated Countries.
- Development of business and/ or governance models facilitating the roll-out of the piloted innovation at larger scale in several countries; if relevant, models may not only consider financing the purchase of the digital solutions but also the establishment of other framing conditions or propose public intervention (e.g. data provision) or public-private partnerships or cooperative (digital) service provision and taking.

Proposals must implement the multi-actor approach, involving at least scientists, , SMEs, and representatives of the agricultural sector. Proposals are expected to demonstrate how networking activities fostering the exchange of experiences and knowledge transfer are organised. Exchange/ collaborate with Digital Innovation Hubs<sup>196</sup> and the consideration of the potential of social innovation to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the wider application of the developed innovative digital solutions are encouraged. Special attention may also be given to certain crops and / or sub-branches, and/or specific production processes for which currently less dedicated precision farming technologies are available on the market.

Proposals may involve financial support to third parties to provide direct support (e.g. in the form of cascading grants) to researchers, developers, SMEs, start-ups and other multidisciplinary actors in particular for populating, testing and validating use cases and/ or other actions contributing to the objectives of the project. A maximum of € 60 000 per third party might be granted. Conditions for third parties support are set out in Part B of the General Annexes. Consortia need to define the selection process of organisations, for which financial support will be granted. Maximum 20% of the EU funding can be allocated to this purpose. The financial support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

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<sup>196</sup> For more information on Digital Innovation Hubs, please see <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/digital-innovation-hubs>.

## **Enabling sustainable fisheries and aquaculture**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

### **HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-02-05-two-stage: Innovative food from marine and freshwater ecosystems**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 18.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal objectives, the farm to fork strategy for a fair healthy and environmentally friendly food system, the EU bioeconomy strategy and blue growth strategy, the successful proposal will support environmentally friendly, inclusive, safe and healthy seafood production through innovation in the supply chain.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Implementation of the ecosystem approach for sustainable management of marine or freshwater fisheries or in aquaculture development.
- Wider and more diverse range of seafood (including from fresh waters) available to European consumers, and greater overall seafood consumption.
- Tools to limit the waste and discarding of seafood during production, processing, transport and consumption, including the minimisation of the environmental impacts of fisheries and aquaculture through better gears or practices.
- Verification of existing and development of new seafood processing methods that add nutritional and economic value and minimise the environmental impact.
- Improved professional skills and competences of those working and being trained to work within the blue economy.

Scope: Despite the vast diversity of biota in the European seas, rivers and lakes, consumers prefer only a few species for consumption. This is even more pronounced for aquaculture production where only a very limited number of fish and shellfish species are farmed. Moreover, some of the farmed species are higher predators and, despite improvements in



feeds, fishing for feed is still a sad reality. Waste of seafood during production, processing, transport and consumption is massive; valorisation of fish and shellfish biomass is still far from achieving its full potential in the context of a circular economy.

Innovation under this topic should explore and test solutions for more sustainable fishing and/or aquaculture practices and diversify production through low trophic level fisheries and/or aquaculture. This could include animals (herbivorous, filter-feeders), algae (micro- and macro-), bacteria and fungi. Issues of biology, feeding, metabolism, disease, pathology, environmental sustainability, gear technology, processing, and marketing of products may be addressed.

Innovation should additionally focus on improving the environmental impact of fisheries and/or aquaculture, e.g. with more selective and less impacting fishing gear, low carbon fishing approaches, nutritious and safe feeds, recirculating aquaculture systems, integrated multitrophic aquaculture, disease control and sustainable solutions in fish and shellfish rearing. It may also identify captured species of high abundance and high nutritional value and reach out to consumers to promote their consumption.

Innovative processing, including digital and packaging solutions as well as formulation and/or fortification, may also be considered to minimise loss of fish and shellfish biomass, add nutritional and economic value to the chain (including by-products), enhance the shelf life of the products, and reduce food waste.

The projects that will be selected may also address issues of proximity between seafood production and consumption, e.g. by exploring possibilities to turn artisanal fisheries more environmentally friendly and economically viable. Innovative processing possibilities may also be explored.

A strong communication component and a genuine co-creation approach with stakeholders and end users, including from industry, consumers and NGOs, are key for a successful introduction, in the medium-term, of innovative and sustainably produced seafood in the EU and in Horizon Europe associated countries. Training and education activities should be included.

International co-operation with partners from non-associated third countries is strongly encouraged as a win-win scenario, while contributing to the European competitiveness and resilience.

Where relevant, proposals may seek synergies and capitalise on the results of projects funded under Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, its continuation European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, and other funding streams.

Social innovation should be considered when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

## **Destination – Circular economy and bioeconomy sectors**

This destination and its topics target climate-neutral **circular and bioeconomy transitions**, covering safe **integrated circular solutions at territorial and sectoral levels**, for important material flows and product value chains, such as the textile, electronics, plastics and construction sectors, as well as **key bioeconomy sectors** such as **sustainable bio-based systems, sustainable forestry, small-scale rural bio-based solutions, and aquatic value chains**. With this approach, the destination supports the European Green Deal, and other European initiatives such as the Industrial Strategy, SME Strategy, Circular Economy Action Plan, Bioeconomy Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy, Farm to Fork Strategy, Textile Strategy, Plastics Strategy, the Action Plan on Critical Raw Materials, and the Forest Strategy.

More specifically, the focus on **circularity**<sup>197</sup> aims at less waste and more value by extending the lifetime and retaining the value of products and materials. It supports a sharing, reusing, and material-efficient economy, in a safe way, and minimises the non-sustainable use of natural resources. The cascading use of materials and innovative upcycling of waste to new applications is encouraged. The safe and sustainable use of biomass and waste<sup>198</sup> for the production of materials and products, including nutrients, can reduce Europe's dependence on non-renewable resources, cut GHG emissions, offer long-term circular carbon sinks and substitutes to fossil-based and carbon-intensive products, and reduce pressures on biodiversity and its wide range of ecosystem services. The potential of biological resources goes beyond biomass processing into renewable products. It includes the use of organisms and their parts in “green” (i.e. more environmentally friendly) bio-based industrial processes. Marine and land-based biotechnology can provide new sustainable and safe food and feed production methods, greener industrial products and processes, new health-related products, and can help characterise, monitor and sustain the health of marine and terrestrial ecosystems. The potential of marine resources and biotechnology will contribute to the coming “blue economy”, accelerating the transition towards a circular and climate-neutral economy that is sustainable and inclusive. The concepts of the circular economy, bioeconomy and blue economy converge and altogether provide an opportunity to balance environmental, social and economic goals, with their sustainability ensured by the life cycle assessment approaches.

Acknowledging the multiple benefits of circularized material/substance and energy flows, such circularity however has to be achieved in a safe, non-hazardous way without (re-)connecting epidemiological pathways or introducing pathogen/toxin enrichment cycles when involving biogenic materials. Established circularized material/substance flows have to be complemented with accompanying research in their safety and non-hazardous to health,

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<sup>197</sup> In synergy with Horizon Europe Clusters 4 and 5, in particular, Cluster 4 dealing with industrial and technological aspects and raw materials supply, including construction with lower environmental footprint, through modularisation, digital technologies, circularity and advanced materials, while Cluster 6 has a systemic approach across sectors including civil society, covering the whole value chain: including technological, business, governance and social innovation aspects.

<sup>198</sup> EU Waste Framework legislation: <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/legislation/>

society, economy and nature. In addition, a **local and regional focus**<sup>199</sup> is crucial for a circular economy and bioeconomy that is sustainable, regenerative, inclusive and just. Innovative urban and regional solutions and value chains can create more and better quality jobs and help our economies rebound from the COVID-19 crisis.

A systemic and science-based circular transition with the help of research, innovation and investments will address all issues from material selection and product design via resource efficiency along the value chain to an optimised after-use system, incorporating reuse, repair and upgrade, refurbishment, remanufacturing, collection, sorting and new forms of recycling and upcycling also to improve the waste cycle management. It will tackle all barriers and mobilise all key stakeholders. The development of definitions, taxonomies, indicators and targets will inform and support policy and decision making. The use of advanced life cycle methods such as the European Commission Product Environmental Footprint (PEF), data and information will enable economic actors, including consumers, to make sustainable choices. The development and deployment of specific technological and non-technological circular solutions, including new business models, will cover intra- and inter-value chain collaboration between economic actors. The development of a working after-use system for plastic-based products, incorporating reuse, collection, sorting, and recycling technologies will provide insights into the transition towards a circular economy for key material flows including plastics. The Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI)<sup>200</sup> under the European Circular Economy Action Plan will expand the circular economy concept beyond traditional resource recovery in waste and water sectors and support the implementation, demonstration and replication of systemic circular solutions for the transition towards a sustainable, regenerative, inclusive and just circular economy at local and regional scale. Water use will be tackled from a circularity perspective, aiming at pollution prevention, resource efficiency and business opportunities.

**Bio-based innovation** lays the foundations for the transition away from a fossil-based carbon-intensive economy by encompassing the sustainable sourcing, industrial<sup>201 202</sup> and small scale processing and conversion of biomass from land and sea into circular bio-based materials and products with reduced carbon and environmental footprint including lower impacts on biodiversity and long-term circular carbon sinks in sustainable products substituting carbon-intensive ones, with improved end-of-life including biodegradability in

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<sup>199</sup> In synergy with Horizon Europe Cluster 4, with focus on the industrial dimensions; and Cluster 5, covering cross-sectoral solutions for decarbonisation (including on community level), whereas Cluster 6 targets systemic regional and local (i.e. territorial) circular and bioeconomy approach.

<sup>200</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm?pg=circular>

<sup>201</sup> In synergy with Horizon Europe Clusters 4, 5 (including their European Partnerships), whereas Cluster 4 targets industrial dimension (including digitisation and circular and climate neutral / low carbon industry, including developing bio-integrated manufacturing), and Cluster 5 covers cost-efficient, net zero-greenhouse gas energy system centred on renewables (including R&D necessary to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the power and energy-intensive industry sector, solutions for capturing, utilisation and storage of CO<sub>2</sub> (CCUS), and bioenergy and other industrial sectors), while Cluster 6 covers the research and innovation based on sustainable biological resources (bioeconomy sectors), in particular for new sustainable feedstock development and through the development of integrated bio-refineries).

<sup>202</sup> In synergy with the European Partnership on Circular Bio-based Europe (CBE), under Horizon Europe Cluster 6.

specific natural as well as controlled environments. It also capitalises on the potential of living resources, life sciences and industrial biotechnology for new discoveries, products, services and processes, both terrestrial and marine. Bio-based innovation can bring new and competitive economic activities and employment to regions and cities in the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, revitalising urban, rural and coastal economies and strengthening the long-term circularity of the bioeconomy, including through small non-food bio-based solutions. Furthermore, targeted and well-tailored investments can increase and diversify the income of primary producers and other rural actors (e.g. SMEs).

To enable the bio-based innovation, environmental objectives and climate neutrality will build on a robust understanding of environmental impacts and trade-offs of bio-based systems at the European and regional scale, including the comparisons to similar aspects on the fossil and carbon-intensive counterparts. Systemic impacts of bio-based systems on biodiversity and its wide range of ecosystem services as well as how we restore and use them, need to be assessed, and negative impacts avoided in line with the “do no harm” principle of the European Green Deal. Implementing sustainable and just bio-based value chain requires symbiosis across primary production and industrial ecosystems in regions, Member States and Associated Countries and improved environmental performance of products, processes, materials and services along value chains and life cycles.

The **multifunctional and sustainable management of European forests** as well as the environmentally sustainable use of wood and woody biomass as a raw material have a crucial role to play in the achievement of the EU’s climate and energy policies, the transition to a circular and sustainable bioeconomy as well as the preservation of biodiversity and the provision of ecosystem services such as climate regulation, recreation, clean air, water resources and erosion control among many others. Furthermore, forestry and the forest-based sector offer important opportunities for wealth and job creation in rural, peripheral and urban areas. The condition of European forests is increasingly threatened by a growing number of social, economic and environmental and climatic pressures. The European Green Deal and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 recognise that the EU’s forested area needs to improve, both in quality and quantity, for the EU to reach climate neutrality and a healthy environment. The multifunctionality and the sustainable forest management under rapid climate change will be enabled through a variety of approaches, including the use of intelligent digital solutions, enhanced cooperation in forestry and the forest-based sector as well as the establishment of an open-innovation ecosystem with relevant stakeholders.

**Aquatic biological resources and blue biotechnology** are crucial to delivering on the Green Deal’s ambition of a ‘blue economy’, which alleviates the multiple demands on the EU’s and the Associated Countries’ land resources and tackles climate change.

The immense marine and freshwater biodiversity both faces and offers solutions to multiple challenges such as climate, biodiversity loss, pollution, food security, green products, and health but remains largely unexplored. Unprecedented advances in the biotechnology toolbox (e.g. -omics, bioinformatics, synthetic biology) have triggered an increased interest in the potential of aquatic bioresources. Further research and innovation will be key to unlocking the

value of the marine and freshwater biological resources available in Europe, including its outermost regions by learning from the functioning and processes of aquatic living organisms to provide a sustainable products and services to the society, whilst avoiding systemic impacts on biodiversity. Algae biomass is becoming increasingly important not only as food but also as a sustainable source of blue bioeconomy products such as pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and speciality chemicals. Although only a small fraction of marine microbial diversity has been characterised to date, advances in genetic and sequencing technologies are opening new avenues for the understanding and harnessing marine microbiomes such as for the biodiscovery of new products and services for the environment and society.

### **Expected impacts**

Proposals for topics under this destination should set out a credible pathway to developing circular economy and bioeconomy sectors, achieving sustainable and circular management and use of natural resources, as well as prevention and removal of pollution, unlocking the full potential and benefits of the circular economy and the bioeconomy, ensuring competitiveness and guaranteeing healthy soil, air, fresh and marine water for all, through better understanding of planetary boundaries and wide deployment and market uptake of innovative technologies and other solutions, notably in primary production (forestry) and bio-based systems.

Specifically, the topics will target one or several of the following impacts, for circular economy, bio-based sectors, forestry and aquatic value chains:

- **Regional, rural, local/urban and consumer-based transitions** towards a sustainable, regenerative, inclusive and just circular economy and bioeconomy across all regions of Europe based on **enhanced knowledge and understanding of science**, in particular regarding biotechnology-based value chains, for all actors, including policy makers, to design, implement and monitor policies and instruments for a circular and bio-based transitions.
- **European industrial sustainability, competitiveness and resource independence** by lowering the use of primary non-renewable raw materials and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other negative environmental footprint (including on biodiversity), enabling climate-neutrality and higher resource efficiency (e.g. by circular design, improved waste management, cascading use of biomass) along and across value chains, developing innovative and sustainable value-chains in the bio-based sectors, substituting fossil-based ones, increasing circular practices in textiles, plastics, electronics and construction, developing recycling technologies and industrial symbiosis, increasing circular bio-based systems from sustainably sourced biological resources replacing carbon-intensive and fossil-based systems, with inclusive engagement of all stakeholders;
- **Improved consumer and citizen benefits**, including in the rural settings by establishing circular and bio-based systems based on sustainability, inclusiveness, health and safety;

reaching a significantly higher level of involvement of all actors (manufacturers, retailers, consumers, public administration, primary biomass producers etc.);

- **Multi-functionality and management of forests** in Europe based on the three pillars of sustainability (economic, environmental and social);
- **Enlarged potential of marine and freshwater biological resources and blue biotechnology** to deliver greener (climate-neutral circular) industrial products and processes, and to help characterise, monitor and sustain the health of aquatic ecosystems for a healthy planet and people.

When considering their impact, proposals also need to assess their compliance with the “Do No Significant Harm” principle<sup>203</sup> according to which the research and innovation activities of the project should not be supporting or carrying out activities that make a significant harm to any of the six environmental objectives of the EU Taxonomy Regulation.

In addition to the impacts listed above, topics under this destination will address the following impact areas of the Horizon Europe Strategic Plan for 2021-2024: “Climate change mitigation and adaptation”, “Enhancing ecosystems and biodiversity on land and in waters”, “A resilient EU prepared for emerging threats”; “Inclusive growth and new job opportunities”; “Industrial leadership in key and emerging technologies that work for people”.

The following call(s) in this work programme contribute to this destination:

Call	Budgets (EUR million)		Deadline(s)
	2021	2022	
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01	126.50		06 Oct 2021
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01		66.00	15 Feb 2022
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-02-two-stage		76.00	15 Feb 2022 (First Stage) 01 Sep 2022 (Second Stage)
Overall indicative budget	126.50	142.00	

<sup>203</sup> as per Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 2020/852 on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment (EU Taxonomy Regulation)

**Call - Circular economy and bioeconomy sectors**

***HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>204</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>205</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2021		
Opening: 22 Jun 2021 Deadline(s): 06 Oct 2021				
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-01	IA	21.50	5.00 to 10.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-02	CSA	10.00	0.40 to 2.00	6
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-03	IA	18.00	5.00 to 7.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-04	IA	22.00	6.00 to 8.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-05	IA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-06	IA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-07	IA	6.00	Around 6.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-08	CSA	9.00	Around 3.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-09	IA	18.00	Around 9.00	2
Overall indicative budget		126.50		

**General conditions relating to this call**

<sup>204</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>205</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

**Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2021-2022**  
**Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment**

<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

**Enabling a circular economy transition**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-01: Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI)'s circular systemic solutions**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 5.00 and 10.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 21.50 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply:  Proposals funded under this topic, and their circular systemic solutions, must form part of the demonstration projects for the implementation of the European Commission's Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI). This means that:



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposals have to achieve deep cooperation between them by means of specific activities which will be included in at least one of their work-packages;</li> <li>• Proposals have to cooperate with CCRI and its coordination service by means of sharing with this initiative knowledge and experiences developed during the implementation and demonstration of the circular systemic solutions;</li> <li>• Proposals have to participate in the CCRI's events.</li> </ul> <p>Applicants have to acknowledge and integrate these obligations into their proposal.</p>
<p><i>Technology Readiness Level</i></p>	<p>Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.</p>

**Expected Outcome:** Successful proposals will support the delivery of solutions to implement the European Green Deal, the circular economy action plan and the bioeconomy strategy. The topic will support the transition towards a sustainable, regenerative, inclusive and just circular economy at local and regional scale across regions of Europe.

Proposals funded under this topic will form part of the demonstration projects for the implementation of the European Commission's Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI)<sup>206</sup>. Proposals are expected to provide policy-makers, public and private investors and local communities with concrete and demonstrated examples of circular systemic solutions. In the context of this topic, a circular systemic solution is defined as a demonstration project for deploying a circular and climate-neutral economy at urban and/or regional scale, involving key stakeholders and, ideally, addressing more than one economic sector.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- Improved circularity and reduced GHG emissions in economic sectors, natural ecosystems, and efficient valorisation of local resources in cities, regions or their groupings.
- Creation of business opportunities in the circular economy at urban and/or regional scale.
- Increased circular and climate-neutral practices among citizens and their participation in circular systemic solutions.
- Enhanced knowledge transfer between the cities, regions or their groupings involved in the proposals financed under this topic and other cities and regions in EU Member States and Associated Countries.

<sup>206</sup>

<https://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm?pg=circular>

- Creation of jobs in the short to medium-term perspective.
- More effective widespread uptake and easier replication, scalability and visibility of circular systemic solutions and hence multiplication of their economic, social and environmental benefits to achieve the policy targets of the European Green Deal, circular economy action plan, EU bioeconomy strategy and the European industrial strategy at local, regional, national, European and international levels.

Scope: Proposals are expected to implement and demonstrate circular systemic solutions for the deployment of the circular economy (including the circular bioeconomy) in cities, regions or their groupings.

The implemented circular systemic solutions should address economic, social and environmental dimensions of the transition towards a circular economy and include science, technology and governance components. They should demonstrate circular governance models and support the active participation of all relevant actors in cities, regions or their groupings. Examples of relevant actors are: public administrations and utilities; private sector services and industries, including small and medium enterprises (SMEs); scientific and innovator communities including incubators and accelerators; financial intermediaries with a focus on environmental and social impact; venture capitalists and business angels; civil society, including citizens; and non-governmental organisations and philanthropy.

The implemented circular systemic solutions may consider applying the circular economy principle not only to waste and water management, but also to other sectors including, for example, one or more of the new circular economy action plan key product value chains, i.e.: batteries and vehicles, electronics and ICT, packaging, plastics, textiles, construction and buildings, food, water and nutrients.<sup>207</sup> The circular systemic solutions may also include nature-based solutions. Circular systemic solutions and the economic sectors involved in them should be selected and based on a detailed analysis of the cities, regions or their groupings' socio-economic and environmental needs to be addressed, circular potential to be exploited and challenges to be tackled.

Circular systemic solutions should identify, analyse and, when feasible, quantify the economic, social and environmental benefits and trade-offs/challenges related to their implementation and demonstration. They should include the monitoring and evaluation of the transition towards a circular economy, identify their strengths and weaknesses as well as causes. They should analyse the experimented regulatory obstacles and drivers and provide clear and precise policy recommendations to improve circular economy. Each circular systemic solution should address environmental externalities and contribute to preserving and, where possible, increasing the well-being and the health conditions of the local communities involved in the transition towards a circular economy.

It is crucial that the circular systemic solutions implemented and their business models have a high replicability and scalability potential. This is fundamental to facilitate that circular

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<sup>207</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/>

systemic solutions demonstrated in specific areas will be replicated in others. During their implementation and by the end of their life cycle, the selected proposals are expected to share with all stakeholders clear and comprehensive guidelines on the circular systemic solutions adopted, including their strengths and weaknesses experienced.

It is essential that proposals also ensure complementarity and cooperation with existing and future relevant European projects on the circular economy and the circular bioeconomy, with special reference to those on local and regional scale, and avoid overlaps and repetition. In particular, cooperation and complementarity should be ensured with the projects under the European Green Deal Call's topic 'LC-GD-3-2-2020 - Demonstration of systemic solutions for the territorial deployment of the circular economy'.<sup>208</sup>

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-02: Circular Cities and Regions Initiative's project development assistance (CCRI-PDA)**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 0.40 and 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <p>Proposals funded under this topic must form part of the instruments for the implementation of the European Commission's Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI). This means that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposals have to cooperate with CCRI and its coordination service by means of sharing with this initiative knowledge and experiences gained through the implementation of the CCRI-PDA</li> </ul>

<sup>208</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/lc-gd-3-2-2020;freeTextSearchKeyword=green%20deal;typeCodes=1;statusCodes=31094501,31094502,31094503;programCode=H2020;programDivisionCode=null;focusAreaCode=31087050;crossCuttingPriorityCode=null;callCode=H2020-LC-GD-2020;sortQuery=submissionStatus;orderBy=asc;onlyTenders=false;topicListKey=topicSearchTablePageState>

	<p>service;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proposals have to participate in the CCRI's events.</li></ul> <p>Applicants have to acknowledge and integrate these obligations into their proposal.</p>
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Expected Outcome: The successful proposal will support the delivery of services and solutions to implement the European Green Deal, the circular economy action plan, the bioeconomy strategy. The topic will support the transition towards a sustainable, regenerative, inclusive and just circular economy across regions of Europe at local and regional scale.

The Circular Cities and Regions Initiative's Project Development Assistance (CCRI-PDA) will be included in the instruments implementing the European Commission's Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI).<sup>209</sup> It will be carried out in close coordination and cooperation with the CCRI.

Investors and lenders need to gain more confidence on investment projects related to circular economy which are still seen as risky. European added value can be achieved, for example, where projects introduce innovation to the market regarding financing solutions minimising transaction costs and engaging the private finance community. European added value could also be achieved where projects demonstrably address legal, administrative and other market opportunities and challenges for innovative and sustainable circular economy investment schemes.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- Delivery of innovative financing schemes that are operational and ready to finance circular economy investments at local and regional scale;
- Delivery of a series of sustainable circular economy projects and innovative financing solutions/schemes at local and regional scale across Europe;
- Demonstration of innovative and replicable investment financing solutions, documenting feedback/uptake from potential replicators.

Scope: The CCRI-PDA services will be provided to public and private project promoters such as local and regional authorities or their groupings, public/private infrastructure operators and bodies, utilities and services, industry (including SMEs). The action will support building technical, economic and legal expertise needed for project development and leading to the launch of concrete investments.

The purpose of the CCRI-PDA is to help project promoters develop their projects and to bring together the technical, economic and legal expertise needed for developing circular economy

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<sup>209</sup> The CCRI is part of the European circular economy action plan (CEAP) and aims to support circular solutions for the transitions towards a sustainable, regenerative, inclusive and just circular economy at local and regional scale <https://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm?pg=circular>

investment projects at local and regional scale resulting in the actual launch of investments during the action. Ultimately, PDA projects should demonstrate the financial viability and sustainability of circular economy investment projects at local and regional scale and provide tangible showcases that should trigger further market replication.

The CCRI-PDA will pay for those activities necessary to prepare and mobilise finance for investment programmes, such as feasibility studies, stakeholder and community mobilisation, business plans and preparation for tendering procedures or setting up a specific financing scheme/financial engineering.

Proposals should address the development or replication and implementation of innovative financing schemes for circular economy investments at local and regional scale.

The CCRI-PDA services should support public and private project promoters to launch investments for activities aimed at increasing circularity in economic sectors that are relevant for the transition towards a sustainable circular economy at local and/or regional scale. The economic sectors involved in each CCRI-PDA service should be selected according to local and/or regional circular economy needs, resources and potential. This selection must be clearly justified and explained.

Proposals should clearly focus their activities on the launch of significant circular economy investment programmes at local and regional scale. Ideally, the proposed investments should be launched before the end of the action, which means that projects should result in signed contracts for circular economy investments at local and regional scale to that effect.

In addition, proposals should include some of the following features:

- Clearly focus their activities on the launch of significant circular economy investment programmes at local and regional scale;
- An exemplary/showcase dimension in their ambition to increase circularity in specific sector(s) at local and regional scale and/or in the size of the expected investments and leverage factors<sup>210</sup>;
- Deliver organisational innovation in the mobilisation of the investment programme (e.g. bundling, pooling or stakeholder engagement);

Moreover, all proposals should demonstrate a high degree of replicability and include a clear action plan to communicate experiences and results towards potential replicators across EU Member States and Associated Countries.

Indicatively, the CCRI-PDA focuses on small and medium-sized circular economy investments of up to EUR 20 million.<sup>211</sup>

The EU contribution per proposal should not exceed 10% of the respective investment.

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<sup>210</sup> i.e. the amount of circular economy investment triggered for each euro of Horizon Europe support.

<sup>211</sup> The Circular Economy Technical Assistance Facility (CETAF) will focus on projects and programmes with a minimum total investment volume of EUR 20 million.

Proposals should justify the budget for the PDA provided to public and private project promoters based on the expected investment portfolio to be set up including the expected amount of investments to be triggered and the respective leverage factors to be achieved.

Proposals are expected to ensure synergies and complementarities with other EU financial schemes for circular economy projects. Examples and background information on already existing PDA facilities are available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/project-development-assistance-pda>

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-03: Innovative solutions to over-packaging and single-use plastics, and related microplastic pollution**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 5.00 and 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 18.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: A successful proposal will contribute to all impacts in this destination related to consumers and industry, in particular to European industrial sustainability, competitiveness and resource independence by lowering the environmental footprint, enabling climate-neutrality and higher resource efficiency, through increased circularity and a resulting reduction in GHG and air pollution emissions.

Project results are expected to contribute to at least three of the following outcomes:

- Increased deployment and market uptake of innovative solutions, through better design, alternative materials, business models promoting reuse, deposit systems, smart labelling in support of and complying with the current relevant legal framework and, when scope would cover the food chain, the future EU framework for sustainability labelling, etc.
- Increased reuse, recyclability and upcycling of packaging and single-use plastics
- Significant reduction in over-packaging and single-use plastics in consumer goods, food packaging and humanitarian relief items
- Significant reduction in packaging waste and single-use plastic waste
- Significant reduction in management costs for the respective waste streams

- Significant reduction in the release of microplastics from packaging and single-use plastics into the environment

Scope: The amount of materials used for packaging is growing continuously and in 2017 packaging waste in Europe reached a record – 173 kg per inhabitant, the highest level ever. In order to ensure that all packaging on the EU market is reusable or recyclable in an economically viable way by 2030, the essential requirements for packaging relate to reducing (over)packaging and packaging waste, designing for re-usable and recyclable packaging, including alternative reusable products or systems, and reducing the complexity of packaging materials.

Plastics continue to be one of the key areas in the 2020 circular economy action plan (CEAP). This is due to their circularity potential, but also due to concerns about their environmental footprint and the use of primarily fossil-based feedstock for their production. One of the main sources of pollution is the amount of single-use plastics and plastics packaging that is wasted daily and that overburdens our waste and water management systems. A particular issue regarding plastics is the pollution from microplastics and disintegrating material, which reaches the soils and ocean and whose possible health impacts on animals and humans still need to be assessed in depth. Some of these microplastics are added intentionally to products such as cosmetics, while other pollution comes from the disintegration and migration of various types of plastics during their use and waste phases. Plastic waste is also an unintended consequence of humanitarian response – often funded by European taxpayer money – and leading to pollution in countries receiving aid but without the capacity to manage the waste.

In line with the EU strategy for plastics in a circular economy and the Single Use Plastics (SUP) Directive, and in line with the priorities on plastics and packaging in the CEAP, projects should combine at least three of the following elements: a reduction of (over)packaging and packaging waste, design for reuse and recyclability of packaging, a reduction of material complexity including the number of materials used (including diverse polymers), the restriction of intentionally added microplastics, increasing the uptake of alternatives decreasing the dependency on fossil fuels and the related pollution, and measures to prevent the release of microplastics at all relevant stages of the product life cycle.

Projects should demonstrate at large scale and validate innovative solutions that are quantitatively relevant and replicable under diverse economic, geographical and social conditions, and across sectors, including humanitarian response, through better design, alternative materials (including biobased and biodegradable), business models promoting reuse, recycling, upcycling, deposit systems, smart labelling, sensor-based sorting, etc. to tackle over-packaging and single-use plastics in consumer goods, food packaging and humanitarian relief items. Where the use of alternative materials is concerned, projects should address aspects to assure quality and safety of these new alternatives.

All solutions should be based on life-cycle approaches. Proposals should integrate life cycle assessment using the European Commission's Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) method and relevant costing methods. Projects should choose a systemic approach to value

chains and end users, including consumers as key actors. All achieved outcomes should be demonstrated using quantitative indicators and targets wherever possible.

Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

Research on the above issues in the humanitarian context (relating to humanitarian relief items) is also eligible under this topic.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-04: Increasing the circularity in textiles, plastics and/or electronics value chains**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 6.00 and 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 22.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: A successful proposal will contribute to all impacts in this destination related to consumers and industry, in particular to European industrial sustainability, competitiveness and resource independence by lowering the environmental footprint, enabling climate-neutrality and higher resource efficiency, through increased circularity and a resulting reduction in GHG and air pollution emissions.

Project results are expected to contribute to at least four of the following outcomes:

- Increased deployment and market uptake of new technological solutions to waste management and recycling, and the measurement of recycled content
- Enhanced diffusion and demonstrated benefits of advanced digital solutions in circular businesses
- Emergence of new value chains using upcycled, recycled and/or biobased resources
- Increased upcycling and recycling rates for the targeted material streams
- Increased uptake of recycled material and upcycling to new higher-value products



- Increased resource efficiency along and across value chains, causing a measurable reduction in GHG emissions
- Increased diffusion of new circular business practices, in particular in the uptake of repair, reuse and remanufacturing
- A significantly higher level of involvement of all actors (manufacturers, retailers, consumers, CSOs, public administration etc.) in circular practices
- Increased level of information and awareness of citizens regarding circular and climate-neutral products and services
- Strengthened competitiveness and job retention and creation potential of circular value chains under different economic and social conditions

Scope: The 2020 circular economy action plan (CEAP) highlights the four material streams textiles, plastics, electronics including ICT equipment, and construction as particularly important with regard to their circularity potential and their environmental footprint. The circularity deficits for these streams are mainly due to the: lack of trust in secondary raw materials; lack of control over supply chains; lacking focus on material efficiency and design for circularity; unsustainable product lifetimes; lack of repair services; price gap between primary and secondary material; lack of secondary material markets; insufficient collection and sorting systems; insufficient and unpredictable input quality for recycling; insufficient information about quality and quantity of materials, including knowledge about possible microplastics pollution and substances of concern, lack of communication along the lifecycle between manufacturers and recyclers; lack of involvement and empowerment of citizens that would allow environmentally informed purchases.

Projects should address the priorities set in the CEAP, which states that “electrical and electronic equipment continues to be one of the fastest growing waste streams in the EU, with current annual growth rates of 2%. It is estimated that less than 40% of electronic waste is recycled in the EU. Value is lost when fully or partially functional products are discarded because they are not repairable.” Textiles are “the fourth highest-pressure category for the use of primary raw materials and water, after food, housing and transport, and fifth for GHG emissions, as well as one of the highest sources of emissions of synthetic microfibers in the EU. It is estimated that less than 1% of all textiles worldwide are recycled into new textiles.” “In the light of the complexity of the textile value chain, to respond to these challenges the Commission will propose a comprehensive EU Strategy for Textiles.” It will be necessary to boost “sorting, re-use and recycling of textiles, including through innovation”, while “tackling the presence of hazardous substances”. Beside the continuous implementation of the EU plastics strategy, the CEAP has a strong focus on microplastics, but also calls for mandatory recycled content and the controlled use of bio-based, biodegradable plastics and alternative materials. In view of the feasibility problems of plastic recycling, this will require the deployment of technologies that are still in their infancy, such as the various forms of chemical and enzymatic recycling.

Projects should deal with one of the three priority material streams (plastics, textiles, electronics), taking however into account the complexity of some materials currently in use (such as composites) and that the three streams are related and to some extent overlapping (plastics-textiles; plastics-electronics), and that specific solutions might require an integrated approach.

Projects should demonstrate and deploy at large scale innovative solutions and designs for increased quality, non-toxicity and durability of secondary materials and increased share of secondary materials in new products. Projects should demonstrate increased recovery, recycling and upcycling rates and a higher uptake of secondary materials for high value applications. Projects should also demonstrate circular business practices, in particular in the uptake of repair and reuse, remanufacture, product-service-systems, and in the full lifetime of products or services. To achieve this, targeted market size, economic feasibility, cost efficiency and social acceptance need to be addressed. To break down the barriers for this transition, it is important that proposals involve and address the different perspectives of all relevant actors, e.g. manufacturers, retailers, consumers and civil society organisations (CSOs). The projects should consider the use of digital solutions and demonstrate their benefits for increased circularity. Projects should also help produce harmonised and robust methods to assess the amount of recycled content in sectoral products, which is key for a future review of green claims through authorities and consumer organisations. Environmental, social and economic impacts should be assessed from a lifecycle perspective as product, organisation and consumption environmental footprints, using the respective methods developed by the European Commission (Product Environmental Footprint, PEF, should be used for the assessment of the environmental impacts) and through costing methods; relevant data should be fed into the European Platform on Life Cycle Assessment, following the specific Environmental Footprint data and format requirements. The functional performance of technologies and secondary materials can be assessed through the EU Environmental Technology Verification (ETV) scheme. Considering the microplastics and microfiber pollution and hazardous substances that are present in the targeted waste streams, their removal from the materials used for the products in concern as well as from the recovered material is crucial, in addition to applying less-polluting production and consumption procedures. Decontamination levels need to be properly addressed and accumulation prevented. All achieved outcomes should be demonstrated using quantitative indicators and targets wherever possible.

Projects should also develop training material to endow workers in this occupational group with the right skillset in order to deploy the new technologies developed. Proposals should consider the development of learning resources for the current and future generations of employees, with the possibility to integrate them in existing curricula and modules for undergraduate level and lifelong learning programmes. The projects should provide contributions to relevant standards or best practices.

Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

## **Innovating sustainable bio-based systems and the bioeconomy**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

### **HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-05: Novel, non-plant biomass feedstocks for industrial applications**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

**Expected Outcome:** Successful proposals will contribute to the impacts of this destination and European policies it supports, in particular the European Green Deal, the circular economy action plan and the bioeconomy strategy. They should help to improve European industrial<sup>212</sup> sustainability, competitiveness and resource independence by lowering environmental footprint (including on biodiversity), enabling climate-neutrality and higher resource efficiency (in particular upcycling and cascading use of biomass) along and across value chains, developing innovative bio-based products. They should engage all stakeholders, and improve their knowledge and understanding of science, in particular biotechnology-based value chains.

Project results should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- More effective prospecting and greater use of biological diversity to generate verifiably more sustainable biomass feedstocks, including through improved harvesting, and processing, and commercially valuable climate-neutral circular bio-based, materials and products. This covers more robust verification of sustainability via life-cycle assessment approaches.
- Greater resource efficiency of production pathways, by applying upcycling and the cascading use of biomass residues or side-streams (e.g. as growing substrates), leading to

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<sup>212</sup> In connection with European partnerships under Cluster 6, in particular Circular Bio-based Europe (CBE).

lower land dependence for biomass<sup>213</sup>, and thus reducing any conflict with food/feed production.

- Higher capacity and engagement of SMEs, contributing to skilled job creation and economic benefits, and improving industrial competitiveness due to the expanded range of natural ingredients for the new applications in industrial sectors. Higher functional performance of the pursued value chains and products, and more sustainable industrial practices and resource independence of the EU Member States and associated countries.

Better public understanding across the EU Member States and associated countries of biotechnology, and of the biodiversity conservation and enhancement objectives enshrined in the EU biodiversity strategy and respect to the principles of access and benefit sharing (UN Biodiversity Convention), via clear, inclusive and transparent communication strategies.

Scope: The innovative bioeconomy sectors need to diversify and to deliver technological and industrial solutions based on available and sustainably accessible biomass. In particular, current plant-based biorefining may need upgrading to leave more land available for biodiversity protection and food production, while allowing the substitution of fossil-based resources with bio-based ones. The scope therefore covers the production of key bio-based products such as food and feed ingredients, including proteins, lipids and fibres, antioxidants and other substances with biological activities, and key bio-based materials (e.g. bio-based plastics, composites, fibres) or chemicals<sup>214</sup>, in a resource-efficient approach<sup>215</sup>. This calls for identifying and optimising sources as microorganisms, insects, fungi or mixotrophic algae, which requires defining certain growing conditions in suitable systems such as biofermentors<sup>216</sup>, where they need to be efficiently processed, extracted and converted into industrial outputs of interest. Proposals should increase circularity, in particular for the use of biomass residues or side-streams used as feed material, and should deliver necessary upgrades to and upscaling of the strategies for the cultivation, production and extraction systems.

Where relevant, proposals should seek links with and capitalise on the results of past and ongoing research projects (especially under the Bio-based Industries Joint Undertaking or on microbiomes). Proposals should:

- a. Develop and demonstrate techno-economic viability of the bio-based production platforms applying the resource efficiency principles (ensuring savings on water, energy, chemical inputs, biomass waste, side-streams or residues), getting more out of less by making use of autotrophic plants and heterotrophs, and applying the modern biotechnological principles. This covers the development of a bio-based microbial production platform for high-value biologically active substances, food/feed ingredients,

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<sup>213</sup> Lowering the negative environmental impacts of growing biomass without use of land (zero pesticides, reduced emissions and energy use)

<sup>214</sup> Production of bioethanol and other biofuels falls outside the scope of this topic

<sup>215</sup> e.g. by fully exploiting the cascading use of biomass resulting from agricultural production as growing substrates

<sup>216</sup> In connection with topic HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRC BIO-01-06 “Contained biomass solutions for sustainable and zero-ILUC production systems for high value applications”

or bio-based materials as well as efficient separation and extraction approaches for products of interest.

- b. Identify and implement the best combination of appropriate technical solutions and practices for specific industrial value chains (justifying the choice, including on level of innovation and business viability), as well as the barriers and drivers derived from e.g. governance and market aspects, while seeking the engagement and understanding of all actors.
- c. Develop and transparently communicate the key parameters to monitor and measure the qualitative and quantitative impacts of these solutions and practices for different sourcing, optimization and production systems, the potential of replacing available traditional alternatives, if relevant, and trade-offs, including on biodiversity, and the associated improvement in socio-economic resilience of businesses, for the creation of jobs and industrial competitiveness.
- d. Develop and test mechanisms involving all actors and specifically including bio-based industries active in knowledge co-creation, exchange, feedback and communication. Demonstrate them to all actors (e.g. agricultural operators, farmers, SMEs and civil society) and help them implement and understand solutions for new or improved bio-based products and processes and for addressing other environmental impacts e.g. lowered pressure on land and on biodiversity sourcing.
- e. Consider contributing data and results to the European Commission’s Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy hosted by the JRC

In this topic it is not mandatory to integrate the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content..

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-06: Contained biomass solutions for sustainable and zero-Indirect Land Use Change (ILUC) production systems for high value applications**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: Successful proposals will contribute to the impacts of this destination and the European policies it supports, in particular the European Green Deal, the circular economy action plan and the bioeconomy strategy, They should help improve European industrial<sup>217</sup> sustainability, competitiveness and resource independence by developing innovative bio-based products. They should engage all stakeholders and improve their knowledge and understanding of science, in particular of biotechnology-based value chains, and increase benefits for consumers.

Project results should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Lower production costs, improved safety and access to final efficient, specific, high-yield and high-value, climate-neutral circular applications<sup>218</sup>
- Lower dependence on land-based production systems, minimising the risk of Indirect Land Use Change (ILUC)<sup>219</sup>, with specific technical solutions and strategies for innovative, high-output, multi-source high-value contained applications, based on a variety of biological organisms<sup>220</sup> and their cultivation systems and technologies involved.
- Methodologically robust verification of sustainability of the production system via life-cycle assessment approaches. This covers the greater resource efficiency of production pathways, by applying the upcycling and cascading use of biomass residues or side-streams.
- More mature and advanced biotechnology solutions for the innovative culture, screening and processing of the selected organisms, as well as the related digital applications, thus contributing to European industrial competitiveness.
- Higher engagement of SMEs, for creating skilled jobs and bringing other socio-economic benefits for end users and/or patients, through expanding the range of natural ingredients for new applications in industrial sectors, enhancing the functional performance of the investigated value chains and products, and contributing to more sustainable industrial practices and resource independence of the EU Member States and associated countries.
- Better public understanding across EU Member States and associated countries of biotechnology, and of biodiversity conservation and enhancement objectives set out in the EU biodiversity strategy and respect for the principles of access and benefit sharing

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<sup>217</sup> In connection with European partnerships under Cluster 6, in particular Circular Bio-based Europe (CBE).

<sup>218</sup> e.g. production of engineered proteins such as reagents, diagnostics, innovative (e.g. scalable plant-based) vaccines or metabolites for specific industrial products (pharmaceuticals, veterinary products, biological reagents)

<sup>219</sup> As defined by the [recast Renewable Energy Directive](#)(EU) 2018/2001 from December 2018, and Land use and forestry regulation for 2021-203, see [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/forests/lulucf\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/forests/lulucf_en)

<sup>220</sup> Such as algae, fungi, plant cells, invertebrates, microorganisms, including complex multi-species communities. See a complementary topic HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-05: Novel non-plant feedstocks for industrial applications

(UN Biodiversity Convention), via clear, inclusive and transparent communication strategies.

International cooperation is encouraged, to allow the exchange of best practice, while ensuring win-win scenarios and contributing to European competitiveness.

Scope: The innovative bioeconomy sectors need to diversify and deliver technological and industrial solutions based on available and sustainably sourced biomass. In particular, this covers sustainable application in various industrial systems for high value products and uses, such as in the pharmaceutical, diagnostic and veterinary sectors<sup>221</sup>, especially in the context of biorefining and other (industrial) high-value uses<sup>222</sup>.

This calls for identifying, optimising, screening and monitoring of the growing conditions in suitable systems such as bioreactors<sup>223</sup>, from where they need to be efficiently processed, extracted and converted into industrial outputs of interest. The scope covers innovative multi-scale bioreactor designs, and related innovations such as hydroponics systems and phenotyping platforms for increased sustainability of biomass production, and its efficient, pathogen-free processing and use.

Where relevant, proposals should seek links with and capitalise on the results of past and ongoing research projects (under Horizon 2020 and other EU-funded initiatives). Proposals should:

- a. Develop bio-based production platforms applying resource-efficient principles (ensuring savings on water, energy, chemical inputs, biomass side-streams or residues), including the study of mixed multi-species communities, and applying modern biotechnological principles, as well as efficient separation and extraction approaches for products of interest.
- b. Identify and implement the best combination of appropriate technical solutions and practices for specific industrial value chains (justifying the choice, including on business viability), as well as the barriers and drivers derived from governance and market aspects, while seeking engagement and understanding of all actors. Participation of industry and SMEs is considered essential.
- c. Develop and transparently communicate: (i) the key parameters to monitor and measure the qualitative and quantitative impacts of these solutions and practices for different optimization and production systems, (ii) the potential of replacing available traditional alternatives, if relevant, and trade-offs, including with respect to biodiversity, patient perspective, and (iii) the associated improvement of socio-economic resilience of the businesses for the jobs creation and industrial competitiveness.

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<sup>221</sup> e.g. antibodies, vaccines, proteins, peptides, bioactive metabolites, linking with Horizon Europe Cluster 1 Health and topic HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-05: Novel non-plant feedstocks for industrial applications

<sup>222</sup> e.g. cosmetics, food ingredients

<sup>223</sup> The proposals should cover size of the chosen contained systems, to enable upscaling and replication.

- d. Develop and test mechanisms involving all actors and specifically including the research community and bio-based industries in knowledge co-creation, exchange, feedback and communication to demonstrate and accompany all actors (e.g. civil society including patient and other related groups) to implement and understand of solutions for improved bio-based products and processes and to address other environmental impacts. Develop specific recommendations for policy makers, while seeking involvement of broader civil society.
- e. Consider contribute data and results to the European Commission’s Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy hosted by the JRC.

For this topic, it is not mandatory to integrate the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) into research and innovation.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-07: Microbiomes for bio-based innovation and environmental applications**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: Successful proposals should contribute to the impacts of this destination, and the European policies it supports, in particular the European Green Deal, the circular economy action plan and the bioeconomy strategy. They should help improve European industrial<sup>224</sup> sustainability, competitiveness and resource independence by developing innovative bio-based products. They should engage all stakeholders and improve their knowledge and understanding of science, in particular biotechnology-based value chains, and increase benefits for consumers.

Project results should contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- Deeper understanding of the structural composition of microbiomes, their structure, functions, mechanisms, and potentials, as related to bio-based innovation (i.e. bio-based materials, biochemicals, products and services, including the environmental applications), as well as improved methods of their isolation and cultivation. This should

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<sup>224</sup> In connection with European partnerships under Cluster 6, in particular Circular Bio-based Europe (CBE).



lead to innovative solutions to engineer and control microbiomes and guarantee safety and efficacy for specific applications.

- Improved interdisciplinary cooperation on R&D&I between academia and industrial sectors (e.g. industrial biotechnology, food, pharma and ICT/data industries) and higher engagement of industry and SMEs.
- More systematic adoption of recent advances in molecular biology and biotechnology to increase industrial uptake of R&D&I on microbiota. This includes, in particular, their complex communities via biotechnology approaches, leading to more cost- and resource-efficient production of high-value complex molecules, lowering pressure on natural resources, or increasing their use in environmental applications.
- Greater and more inclusive understanding, awareness and trust in innovations, via societal dialogue and transparent communications with all stakeholders (academia, industry, including SMEs, NGOs, regulatory institutions, international partners etc.).

Scope: Microbiomes is the term given to the collective genomes of mixed nature-based microorganism populations. In recent years, scientific-technological progress in genome sequencing and other -omics technologies and in the bioinformatic analysis and interpretation of the data has opened up the opportunity to better understand the composition of (often difficult to cultivate with existing approaches) microbial communities, the functions and interaction of their members, and their interaction with their environment (e.g. soil) or hosts (humans, animals, plants).

The scope includes developing the methods for molecular cartography, the quantitative determination of genes and metabolites and establishing the R&D resources (e.g. inventories, catalogues, “reference microbiomes”, databases etc.). Marine microbiomes are excluded from the scope, in order to avoid overlaps with the parallel topic<sup>225</sup>.

International cooperation is encouraged, as it can contribute to European competitiveness and resilience.

Proposals should:

- a. Develop and apply a toolbox of technologies to identify, characterise and sustainably exploit (including isolation and cultivation aspects) the microbiomes and their genetic and metabolic diversity relevant for the bio-based sectors. Develop the related microbiome-based bioprocesses, e.g. to enable industrial manufacturing of high-value bio-based substances or materials (excluding biofuels/bioenergy applications), at sufficiently large scale, or for the environmental protection applications (e.g. decomposition of persistent and hazardous contaminants or industrial, municipal waste and residues).

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<sup>225</sup> HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01-07: Marine microbiome for a healthy ocean and a sustainable blue bioeconomy

- b. Identify and characterise the key environmental and safety aspects, and potential impacts, while adhering to the binding EU and international regulatory framework.
- c. Outline the scale-up production processes for novel bio-based innovations that are necessary to reach a critical mass for a given application, to achieve economies of scale, address different market segments and potential applications, etc. This includes addressing process and product safety, including occupational and consumer safety aspects, taking into account best international practice and initiatives.
- d. Ensure the transparent and inclusive engagement of all actors, including industry and SMEs, the scientific community, regulatory institutions, and broader civil society, including NGOs, to ensure the necessary impact and awareness.
- e. Where relevant, proposals should seek links with and capitalise on the results of past and ongoing research projects, including on food systems, health and industrial value chains, as related to microbiomes.

For this topic, it is not mandatory to integrate the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) into research and innovation.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-08: Mainstreaming inclusive small-scale bio-based solutions in European rural areas**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

**Expected Outcome:** In line with the European Green Deal objectives and the EU bioeconomy strategy, successful proposals will support innovators to scale-up inclusive and small-scale biobased solutions in rural areas contributing to regional, urban and consumer-based transitions towards a sustainable, regenerative, inclusive and just circular economy and bioeconomy across all regions of Europe at local and regional scale.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Enhanced cooperation between the key players and knowledge holders resulting in sustainable business model pathways for bio-based innovations in rural areas;
- Provision of tailored and independent support to innovators in order to accelerate the development of marketable products and services and to improve the market penetration of bio-based solutions in Europe;
- Successful deployment of existing scientific and practical knowledge and more bio-based solutions introduced in rural areas in line with relevant policy initiatives (e.g. bioeconomy strategy, European Green Deal, common agricultural policy (CAP), long-term vision for rural areas, etc.).

Scope: Europe's future economic growth and job creations will increasingly stem from innovation in products, services and business models. This is why there is currently considerable investment in research and innovation. However, there are barriers to the adoption and implementation of research results and cooperation between research, advisory services, farmers, foresters and other actors in the supply chain is not adequately supported. Regional platforms for innovation support services are needed to help European regions develop their bio-based economies and to increase awareness and knowledge about emerging opportunities as well as the environmental and socio-economic impacts relating to the valorisation of locally or regionally available biomass.

Proposals will:

- Establish regional platforms that provide innovation support services to multi-actor partnerships (e.g. farmers, foresters, clusters, business support organisations, social partners, civil society organisations including non-governmental organisations, etc.) and increase regional stakeholders' awareness and understanding of the bioeconomy, its potential and impacts, and help them build the capacity to identify innovative bio-based business models.
- Based on previous research results (e.g. BE-RURAL<sup>226</sup>, Power4Bio<sup>227</sup>, BioeastUp<sup>228</sup>, etc.), activities should help match information on regionally available biomass, waste and residue streams with market information and technologies to enable full utilisation and sustainable production of bio-based products.
- Help transfer training and knowledge on better nutrient recycling in the circular bioeconomy, by identifying links between different agricultural/forestry and industrial value chains, raising awareness and sharing best practice on the use of residues as soil improvers and fertiliser in the bio-based economy.
- Consider contributing data and results to the European Commission's Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy hosted by the JRC.

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<sup>226</sup> <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/818478>

<sup>227</sup> <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/818351>

<sup>228</sup> <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/862699>

Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this topic and other relevant topics (e.g. HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-02: Expertise and training centre on rural innovation) is strongly encouraged.

Social innovation<sup>229</sup> is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

### **Innovating for blue bioeconomy and biotechnology value chains**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-09: Unlocking the potential of algae for a thriving European blue bioeconomy** <sup>230</sup>

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 9.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 18.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal objectives, EU bioeconomy strategy and blue growth strategy, the successful proposal will support the development of algae-based greener aquatic industrial products/processes and/or environmental services sustaining the health of aquatic ecosystems for a healthy planet and people.

The project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Leveraging of the potential of algae as an industrial feedstock by upscaling and demonstrating the techno-economic viability of algae cultivation and biotransformation concepts with positive environmental, social and economic impacts. Implementation of the European Green Deal’s sustainable blue economy and the EU bioeconomy strategy.

<sup>229</sup> As defined by the European Commission: innovations that are social in both their ends and their means. Specifically, [...] social innovations [are] new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations. They are innovations that are not only good for society but also enhance society’s capacity to act.” according to the European Commission Bureau of European Policy Advisors ([BEPA, 2011, p. 9](#); see also [Regulation \(EU\) No 1296/2013 on a European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation \("EaSI"\)](#)).

<sup>230</sup> Cyanobacteria are in scope of this topic.

- Provide market knowledge to align the development of new algae products to the uses and needs of various sectors.
- Strengthen the competitiveness of the European blue bioeconomy and marine biotechnology industry by reducing technical bottlenecks and by developing promising business models making the whole algae sector more attractive to investment.
- Provide scientific evidence on environmental benefits - including on ecosystem services, if relevant - and on risks of algae-based cultivation. Deliver - if applicable - a comparison between the environmental footprint of algae-based products and their land based counterparts.

Scope: The farm production of micro- and macro-algae is one of the most promising emerging ocean sectors. Algae can be developed and processed into an almost endless number of products, enabling a shift to aquatic biomass production and reducing the pressure on plant biomass derived from agriculture and forestry. Total algae production in the EU increased by 76% between 2006 and 2016.

EU policy is set to unlock the versatility and potential of algae. The European Green Deal and the farm to fork strategy support the role of algae in the protein transition and its contribution to a sustainable food system. Moreover, the 2018 EU bioeconomy strategy stresses the potential of algae as a source of innovative aquatic bio-based products such as pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and fine and speciality chemicals. The integrated processing of algae offers an interesting way to exploit, profitably and sustainably, most or all of its potential, by recovering and separating the biomass components and by minimising waste production.

Applicants should carry out activities along the following lines of research:

- Demonstrate viable concepts to enable the cost-effective cultivation and processing of algae into circular bio-based products and/or environmental services (e.g. medical, cosmetics, fine and speciality chemicals, remediation). The integration with food/feed production or with other processes (such as water treatment, crop and livestock farms and carbon sequestration) could be considered if it adds to the economic, environmental and social viability of the whole concept.
- Scale-up the production of algae products and bring them closer to market by addressing key challenges such as (i) optimising strains' biology (including if relevant associated microbiomes) and the mechanisms regulating cell performance for rapid growth and high yields of novel valuable compounds; (ii) pest and disease control; (iii) standardising the product and production lines; (iv) post-harvest treatment and storage; (v) assessing risks of escape of propagules with the potential to affect local genetic biodiversity; and (vi) securing the safety of the selected applications. The efficiency and capacity of production systems should also be improved. Demonstrate downstream processing and fractionation of components that enable the practical implementation of multiproduct algal biorefineries.

- Establish European strategic development plans for the proposed algae farming that address biodiversity and ecosystems considerations. Key factors such as the carrying capacity of the European seas and the availability and use of land/light/energy should be considered; Provide estimates of the market demand for algae products and of the market structure.
- Quantified assessment of environmental benefits and risks of algae farming and products, including a comparison with land-based products. Assessment of possible ecosystem services of algae farming.

Strong weight is placed on industrial leadership in the projects. The emphasis should be on the delivery of tangible social and environmental benefits. Successful proposals should carry out a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of the proposed concept. Efforts should be dedicated to improve the professional skills and competences of those working and being trained to work in algae farming (e.g. through the development of training material).

Where relevant, proposals may seek synergies and capitalise on the results of projects funded under Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, its continuation European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, and other funding streams.

Cooperation with other selected proposals under this topic and complementary topics included in this work programme is encouraged. This notably includes other algae-relevant topics “HORIZON-CL6-CIRCBIO-02-04-two-stage: Photosynthesis revisited: climate emergency, “no pollution and zero-emission” challenge and industrial application” and “HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-02-05-two-stage: Innovative food from marine and freshwater ecosystems”.

**Call - Circular economy and bioeconomy sectors**

***HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>231</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>232</sup>	Number of projects expected to be
		2022		

<sup>231</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.  
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>232</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

**Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2021-2022**  
**Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment**

				funded
Opening: 28 Oct 2021				
Deadline(s): 15 Feb 2022				
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01-01	CSA	10.00	0.40 to 2.00	6
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01-02	IA	14.00	Around 7.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01-03	CSA	4.00	Around 2.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01-04	IA	8.00	Around 8.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01-05	RIA	8.00	Around 8.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01-06	RIA	4.00	Around 4.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01-07	RIA	18.00	Around 9.00	2
Overall indicative budget		66.00		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

**Enabling a circular economy transition**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01-01: Circular Cities and Regions Initiative’s project development assistance (CCRI-PDA)**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 0.40 and 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <p>Proposals funded under this topic must form part of the instruments for the implementation of the European Commission’s Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI). This means that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposals have to cooperate with CCRI and its coordination service by means of sharing with this initiative knowledge and experiences gained through the implementation of the CCRI-PDA service;</li> <li>• Proposals have to participate in the CCRI’s events.</li> </ul> <p>Applicants have to acknowledge and integrate these obligations into their proposal.</p>

**Expected Outcome:** The successful proposal will support the delivery of solutions to implement the European Green Deal, the circular economy action plan and the bioeconomy strategy. The topic will support the transition towards a sustainable, regenerative, inclusive and just circular economy across regions of Europe at local and regional scale.

The Circular Cities and Regions Initiative’s Project Development Assistance (CCRI-PDA) will be included in the instruments implementing the European Commission’s Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI).<sup>233</sup> It will be carried out in close coordination and cooperation with the CCRI.

Investors and lenders need to gain more confidence in investment projects in the field of circular economy which are still seen as risky. European added value can be achieved, for example, where projects introduce innovation to the market regarding financing solutions

<sup>233</sup> The CCRI is part of the European circular economy action plan (CEAP) and aims to support circular solutions for the transitions towards a sustainable, regenerative, inclusive and just circular economy at local and regional scale <https://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm?pg=circular>



minimising transaction costs and engaging the private finance community. European added value could also be achieved where projects demonstrably address legal, administrative and other market opportunities and challenges for innovative and sustainable circular economy investment schemes.

CCRI-PDA projects' results are expected to contribute to the delivery of a series of sustainable circular economy projects and innovative financing solutions/schemes at local and regional scale across Europe.

Scope: The CCRI-PDA beneficiaries include public and private project promoters such as local and regional authorities or their groupings, public/private infrastructure operators and bodies, utilities and services, industry (including SMEs).

The purpose of the CCRI-PDA is to help project promoters develop their circular economy projects and to bring together the technical, economic and legal expertise needed for developing circular economy investment projects at local and regional scale resulting in the actual launch of investments during the action. Ultimately, CCRI-PDA projects should demonstrate the financial viability and sustainability of circular economy investment projects at local and regional scale and provide tangible showcases that should trigger further market replication.

The CCRI-PDA should provide support for those activities necessary to prepare and mobilise finance for investment projects, such as feasibility studies, stakeholder and community mobilisation, business plans and preparation for tendering procedures or setting up a specific financing scheme/financial engineering.

Proposals could address the development or replication and implementation of innovative financing schemes for circular economy investments at local and regional scale.

The CCRI-PDA should support public and private project promoters to launch investments for activities aimed at increasing circularity in economic sectors that are relevant for the transition towards a sustainable circular economy at local and/or regional scale. The economic sectors involved in each CCRI-PDA service should be selected according to local and/or regional circular economy needs, resources and potential. This selection must be clearly justified and explained.

Proposals should clearly focus their activities on the launch of significant circular economy investments at local and regional scale. The investments should be launched before the end of the action, which means that projects should result in signed contracts with investors for circular economy investments at local and regional scale to that effect.

In addition, proposals should include all following features:

- Clearly focus their activities on the launch of significant circular economy investment programmes at local and regional scale;

- An exemplary/showcase dimension in their ambition to increase circularity in specific sector(s) at local and regional scale and/or in the size of the expected investments and leverage factors<sup>234</sup>;
- Delivery of organisational innovation in the mobilisation of the investment programme (e.g. bundling, pooling or stakeholder engagement);

In addition, all proposals should demonstrate a high degree of replicability and include a clear action plan to communicate experiences and results to potential replicators across EU Member States and Associated Countries.

Indicatively, the CCRI-PDA focuses on small and medium-sized circular economy investments of up to EUR 20 million.<sup>235</sup>

The EU contribution per proposal should not exceed 10% of the related investment.

Proposals should justify the budget for the project development assistance needed based on the expected investment portfolio to be set up. This includes the amount of investments that is expected to be triggered and the respective leverage factors to be achieved.

Proposals are expected to ensure synergies and complementarities with other EU financial schemes for circular economy projects. Examples and background information on already existing PDA facilities are available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/project-development-assistance-pda>

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

### **Innovating sustainable bio-based systems and the bioeconomy**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01-02: Marginal lands and climate-resilient and biodiversity-friendly crops for sustainable industrial feedstocks and related value chains**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 14.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions

<sup>234</sup> i.e. amount of investments in the circular economy triggered per each EUR of Horizon Europe support.  
<sup>235</sup> The Circular Economy Technical Assistance Facility (CETAF) will focus on projects and programmes with a minimum total investment volume of EUR 20 million.

<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
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Expected Outcome: Successful proposals will contribute to the impacts of this destination and the European policies it supports, in particular the European Green Deal, the circular economy action plan and the bioeconomy strategy, and engage all stakeholders. They should help improve European industrial<sup>236</sup> sustainability, competitiveness and resource independence by lowering the environmental footprint (including on biodiversity), enabling climate neutrality and higher resource efficiency (in particular upcycling and cascading use of biomass) along value chains, and developing innovative bio-based products.

Projects results should contribute to all following expected outcomes:

- Identification of the co-benefits potential risks and upscaling potential of sustainable biomass production with a low potential for Indirect Land Use Change (ILUC) with focus on marginal lands<sup>237</sup>. This should include non-edible (industrial) biomass use (such as in biorefineries of various scale and types for climate-neutral circular materials and products); introducing new industrial cropping systems (such as perennial crops).
- An improved understanding of the actual available land in the EU Member States and associated countries that could be used for biomass production that can be certified as ‘low ILUC’ for use in bio-based sectors; taking into account increasing resilience to environmental climate change effects such as soil erosion and water stress of the identified crops.
- An increased understanding of the biodiversity challenges and potentials, and the ecosystem services, with due attention to protection measures, coupled with end-user adoption and implementation of environmentally sound practices by all operators (farmers, researchers, and bio-based industry active in rural areas). This should include the replication of such practices across Europe.
- Improved functional performance of the specific value chains and products, and improved resource efficiency thanks to a better application of the cascading use of biomass.

Scope: Sustainable biomass provision by primary land sectors (agriculture and forestry), supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation. This will require finding a balance between productivity and ecosystem services, notably biodiversity and social sustainability goals.

The topic explores two main aspects. First, enhancing ecosystem services to prepare for increased water stress and water scarcity due to climate change (including the increasing

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<sup>236</sup> In connection with European partnerships under Cluster 6, in particular Circular Bio-based Europe (CBE).

<sup>237</sup> Elbersen, et al. Definition and Classification of Marginal Lands Suitable for Industrial Crops in Europe (EU Deliverable), WUR: Wageningen, The Netherlands, 2018; p. 44

desertification of large parts of the EU, especially of the Mediterranean and Central European Member States). Secondly, serving multi-purpose and optimised<sup>238</sup> biomass production, with a specific focus on improving biodiversity-related benefits, with opportunities for European rural development and improved industrial competitiveness.

The scope includes identifying and developing environmentally and economically viable sources of pollinator-supporting industrial crops (e.g. by exploring the traits supporting the pollinators such as nectar provision, or resistance to pests and diseases, as well as the optimisation of a related agronomic practice). It also includes identifying and optimising crops (e.g. non-edible oil and fibre crops, dryland shrubs and woody crops) that could be adapted through modern biotechnology tools to require low-water/low-input use, and upscaling them in related value chains, e.g. in industrial sectors such as biochemicals, composites or elastomers, with the aim of replacing their fossil-based counterparts.

The topic aims to engage all relevant actors, especially the farming community, but also bio-based industry and academia, and civil society, calling for working together and co-creation, to develop solutions involving end users and taking into account a comprehensive business case at farm/production level.

Proposals should help to increase farming systems' resilience to climate change and boost the sustainability of biomass provision through sound agronomic practices, with particular focus on high resource efficiency (including water, and nutrients e.g. via nature-based solutions and biodiversity-friendly solutions) and circular use of biomass and other natural resources.

Proposals may develop key performance indicators and life cycle assessment (LCA) criteria for operators, or identify biodiversity hotspots along the value chains and test them against established benchmarks as part of the overall recommendations.

Where relevant, proposals should seek links with and capitalise on the results of past and ongoing EU Member States and associated countries research projects (especially under the Bio-based Industries Joint Undertaking and the future Circular Bio-based Europe partnership).

Proposals should:

- a. Identify and evaluate the most suitable feedstock options for different farming systems and pedo-climatic conditions. The agricultural diversity of EU and associated countries should be considered, and the selected options should contribute efficiently to climate change mitigation/adaptation (with a focus on water scarcity and water stress) and biodiversity preservation and enhancement (with special attention to marginal lands under high risk of desertification), while ensuring overall business case viability.
- b. Develop sustainable diversification strategies that can help optimise the production of agricultural feedstock in the emerging bio-based economy (e.g. through intercropping systems, logistics and storage). Identify and produce crops suited to marginal lands. Optimise intermediary/catch crops to increase biomass production sustainably, or

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<sup>238</sup> including by the modern biotechnology approaches, as appropriate

optimise perennial crops and short-rotation coppice plantations in annual crops-dominated agricultural production systems.

- c. Identify and implement the best mix of appropriate technical solutions and practices for specific industrial value chains (a proposal should select and justify the choice). The scale-dependent effects on farms and landscapes should be analysed, as well as the barriers and drivers arising from governance and market issues. Make an effort to inform and engage all actors.
- d. Develop and communicate the methods to monitor and measure the qualitative and quantitative impacts of these solutions and practices for different farming systems, the climate neutrality/negativity potential and trade-offs, including for biodiversity, and the associated improvement in farm/business socio-economic resilience.
- e. Develop and test mechanisms with all actors, notably the research community and bio-based industry. Exchange knowledge on and demonstrate solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation, water stress and biodiversity loss (including biotechnology approaches) to rural stakeholders (farmers, foresters) and the broader public, and help them implement them.
- f. International cooperation is encouraged to allow the exchange of best practice while ensuring win-win scenarios and contributing to European competitiveness.

For this topic, it is not mandatory to integrate the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) into research and innovation.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01-03: Benefits of the transition towards sustainable circular bio-based systems from linear fossil-based**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: Successful proposals will support policy makers in their efforts to develop sustainable pathways to replace fossil and carbon-intensive systems with circular bio-based systems at the EU and regional scale, in line with the 2030 climate targets and European Green Deal objectives. Project outcomes will contribute to foster European industrial sustainability, competitiveness and resource independence.

Projects results are expected to contribute to the following expected outcome:

- Policies are designed to enable the transition from linear fossil-based systems to circular bio-based systems, setting priorities.

Scope: Abandoning the current linear fossil-based economy is a prerequisite for European Green Deal objectives and, in general, for preserving life on our planet. Biogenic resources are key means of mitigating climate change as they can strengthen natural and anthropogenic carbon sinks. Circular bio-based systems are part of the solution to achieving climate neutrality, where they replace carbon-intensive and fossil-based systems and are based on sustainably sourced biological resources. Policies must ensure that this transition from linear fossil-based to circular bio-based systems is sustainable and aims at i) climate change mitigation and adaptation; ii) increasing resource efficiency and circularity; iii) preserving and restoring natural resources, their ecosystem services and biodiversity; and i) ensuring a just transition for everyone. Policies and priorities should be comprehensive and underpinned by a critical assessment of the environmental/social/economic impacts of the current linear fossil-based economy. That assessment should help individuating policy priorities, as well.

To support designing policies to transition away from linear fossil-based systems towards sustainable circular bio-based ones, proposals should:

- a. Consolidate knowledge on current trends in terms of the environmental, economic and social limits of a linear carbon-intensive and fossil-based economy. By limits, we mean technical and structural barriers and/or inability to reach local and global Sustainable Development Goals (e.g. SDGs, climate change mitigation targets, European Green Deal objectives). Cultural and social limits should also be considered, including barriers related to gender and age.
- b. Develop new/improve existing methodologies to assess environmental/social/economic impacts of linearity vs circularity in the economy, including on waste production and disposal, non-renewable resources exploitation and loss, geographically (and socially) unbalanced distribution of resources and growth, biodiversity loss at global and local scale. The methodologies should consider circular economy indicators, methods and concepts developed or under development in existing initiatives, including Commission's ongoing work on the circular economy monitoring framework and R&I activities.
- c. Assess the environmental/social/economic impacts of the EU's current linear fossil-based economy. This should include aspects related to the geographical distribution of oil origins and global trade, direct and indirect environmental impacts of fossil-based value chains on a life cycle base, including on, but not limited to, climate change, resource use including land, water and marine space, air/water/soil quality, ecosystems services and biodiversity. Costs arising from environmental and social impacts should be internalised in the economic impacts assessment.
- d. Develop and compare multiple scenarios of transitioning from fossil-based to circular bio-based systems, modelling the replacement of the fossil-based activities, with a focus on the most carbon-intensive ones, with bio-based systems, including innovative

solutions, at EU and global scale. Environmental/social/economic impacts of bio-based systems should be assessed with validated methodology, considering also the benefits of applying a circular approach to the bio-based systems. Biogenic carbon capture utilization (BCCU) solutions<sup>239</sup> for bio-based systems via nature-based solutions (e.g. in soils or long-term circular bio-based materials) should be part of the assessment. Scenarios should compare the impacts of fossil-based and bio-based solutions, and include social aspects and social innovation, especially at the socio-technical interfaces of innovative solutions.

- e. Identify knowledge gaps in the assessment of the sustainability of the transition from fossil-based to circular bio-based systems and in the comparison between alternative scenarios as described under point d).
- f. Identify priorities in the transition from fossil-based to circular bio-based systems, according to scenarios analysed in the project and develop guidelines and policy recommendations.

Proposals should include a task dedicated to sharing methodologies and findings with projects funded within this topic.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of social sciences and humanities (SSH) disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01-04: Maximising economic, environmental and social synergies in the provision of feedstock for bio-based sectors through diversification and increased sustainability of agricultural production systems**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach and ensure adequate involvement of the forest-based sector. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

<sup>239</sup> In synergy with European partnerships under Clusters 4, 5, and 6.

<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
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Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal and the EU bioeconomy strategy, successful proposals will demonstrate the potential of diversification strategies in the primary production sector for providing feedstock in bio-based value chains. They should contribute to regional, urban and consumer-based transitions towards a sustainable, regenerative, inclusive and just circular economy and bioeconomy in Europe at local and regional level.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Sustainable primary production systems to diversify income for farmers, while supporting the development of bioeconomies in rural areas within planetary boundaries.
- Targeted policies at EU / national and regional level promoting sustainable agricultural production systems in full respect of biodiversity protection and enhancement objectives.
- Improved knowledge of primary producers on co-benefits and potential risks of introducing new production systems.
- Better management of the actual available land in EU Member States and associated countries that has been and could be envisaged for biomass production that is certifiable as ‘low induced land use change (ILUC)’ for the use in bio-based sectors<sup>240</sup>.

Scope: Securing long-term supply of affordable and sustainable biomass is a key challenge for the European bioeconomy. It is crucial to limit negative (indirect) changes in land use, which can lead to losses of biodiversity, carbon or other ecosystem services and to move towards a sustainable bioeconomy that operates within sustainable parameters. The diversity and diversification of farming systems can contribute to a sustainable European bioeconomy by securing stable revenues for farmers, lowering negative environmental impacts and increasing resilience to climatic, economic and biological risks.

Proposals will:

- Explore alternative systems and designs to improve the overall sustainability of local and regional agricultural production systems in a variety of landscapes, soil and climatic conditions, across the EU and associated countries;
- Consider the environmental, economic and social impacts of primary production systems and contribute to the characterisation of diversity and its relation to expected functions and benefits;
- Develop sustainable diversification strategies that can optimise the production of agricultural feedstock in the emerging bio-based economy. These could include the co-production of food and non-food products (e.g. through intercropping systems),

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<sup>240</sup> According to Directive (EU) 2018/2001



diversification and optimisation of crops cultivated in greenhouses for high value products, optimisation of intermediary/catch crops to increase the biomass production in a sustainable way and circular low-emission livestock or mixed farming systems.

- Optimise diversification strategies for different European agricultural production models/sectors with a view to minimise potential land conflicts and in line with agro-ecological practices.
- Consider contributing data and results to the European Commission’s Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy hosted by the JRC.

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure adequate involvement of the farming sector and other actors in rural areas.

Social innovation<sup>241</sup> is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, development of training material for upskilling of reskilling of the workforce, social ownership or market uptake.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement. This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01-05: EU-China international cooperation on unlocking the potential of agricultural residues and wastes for circular and sustainable bio-based solutions**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of

<sup>241</sup> As defined by the European Commission: *innovations that are social in both their ends and their means. Specifically, [...] social innovations [are] new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations. They are innovations that are not only good for society but also enhance society’s capacity to act.*” according to the European Commission Bureau of European Policy Advisors ([BEPA, 2011, p. 9](#); see also [Regulation \(EU\) No 1296/2013 on a European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation \("EaSI"\)](#)).

	the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: Grants awarded under this topic will be coordinated with the Ministry of Science and Technology, China (MOST).
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Grants awarded under this topic will be linked to the specific grants awarded by the Ministry of Science and Technology, China (MOST) to the Chinese partners. The respective options of the Model Grant Agreement will be applied.

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal, EU bioeconomy strategy and farm to fork strategy, successful proposals will explore opportunities for the valorisation of waste, by- and co-products. They should contribute to regional, urban and consumer-based transitions towards a sustainable, regenerative, inclusive and just circular economy and bioeconomy across in Europe at local and regional level.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Strengthened international cooperation with actors from China in the areas of agricultural residues and wastes for circular, biosecure and sustainable bio-based solutions
- Establishment of bio-based production systems that are optimised in view of sustainability, circular resource use and economic viability
- Increased resource efficiency through reduction of waste and better waste management practices in primary production systems.
- Increased opportunities for the valorisation of waste, by- and co-products resulting in environmental and economic benefits for the farming sector (e.g. development of new products and processes).
- Improvement in overall environmental performance (soil health, water quality, low-carbon livestock, reduction of emissions, biodiversity, etc.) of bio-based sectors.

Scope: Agriculture generates co-products, by-products and waste streams that are often not treated adequately in environmental and economic terms. In crop cultivation, losses can be observed at farm and post-harvest levels and downstream along the value chain. Co-products or by-products are generated, for instance in the wine, fruit and vegetable, olive oil, starch and sugar sectors, which offer potential to further valorise the resources. In livestock production,

and in particular in large-scale production systems, appropriate management of manure and other waste sources from livestock production and transformation is a challenge. Therefore, this topic addresses opportunities for new processes and concepts that enable innovative uses of these materials while quantifying the impact of deviating biomass streams from their current flow (e.g. in terms of biodiversity impacts, soil fertility, etc.).

Proposals will:

- Evaluate existing techniques and develop new innovative approaches for the efficient use of agricultural wastes, co-products and by-products, thereby contributing to the creation of sustainable value chains in the farming and processing sectors.
- Address, if applicable, innovative solutions for protein recovery and/or microbial protein production from agricultural wastes/by-products for food and feed applications to meet the demand for new protein-based products at local and global levels.
- Examine the safety and risks of circularised substance flows, particularly the reutilisation of food waste and (animal) by-products, and prevention of the creation of pathogen/toxin enrichment cycles and introduction or reconnection of epidemiological pathways.
- Demonstrate environmentally-friendly and economically viable approaches in sector-specific case studies and test the possible practical take-up of proposed approaches and technologies.
- Examine the synergies/conflicts and interdependencies between the different agri-waste feedstock and develop coherent indicators to evaluate their quantity, quality and sustainability attributes, as well as the costs associated with their production, collection and processing.
- Consider environmental, economic and social safeguards, such as the sustainable extraction rates of residues, with a view to maintaining low emissions, soil health and fertility, as well as possible conflicts with alternative uses.
- Address, if applicable, nutrient and energy recovery and the overall minimisation of environmental impacts in the context of good agricultural practices and possible sanitary implications.
- Improve data collection (e.g. data on residue quantities, residue management and feed requirement) at farm-level, link them with relevant information systems (e.g. the Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN)) and improve knowledge on the availability, demand and market prices of agricultural waste and residue streams.
- Develop training material to endow primary producers and workers with the right skillset in order to adapt to the proposed viable approaches.

Actions will contribute to implementing the EU-China Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology (FAB) flagship initiative, which aims to ensure sustainability of agri-food systems, catering

for the needs of a growing population, the reduction of food and agricultural losses and waste, and the provision of safe and healthy foodstuffs.

Due to the scope of this topic, international cooperation is strongly encouraged, in particular with China. This topic is envisaged to be implemented as a coordinated call but if no agreement is reached with the Ministry of Science and Technology China (MOST) on the co-funding of Chinese partners, it will be implemented as a normal call. Updates will be published on the Funding & Tenders Portal.

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure adequate involvement of the farming sector.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement. This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

Proposals should consider the development of learning resources for the current and future generations of employees, with the possibility to integrate them in existing curricula and modules for undergraduate level and lifelong learning programmes. The projects should provide contributions to relevant standards or best practices.

### **Safeguarding the multiple functions of EU forests**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01-06: Strengthening the European forest-based research and innovation ecosystem**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <p>The proposals must use the multi-actor approach and ensure adequate involvement of the forest-based sector. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p> <p>The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.</p>

Expected Outcome: To support the new EU forest strategy, successful proposals will assess research needs and funding possibilities for forestry and the forest-based sector, notably for the multifunctionality and management of forests in Europe based on the three pillars of sustainability (economic, environmental and social). Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Better insights into existing funding sources (including Horizon Europe, rural and regional development funds) and streamlining of research and innovation (R&I) actions in Europe.
- Establishment of a co-creative environment allowing stakeholders to identify jointly existing research gaps and future priorities to coordinate research efforts at regional, national and European level.
- Intensified trans-national R&I cooperation in forestry and the forest-based sector on research priorities, critical and key technologies.
- Creation of an open-innovation ecosystem with relevant stakeholders in the EU and associated countries to support the evolution of the forest-based sector.

Scope: A key R&I challenge for the coming years is to address the complexity of the forest-based sector in environmental terms (long life cycle, ecosystem functioning and diversity, spatial variability, interface between the soil and the atmosphere, in the middle between cultivated and natural assets), economic terms (multiple forest owners and SMEs, competitiveness on global markets) and policy terms (many forest-related policies including biological diversity, climate and energy, bioeconomy, rural development, trade, agriculture, etc.).

A successful transition of the forest-based sector towards greater sustainability needs to be underpinned by a comprehensive scientific assessment. Better coordination of research activities is also required to overcome fragmentation of public research efforts, to strengthen the link between forest managers, industries and society and to streamline the activities of European, national and regional stakeholders.

Proposals will:

- Analyse the forest-based sector in an integrated way, considering different biodiversity and bioeconomy issues, societal expectations and climate change risks that call for an intensified European and international collaboration.
- Design a suitable method for conducting foresight analysis on issues that are likely to have an impact on forests in European regions and globally.
- Consider the future availability of and demands for different forest resources, and assess their sustainability within the changing global economic, social and environmental conditions.

- Provide evidence and knowledge on how existing funding sources at EU (including Horizon Europe, rural and regional development funds), Member State, associated countries' and regional levels are mobilised to support research and innovation initiatives in the forest-based sector.
- Address the necessity for new knowledge to support major transitions and innovations in forestry and the forest-based sector in view of the new EU forest strategy and other major policy initiatives.
- Develop a structured framework for a European network of research funding and research policy organisations across the different parts of the forest-based and related sectors to increase cross-fertilisation between different areas of knowledge generation and innovation activities.
- Develop an R&I roadmap at EU-level and prepare for a possible European partnership or other appropriate comprehensive actions under Horizon Europe.
- Provide scenarios and information on how to maximise synergies and minimise trade-offs between the different funding instruments and research needs (environmental, economic and social dimensions)
- Assess the potential of flagship projects in selected key strategic areas in the forest-based sector (e.g. integrated forest research across several dimensions of sustainable forest management; landscape-level integration of forest research at the interface with other sectors (agriculture, cities, water); increased, sustainable wood production and mobilisation; renewable building materials for healthier living; role of new wood-based products to reach climate neutrality by substitution effects; contributions of the forest-based sector in the green recovery).

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure a value chain approach, with adequate involvement of the forestry and forest-based sector.

Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

### **Innovating for blue bioeconomy and biotechnology value chains**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01-07: Marine microbiome for a healthy ocean and a sustainable blue bioeconomy** <sup>242</sup>

<b>Specific conditions</b>
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<sup>242</sup> In the context of this topic marine microbiome is understood as the global collective of all microorganisms in marine and aquatic environments. The term refers also to the specific communities of microbes that live in and on individual aquatic ecosystems, including their creatures.

<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 9.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 18.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 3-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

**Expected Outcome:** In line with the European Green Deal, the EU bioeconomy strategy and the blue growth strategy, the successful proposals will support the development of microbiome-based greener aquatic industrial products/processes and/or environmental services sustaining the health of aquatic ecosystems for a healthy planet and people.

The project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Provision of a scientific base to enable the efficient production of high-quality marine microbiome data, increased data interoperability and facilitate its use by a wide range of stakeholders. Improvement of capacity building in bioinformatics in Europe and overcome fragmentation.
- Increased engagement of all actors in the marine microbiome biodiscovery pipeline, including industry, the scientific community, and civil society in full consideration of the sustainability objectives while accelerating the profitability and economic prospects of marine microbiome-enabled products and processes.
- Proven biodiscovery strategies based on whole microbiome communities enlarging the spectrum of biotechnology-enabled products and processes of value to society based on marine bioresources.
- Better protection and sustainable use of marine (genetic) bioresources by advancing new intellectual property rights (IPR) approaches to securing clear access while ensuring fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilisation.
- Increased awareness on the potential of marine microbiome to boost the sustainable blue bioeconomy.

**Scope:** The ocean is the Earth’s largest microbiome. Microorganisms represent nearly 90% of the ocean biomass and largely determine the functioning and health of marine ecosystems. They also contain a great variety of metabolic pathways that can yield beneficial products and processes such as medicines, high value industrial compounds and environmental services. The marine microbiome is one of the fastest growing segments of the blue bioeconomy and its study is vital to advance the discovery, understanding, protection and harnessing of the ocean.

The purpose of the action is to develop novel tools and approaches to produce, analyse and use marine microbiome data for the discovery and production of high value sustainable industrial products/processes and/or environmental services that sustain the health of aquatic ecosystems.

Applicants should address:

- Scientific and technological challenges cutting across marine microbiome fields such as: (i) developing new methods to analyse and model microbiome communities and take full advantage of post-genomic technologies and bioinformatic analysis pipelines; (ii) developing standards and common methodologies that are coherent across marine microbiome exploration, monitoring and engineering, and can adapt to the capacity of the different sectors (science, industry, people and society); and (iii) optimising the use of (pre-existing) databases and research infrastructures by ensuring interoperability and enhanced networking.
- Bioprospecting to discover biological compounds or functions that are obtained only through complex interactions involving whole microbiome communities; targeted cultivation strategies beyond lab grown monocultures; manipulate and bioengineer microbiome products that ensure the sustainable use of marine bioresources; ensure open access and benefit sharing in balance with agreements and negotiations to protect intellectual property.

Collaboration between private industry and academia, and the link with end users and society are both essential. In addition, the professional skills and competences on marine microbiomes of those working and being trained to work within the blue bioeconomy should be improved.

Proposals should assess the risks and ethics related to microbiome science & technology and guarantee the preservation of biodiversity and the compliance with EU regulations on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilisation (ABS) in the EU. Fostering long-term preservation in biobanks, proper documentation of rights for redistribution and full traceability of their use and benefits.

Dissemination, public engagement and establishing links between researchers and the various end users should be central to the proposals. Projects should seek synergies and capitalise on the results of past or ongoing research. Cooperation with other selected proposals under this topic and complementary topics included in this work programme<sup>243</sup> is encouraged.

International co-operation is strongly encouraged as a win-win scenario, while contributing to the European competitiveness and resilience.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

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<sup>243</sup> Another microbiome-related topic presented in this work programme is “HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-07: Microbiomes for bio-based innovation and environmental applications.”



**Call - Circular economy and bioeconomy sectors**

***HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-02-two-stage***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>244</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>245</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2022		
Opening: 28 Oct 2021				
Deadline(s): 15 Feb 2022 (First Stage), 01 Sep 2022 (Second Stage)				
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-02-01-two-stage	IA	21.00	6.00 to 8.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-02-02-two-stage	RIA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-02-03-two-stage	IA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-02-04-two-stage	RIA	6.00	Around 6.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-02-05-two-stage	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-02-06-two-stage	IA	15.00	6.00 to 8.00	2
Overall indicative budget		76.00		

**General conditions relating to this call**

<sup>244</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>245</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

### **Enabling a circular economy transition**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-02-01-two-stage: Integrated solutions for circularity in buildings and the construction sector**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 6.00 and 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 21.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

**Expected Outcome:** A successful proposal will contribute to all Destination ‘Circular economy and bioeconomy sectors’ impacts related to consumers and industry, in particular to European industrial sustainability, competitiveness and resource independence by lowering the environmental footprint, enabling climate-neutrality and higher resource efficiency, through increased circularity and a resulting reduction in GHG emissions.

Project results are expected to contribute to at least four of the following outcomes:

- Increased deployment and market uptake of innovative climate-neutral circular solutions for construction, waste prevention, lifetime extension and significant improvement of lifecycle performance of buildings and their components, including GHG emissions
- Increased deployment and market uptake of innovative solutions to design and manufacture for disassembly, waste prevention and management, reuse and recycling in the construction sector, including production and assembling
- Enhanced diffusion and demonstrated benefits of advanced digital solutions, ensuring coherence with other initiatives such as digital logbooks for logistics of construction materials and the energy-efficient operation of buildings
- Increased recovery and recycling rates of construction and demolition waste
- Improved elimination of hazardous substances from secondary materials
- Increased upcycling of reused and recycled material in construction materials, products and buildings
- Increased knowledge about the overall environmental footprint of buildings and construction materials, including the integrated assessment of material and energy efficiency with regard to possible trade-offs and synergies, and increased practical application of the Commission's Product Environmental Footprint method.

Scope: The 2020 circular economy action plan (CEAP) states that “the built environment has a significant impact on many sectors of the economy, on local jobs and quality of life. It requires vast amounts of resources and accounts for about 50% of all extracted material. The construction sector is responsible for over 35% of the EU's total waste generation. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from material extraction, manufacturing of construction products, construction and renovation of buildings are estimated at 5-12% of total national GHG emissions. Greater material efficiency could save 80% of those emissions.” Measures should strive for the use of more climate-neutral circular materials with low environmental footprint and tackle material recovery, upcycling, recycled content in products, durability and adaptability of buildings, and they should have a strong life cycle and digitalisation focus. They should also focus on circular design that facilitates reuse and recycling beforehand.

This activity should demonstrate at large scale and deploy innovative climate-neutral circular solutions that prevent waste, expand the lifetime and improve the life cycle performance of buildings and their components, but also improve the quality of and the confidence in reused and recycled material. This targets materials, products, equipment and systems, their sourcing, design, upgradability, durability, material efficiency, dismantling, recyclability, etc. Dismantling and deconstruction should be embedded already in the design phase, with the adoption of circular economy principles, and thus reduce construction and demolition waste (CDW). As part of an overall digitalisation of the construction ecosystem, projects should use digital tools such as Building Information Modelling (BIM) or Digital Twin, which are key to

traceability and circularity, and can be further used during deconstruction. Appropriate material recycling within construction operations, waste material identification, sorting and decontamination solutions should be considered to improve material logistics, processing and upgrading. Projects should aim to support the strengthening of preferably local or regional secondary material markets. All solutions should be based on life-cycle approaches and proposals should integrate life cycle assessment using the European Commission’s Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) method and relevant costing methods. The projects should also propose, test and demonstrate new business models. Projects should also develop training material to endow workers in this occupational group with the right skillset in order to deploy the new technologies developed. All achieved outcomes should be demonstrated using quantitative indicators and targets wherever possible.

With regard to the territorial aspects of all proposed solutions, proposals seek to contribute to the goals and cooperate with the services of the European Commission’s Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI). Joint activities with CCRI projects are encouraged.

Proposals should seek to build synergies with projects funded under Cluster 4 Destination ‘Climate neutral, circular and digitised production’, section “A new way to build, accelerating disruptive change in construction”. Projects are therefore strongly encouraged to organise joint activities, ensure synergies and undertake clustering activities with projects under Cluster 4.

Projects should seek to contribute to the New European Bauhaus initiative by supporting the green and digital transitions in communities’ living environments through merging sustainability, inclusiveness and quality of experience.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**Innovating sustainable bio-based systems and the bioeconomy**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-02-02-two-stage: Exploring extreme environments: novel adaptation strategies at molecular level for bio-based innovation**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
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**Expected Outcome:** Projects will contribute to the expected impacts identified for Destination ‘Circular economy and bioeconomy sectors’, and to the European policies it supports, in particular the European Green Deal, the circular economy action plan and the Bioeconomy and biodiversity strategies. Their results will help to improve the European industrial<sup>246</sup> sustainability, competitiveness and resource independence by lowering the environmental footprint (including on biodiversity), enabling climate-neutrality and higher resource efficiency (in particular upcycling and cascading use of biomass) along and across value chains, developing innovative bio-based products. They will engage all stakeholders and improve their knowledge and understanding of science, in particular biotechnology-based value chains

Projects results should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

Deeper understanding of the molecular, biochemical and cellular mechanisms of ecological adaptation of terrestrial and aquatic organisms in response to life under extreme or changing environments, while strengthening the remediation options at macro level for the studied populations, including by their interactions, thus contributing to expanding the range of potential climate change mitigation strategies.

- Stronger innovation capacity by applying the discovered principles (including via biotechnology routes) to the development of more resilient innovative feedstocks needed for sustainable bio-based products<sup>247</sup>
- A significantly improved environmental footprint of novel feedstocks based on discovered principles<sup>248</sup>, and a wider range of sustainable biomass resources available to European industry, that are important for industrial competitiveness and SMEs participation, thus helping to create skilled jobs and boost the economy.
- Increased public understanding in Europe of biotechnology, the conservation of biodiversity, and EU biodiversity strategy goals. Respect of the principles of access and benefit sharing (UN Biodiversity Convention), via clear, inclusive and transparent communication strategies.

**Scope:** The topic covers R&D needed to advance and potentially exploit knowledge on the ways terrestrial and aquatic organisms and their populations adapt, on molecular, physiological, and ecological levels, to the effects of climate change, such as by tolerance to extreme temperatures, drought/water stress, salinity or increased biotic pressures (new pests), as observed at macro-scale (e.g. shifting ecological niches). The scope covers understanding

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<sup>246</sup> In connection with European partnerships under Cluster 6, in particular Circular Bio-based Europe (CBE).

<sup>247</sup> i.e. molecular traits linked with sustainable intensification of production, quality of the concerned feedstocks, or enhanced defence ability

<sup>248</sup> e.g. through lowered requirements for pesticides or irrigation.

the complex interactions between the affected populations (e.g. molecular signalling), and broader outcomes on an ecological level. International cooperation is strongly encouraged to maximise the impact.

Where relevant, proposals should seek synergies and capitalise on the results of past and ongoing research projects. Proposals should:

- a. Identify and justify the choice of the selected organism or system under investigation, specifying the level and characteristics of the environmental stimuli covered (i.e. extreme or changing environment linked to climatic conditions).
- b. Consider the broader level of climate adaptation in the systems identified, in order to shed light on the possibility and magnitude of applying the discovered principles as part of a mitigation strategy.
- c. Engage with industrial actors including SMEs to identify and implement the best combination of appropriate technical solutions and in particular biotechnology for specific industrial value chains, for sustainable biomass generation, taking into account the barriers and drivers derived from governance and market aspects, while seeking engagement and understanding of all actors.
- d. Develop and communicate the key methods to monitor and measure the qualitative and quantitative impacts of these solutions and practices for different biomass sourcing, optimization, processing and production systems, the potential of replacing available traditional alternatives, if relevant, and trade-offs, including for biodiversity, and potential benefits in terms of the socioeconomic resilience of businesses, job creation and industrial competitiveness.
- e. Develop and test mechanisms with all actors, notably the research community and bio-based industry. Exchange knowledge on and demonstrate solutions for improved bio-based products and processes and for addressing other environmental impacts such as on biodiversity to agricultural operators, farmers, fishers, foresters, SMEs and the broader public, and help them implement them.

For this topic, it is not mandatory to integrate the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) into research and innovation.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-02-03-two-stage: Sustainable biodegradable novel bio-based plastics: innovation for sustainability and end-of-life options of plastics**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 7-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: Successful proposals will support the uptake of bio-based innovation with high environmental and functional performance of products, processes and services along value chains and life cycles by bio-based industry, in line with European Green Deal objectives. Project outcomes will contribute to foster European industrial sustainability, competitiveness and resource independence, by lowering the environmental footprint and enabling climate-neutrality and higher resource efficiency along value chains.

Projects results are expected to contribute to the following expected outcome:

- Bio-based plastics value chains are deployed with improved functionalities and environmental performances, less toxicity substances, lower waste production and better product safety control along the whole value chain.

Scope: There is a need to develop innovative, sustainable bio-based and biodegradable plastics with novel properties and production processes to deliver environmentally friendly materials with the desired properties for long-term circular applications, markets and uses. The approach should combine environmental sustainability, circularity and functionality of the developed products and of the supply chain. Results should be aligned to recent policy developments on plastics.

Proposals should:

- a. Develop novel sustainable bio-based biodegradable plastics with enhanced functionalities, circularity and environmental sustainability, based on their non-toxic nature and improved end-of-life behaviour, for specific applications. The bio-based plastic should be mechanically recyclable and its biodegradability in specific environments should allow for a more sustainably managed end-of-life such as either composting or anaerobic digestion or home composting or in ‘in-situ’ degradation (i.e. natural soil and marine environments) depending on applications and conditions.
- b. Develop and optimise innovative aspects of the production process, for example green chemistry and/or fermentative production, especially with respect to catalysts, higher yield, bio-based plastic quality, while ensuring the sustainability of biological feedstock used in the manufacturing, including biological waste and residues, and of production processes, aiming at a low environmental footprint and economic viability.
- c. Test the biodegradability in the specific environment where the bio-based plastic developed for selected applications and conditions could end its life cycle, i.e. either composting plant or anaerobic digester, or home composting, or in ‘in-situ’ degradation (i.e. natural soil and marine environments);

- d. Consider process and product safety (i.e. production through to the use of a product) in value chains, especially for new products and materials, following national or EU regulations. The toxicological evaluation of products and the EU regulatory requirements for product safety should be systematically addressed as part of proposals/projects, in particular where uses may be linked to critical exposure routes (e.g. food contact materials).
- e. Demonstrate the scaled-up production processes and cost competitiveness for novel sustainable bio-based biodegradable plastics in order to reach a critical mass for a given bio-based plastic, to achieve economies of scale.

Proposals should include a task dedicated to sharing methodologies and findings with projects funded within this topic. Where relevant, proposals should seek links with and to capitalise on the results of past and other ongoing research projects. They should take a multidisciplinary approach, involving many stakeholders and fields of applications and considering various aspects along the bio-based plastics value chain, including EU rules on product safety. They should also consider contributing data and results to the European Commission’s Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy hosted by the JRC.

For this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-02-04-two-stage: Photosynthesis revisited: climate emergency, “no pollution and zero-emission” challenge and industrial application**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

**Expected Outcome:** The successful proposal will contribute to Destination ‘Circular economy and bioeconomy sectors’ impacts, and the European policies it supports, in particular the European Green Deal, the circular economy action plan and the bioeconomy strategy. They will help improve European industrial<sup>249</sup> sustainability, competitiveness and resource independence to develop innovative bio-based products. They will engage all stakeholders

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<sup>249</sup> In connection with European partnerships under Cluster 6, in particular Circular Bio-based Europe (CBE).



and improve their knowledge and understanding of science, notably of biotechnology-based value chains, and improve benefits for consumers.

Projects results should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Wider application of recent advances in molecular biology and biotechnology to increase photosynthetic efficiency of plants and/or algae and other autotrophic organisms, increasing their assimilation of carbon dioxide, boosting biomass yields, their processing and recovery of substance and materials of economic interest, and resulting in potential contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Increased industrial uptake of plants and photoautotrophic organisms via biotechnology approaches, for the production of high-value complex molecules, to improve cost- and resource-efficiency. Wider uptake of life sciences and biotechnology innovations, supporting high engagement of industry and SMEs in Europe.
- Greater understanding and application of biotechnology to address air pollution (especially ozone) by crops and plants related with heat waves and environmental stress.
- Greater and more inclusive understanding and awareness of innovations, via transparent communication and societal dialogue with all stakeholders (academia, industry, SMEs, NGOs, regulatory institutions, international partners etc.).

Scope: The photosynthetic capacity of plants, algae and other photosynthetic organisms to assimilate atmospheric carbon dioxide positions them at the centre of the global climate change adaptation and mitigation challenge<sup>250 251</sup>. Their autotrophic lifestyle also makes them ideal platform organisms for sustainable production of biomolecules<sup>252</sup>, including molecules of high socio-economic value, of interest to diverse industrial sectors, by increasingly sophisticated synthetic and molecular biology approaches<sup>253</sup>.

This creates new opportunities for industrial production, beyond improved yields, while helping increase CO<sub>2</sub> assimilation capacity - contributing notably to the reduction of pollution in Europe, and making it more efficient. In particular, recent research confirm a strong correlation between plant physiological reactions during drought and heat waves, which are increasing in frequency and intensity in Europe, notably by contributing to ozone pollution<sup>254</sup>, the so-called ‘climate penalty of plants’<sup>255 256</sup>.

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<sup>250</sup> For instance, see Ort et al. Redesigning photosynthesis to sustainably meet global food and bioenergy demand. *Proc. Natl Acad. Sci. USA* **112**, 8529–8536 (2015).

<sup>251</sup> Notwithstanding the recognized need for even stronger emission reductions.

<sup>252</sup> O’Neill E. and Kelly, S. 2016 Engineering biosynthesis of high-value compounds in photosynthetic organisms,

<sup>253</sup> Schander et al., A synthetic pathway for the fixation of carbon dioxide in vitro, *Science* **18** (Nov 2016): 900-904

<sup>254</sup> Lin *et al.* Vegetation feedbacks during drought exacerbate ozone air pollution extremes in Europe. *Nat. Clim. Chang.* **10**, 444–451 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-020-0743-y>

<sup>255</sup> Sadiq, M. The climate penalty of plants. *Nat. Clim. Chang.* **10**, 387–388 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-020-0765-5>

The topic covers innovative technologies with potential to boost the efficiency of photosynthesis, reduce the ‘climate penalty of plants’, and increase their sustainable industrial application. All photoautotrophic organisms such as plants, micro- and macro algae, cyanobacteria and purple sulphur bacteria are in the scope.

International cooperation is strongly encouraged to allow the exchange of best practices while ensuring win-win scenarios and contributing to European competitiveness.

Proposals should:

- a. Develop and apply a toolbox of technologies to optimise the photosynthesis pathways and structures of plants and algae to enable industrial manufacturing of large quantities of high-value bio-based compounds, substances or materials (excluding biofuels/bioenergy applications), while addressing the CO<sub>2</sub> assimilation and the zero-pollution goals (especially ozone pollution) at sufficiently large scale.
- b. Identify and characterise the key aspects of the environmental and safety aspects, as well as the future scenarios of increasing environmental pressures under climate change conditions (water, gaseous inputs, land use etc.), for the selected crops, beyond the model species.
- c. Outline the necessary scale-up production processes for novel bio-based innovations in order to reach a critical mass for a given application (including the crop/species selection), to achieve economies of scale, address different market segments and applications.
- d. Consider process and product safety - including the occupational and consumer safety aspects - in value chains, in line with national or European regulations. Ensure the transparent and inclusive engagement of all actors, including industry and SMEs, the scientific community, regulatory institutions, and broader civil society, including NGOs, to ensure the necessary impact and awareness.
- e. Where relevant, proposals should seek links with and capitalise on the results of past<sup>257</sup> and ongoing<sup>258</sup> research projects, taking care to avoid overlaps.

For this topic, it is not mandatory to integrate the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) into research and innovation.

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256 Air quality in Europe – 2019 report Report no. 10/2019 (European Environment Agency, 2019);

<https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/air-quality-in-europe-2019>

257 E.g. FP7 project “[3to4](#)”: Converting C3 to C4 photosynthesis for sustainable agriculture

258 E.g. Horizon 2020 call [BIOTEC-02-2019](#): Boosting the efficiency of photosynthesis (RIA), with projects CAPITALISE, GAIN4CROPS and PhotoBoost.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-02-05-two-stage: Life sciences and their convergence with digital technologies for prospecting, understanding and sustainably using biological resources**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

**Expected Outcome:** In line with the European Green Deal and other European initiatives such as the circular economy action plan, the industrial strategy, the bioeconomy strategy and the biodiversity strategy, the successful proposal should support the uptake of bio-based innovation, to improve European industrial<sup>259</sup> sustainability, competitiveness and resource independence. They should develop innovative bio-based products using the full benefits of artificial intelligence and other digital technology innovation. They should engage all stakeholders and improve their knowledge and understanding of science, notably biotechnology-based value chains, and improve benefits for consumers.

Project results should contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- Use the full potential of artificial intelligence applications for prospecting, understanding and sustainably using biological resources within safe planetary boundaries.
- Digital tools, sensors and methods for improved efficiency, climate change adaptation and sustainability of industrial processes in the bio-based sectors considering the needs of stakeholders are integrated in innovative engineering solutions.
- Enhanced monitoring, reporting and management of natural resources using artificial intelligence and other digital technology applications.

**Scope:** Engineering biology applications have grown beyond chemical production to include the generation of biosensor organisms for the lab, animal, and field, modification of agricultural organisms for nutrition and pest/environmental resilience, production of organisms for bioremediation, and live cell and gene/viral therapies. The rapid expansion of the field has resulted in new tools and new approaches. However, we are still challenged by the need for novel and more robust and interoperable computational tools and models for

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<sup>259</sup> In synergy with European partnerships under Cluster 6, in particular Circular Bio-based Europe (CBE).

engineering biology. For example, improved models of synthetic systems (synthetic biology) and of their interaction with their host organisms could help enable more successful engineering.

This information infrastructure for biological design is at an early stage compared to engineering disciplines such as mechanical and electrical engineering, as the biomanufacturing field has emerged only recently. A critical bottleneck is a lack of established “design rules,” core aspects of biological and biomolecular function that apply to diverse systems and applications. Furthermore, technologies for the utilization, manufacture, and deployment of innovative bio-based systems are still under development. These roadblocks have hampered the development of standard computational frameworks to represent, process and store information on biological components, predict system behaviour, and diagnose failures. Therefore, widespread automation in the bio-based sectors remains out of reach.

A mature computational infrastructure for biodesign requires powerful access to information on biological parts and systems, their environments, their manufacturing processes, and their operations in and beyond the laboratory in which they are created. This in turn requires findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable data that enable effective aggregation information on bio-based systems, their environments, and their processes of manufacture, and the establishment of standard models of data processing and analysis, including bioinformatics, biosensors, bioindicators, ‘-omics’ technologies that allow open-development and scalable execution in the bio-based sectors.

The topic aims to prevent pollution and sustainably manage and use natural resources within safe planetary boundaries, including in the deployment of the bioeconomy and the bio-based sectors. The topic focuses on bioinformatics, “cheminformatics” and artificial intelligence as approaches and tools to transform available information into biologically or biotechnologically applicable knowledge. It also aims to efficiently integrate digital technologies into bio-based operations to optimise value chains from a technical, economic, social and environmental point of view.

Proposals should:

- a. Enable prospecting, understanding and sustainable use of biological resources based on their convergence with digital technologies that lead to optimised and more efficient bio-based operations.
- b. Identify and characterise advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence, and their benefits for the utilisation, manufacture, and deployment of innovative bio-based systems.
- c. Develop integrated biological designs and data models for improved prospecting, understanding and deployment of higher efficiency and sustainability of biological resources and industrial bio-based operations (e.g. bioinformatics, biosensors, bioindicators, data analysis, ‘-omics’ technologies).

- d. Improve the economic and environmental sustainability of bio-based operations.
- e. Focus on the integration of -omics and machine learning techniques such as active learning for the design-build-test-learn (DBTL) cycle.
- f. Develop improved models and model standards of synthetic systems (synthetic biology) and of their interaction with their host organisms to facilitate more successful engineering and broader application in the bio-based sectors.
- g. Establish bio computer-aided design (BioCAD) tools and design-of-experiment (DoE) approaches.
- h. Reinforce and maintain scientific infrastructures to integrate existing biodiversity information (species, habitats and environmental processes).
- i. Consider contributing data and results to the European Commission’s Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy hosted by the JRC.

For this topic, it is not mandatory to integrate the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) into research and innovation.

**Safeguarding the multiple functions of EU forests**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-02-06-two-stage: Harnessing the digital revolution in the forest-based sector**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 6.00 and 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.  If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may

	<p>additionally be used).</p> <p>The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.</p>
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	<p>Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.</p>

Expected Outcome: In line with the EU forest strategy and the European digital strategy, successful proposals will demonstrate the potential of digital solutions in forestry and forest-based value chains contributing to the multifunctionality and management of forests in Europe based on the three pillars of sustainability (economic, environmental and social). Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Deployment of information and communication technology (ICT) innovations in forestry to optimise productivity as well as the delivery of ecosystem services.
- Application of innovative approaches along the forest-based value chain by more accurate tracing methodologies of forest resources.
- A greater competitive advantage for European industries that utilise forest resources more efficiently.

Scope: The improved use of information flows and intelligent digital solutions that are increasingly available in forest monitoring, management and forestry operations, could help to significantly improve and unlock the efficiency of wood supply chain activities. Modern digital applications also provide promising possibilities to improve forest managers’ decision making in a precious and complex forest environment and to improve ecosystem monitoring.

This topic addresses innovations in information systems for forest managers, forest-based industries and policy makers as well as advances in precision forestry, harvesting systems and forest nursery operation, optimised harvest planning, operations management, timber transport and logistics, as well as safety, ergonomics and smart assistance for human workers. The synergetic use of geo-spatial, statistical, and modelling technologies together with information and communication technologies such as aerial and satellite retrievals, (in particular from the Copernicus programme) and the ‘web of things’ combined with big-data analytics is highly encouraged.

The aim is to harness the potential of ICT and new technologies to improve the sustainability of forest management and logging operations with a view to sharing data throughout the wood value chain, thereby driving greater sustainability, to offer new business models along the value chain and to improve the traceability of forest resources for optimised and transparent supply chains. The integration in the new technologies of climate change impacts on these wood chains should be an essential component. Activities may also include robust and transparent methods and tools for high resolution forest and ecosystems services assessments, natural disturbance risk monitoring and analysis (including pests and forest fires) and disaster response systems.

Besides activities such as prototyping, testing, demonstrating and piloting in a near to operational environment, proposals may include limited research activities. Assessing and deepening the understanding of economic, social and environmental impacts through an enhanced application of digital technologies for foresters, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and industries, as well as end-consumers will be of special interest, including the assessment of risks and opportunities for jobs in forestry, the wider forest-based sector and rural communities.

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure adequate involvement of the primary sector and the wider forest-based value chain. Cooperation with other selected projects under this topic and other relevant projects is strongly encouraged.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

## **Destination – Clean environment and zero pollution**

Anthropogenic pollution undermines the integrity of Earth ecosystems and severely affects natural resources essential for human life. Keeping our planet clean and our ecosystems healthy will not only contribute to addressing the climate crisis but also help regenerate biodiversity, ensure the sustainability of primary production activities and safeguard the well-being of humankind. In line with the objectives of the European Green Deal, particularly its zero pollution ambition, and the 2030 Climate Target Plan, and other relevant EU legislation<sup>260</sup>, this destination seeks to halt and prevent pollution by focussing the work programme 2021-2022 on fresh and marine waters, soils, air, including from nitrogen and phosphorus emissions, as well as on the environmental performance and sustainability of processes in the bio-based systems. Synergies with other clusters (notably 1 and 5), relevant destinations as well as missions and partnerships will be exploited.

Halting emissions of pollutants to soils and waters is of fundamental significance for the planet. Diffuse emissions of pollutants from land and urban sources, including atmospheric depositions, are a major stress factor for terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, threatening the quality of surface waters and aquifers, and affecting soil quality and all water-dependent sectors that require a holistic understanding of the pollution sources, key vectors and pathways. Projected impacts of climate change will alter, and notably reduce, the hydrological flows in many parts of Europe, while eutrophication could be exacerbated by increasing temperatures. Climate change and increasing water demand will exert significant pressures on surface and groundwater quality<sup>261</sup>, notably where the combined effect of water table depletion and sea level rise will endanger the integrity of coastal aquifers and groundwater quality. This is due to saline water intrusion or extreme events (e.g. higher tides, storm surges or inland flooding events), which will put coastal wetlands and reservoirs, estuaries and ecosystems at risk. While recognising its essential role in aquatic ecosystems functioning and services, the sediments originating mostly from run-off and erosion are likely the major source of physical pollution of water bodies (excessive turbidity, impacts of deposition, accumulation of litter and debris) and contribute to a large extent to chemical and biological pollution of receiving waters. Beside land use practises, the increasing intensity and variability of precipitation will exacerbate erosion risks, affect the deposition and transport of sediments and could lead to a remobilisation of legacy contaminants and further deteriorate the quality of soils, sediments and water bodies, including aquifers, estuaries and coastal areas, and of their ecosystem function and services.

Keeping nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) cycles in balance is another crucial challenge. N and P flows from anthropogenic sources, mostly from excessive or inefficient input of fertilisers (including manure, sewage sludge, etc.) in agriculture, currently exceed planetary

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<sup>260</sup> cf. European Green Deal deliverables farm to fork strategy, biodiversity strategy, soil strategy, but also bioeconomy strategy, marine strategy, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development etc., the Missions on Soil Health and Food as well as on Ocean, seas and waters, etc.

<sup>261</sup> Member States identified that diffuse pollution is still a significant pressure that affects 35 % of the area of groundwater bodies, while quality standards (pesticides, herbicides...) were exceeded in 15 % of the groundwater bodies



boundaries. Their leaching and run-off negatively affect soil biodiversity, pH, organic matter concentration and carbon sequestration capacity, and cause the eutrophication of water bodies while ammonia and nitrous oxide emissions affect air quality and climate. As all environmental media are concerned, a systemic approach is necessary to limit N/P emissions from different sources, for example through the deployment of alternative fertilising products, and considering regional conditions (geography, climate zones, economy activities, soil properties, eco-system condition, agricultural practices, governance structures etc.), and to bring N/P flows back within safe ecological boundaries

Protecting drinking water and managing water pollution in rural settlements, and in increasingly dense urban areas requires innovative and holistic approaches at city/catchment level to ensure water quality, resilient to the impacts of climate and global change, by considering different spatial and temporal scales and contexts, aging water infrastructures, as well as pollution derived from point and non-point sources, and natural/human-made disasters. Protective measures should consider current and future land use, environmental needs and socioeconomic interests as essential elements for improving water quality and its management and governance. Re-emerging pollutants, such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) or mercury, and contaminants of emerging concern (CECs) in water bodies may have impacts on ecological and human health, and some are not well regulated under existing environmental legislation. Sources of these pollutants include e.g. industry, agriculture, urban runoff, household products, coatings, paints and pharmaceuticals that are normally disposed of to sewage treatment plants and subsequently discharged into water bodies. Micro-pollutants, plastics, pathogens and CECs, individually or combined, represent a concern for a safe and good quality drinking water supply. Increasing water temperatures, notably due to climate change could deteriorate the quality of aquatic ecosystems and drinking water sources by favouring the conditions for enhanced eutrophication as well as pathogen development or the spread of invasive species. Emerging concerns are also growing at the level of drinking water treatment and distribution, notably in relation with disinfection operations and possible harmful effects of by-products and metabolites.

Addressing pollution on seas and ocean is a prerequisite for a healthy planet. The ocean is being polluted and destroyed due to the release of substances or energy in marine waters which initiate a range of subsequent effects. According to a new European Environment Agency report, all four regional seas in Europe have a large-scale contamination problem, ranging from 96% of the assessed area in the Baltic Sea and 91% in the Black Sea, to 87% in the Mediterranean and 75% in the North-East Atlantic Ocean. The main sources of pollution include industrial, agricultural and municipal waste runoff, other human activities (e.g. transport), underwater noise, light, atmospheric deposition, etc. into marine waters.

Increasing the environmental performance and sustainability of processes and products plays a significant role in keeping our planet clean. Environmental pollution resulting from human activity is detrimental to ecosystems at different functional levels, representing, also, an important economic burden for society. Circular bio-based systems, including biotechnology, have the potential to substantially contribute to the European Green Deal objectives, provided that they are developed sustainably and systemically aiming at mitigating the climate change

and its impacts, increasing resource efficiency and circularity, preserving and restoring ecosystems services, natural resources, air/water/soil quality and biodiversity. Indicators of such sustainability are needed, building on dynamic perspectives at scales ranging, in space, from planetary to local ecosystems and, in time, from next decade to the end of century and beyond. Environmental impacts should be traced along value chains and trades to enable responsible production and consumption.

### **Expected impacts**

Pollution must be halted and eliminated to guarantee clean and healthy soils, air, fresh and marine water for all. To reach this objective, it will be paramount to advance the knowledge of pollution sources and pathways to enable preventive measures, improve monitoring and control, apply planetary boundaries in practice and introduce effective remediation methods.

Proposals for topics under this destination should set out a credible pathway to contribute to the aforementioned goal to achieve a clean environment and zero pollution, and more specifically to one or several of the following impacts:

- Advanced understanding of diffuse and point sources of water pollution in a global and climate change context, enabling novel solutions to protect water bodies, aquatic ecosystems and soil functionality, and further enhancing water quality and its management for safe human and ecological use, while fostering the EU's and Associated Countries' position and role in the global water scene.
- Balanced N/P flows well within safe ecological boundaries at EU and Associated Countries, regional and local scale, contribute to restoring ecosystems.
- Clean, unpolluted seas in the EU and Associated Countries as a result of successful behavioural, social-economic, demographic, governance and green-blue transitions.
- Circular bio-based systems reversing climate change, restoring biodiversity and protecting air, water and soil quality along supply chain of biological feedstock and industrial value chains, within the EU and Associated Countries and across borders.
- Innovative biotechnology creating zero-pollution bio-based solutions.

When considering their impact, proposals also need to assess their compliance with the “Do No Significant Harm” principle<sup>262</sup> according to which the research and innovation activities of the project should not be supporting or carrying out activities that make a significant harm to any of the six environmental objectives of the EU Taxonomy Regulation.

Actions should develop scientifically robust and transparent approaches and methodologies, building on achievements from previous research activities, where possible and appropriate. To ensure deployment, trustworthiness, swift and wide adoption by user communities, and to support EU and national policy-makers, they should adopt high standards of transparency and

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<sup>262</sup> as per Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 2020/852 on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment (EU Taxonomy Regulation)

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openness, going beyond ex-post documentation of results and extending to aspects such as assumptions, models and data quality during the life of projects.

Topics under this destination will address the following impact areas of the Horizon Europe strategic plan for 2021-2024: “Climate change mitigation and adaptation”; “Enhancing ecosystems and biodiversity on land and in waters”; “Good health and high-quality accessible healthcare”; “Clean and healthy air, water and soil”; “A resilient EU prepared for emerging threats”; and “Inclusive growth and new job opportunities”.

The following call(s) in this work programme contribute to this destination:

Call	Budgets (EUR million)		Deadline(s)
	2021	2022	
HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01	65.00		06 Oct 2021
HORIZON-CL6-2022-ZEROPOLLUTION-01		51.00	15 Feb 2022
Overall indicative budget	65.00	51.00	

**Call - Clean environment and zero pollution**

***HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>263</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>264</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2021		
Opening: 22 Jun 2021 Deadline(s): 06 Oct 2021				
HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-01	CSA	6.00	Around 2.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-02	RIA	7.00	Around 7.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-03	RIA	10.00	2.00 to 4.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-04	CSA	3.00	Around 3.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-05	IA	6.00	Around 6.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-06	RIA	7.00	Around 3.50	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-07	CSA	6.00	Around 2.00	3

<sup>263</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>264</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-08	RIA	5.00	Around 5.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-09	CSA	4.00	Around 2.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-10	RIA	11.00	Around 5.50	2
Overall indicative budget		65.00		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

### **Halting emissions of pollutants to soils and waters**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-01: Regional nitrogen and phosphorus load reduction approach within safe ecological boundaries**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).</p>

**Expected Outcome:** Successful proposals will support local administrations and policy makers to apply a systemic approach preventing pollution from nitrogen and phosphorus, in line with the zero pollution ambition. Project outcomes will contribute to maintaining nitrogen and phosphorus flows well within safe ecological boundaries at EU, regional and local scale and to restoring ecosystems. Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Harmonised environmental protection policies and implementation actions delivered by local administrations and policy makers to achieve nitrogen and phosphorus load reduction targets at regional/river basin level.
- Best practices shared in EU and Associated Countries to prevent pollution from nitrogen and phosphorus emissions to air/soil/water including the design of inter-sectorial governance models and policy implementation tools to deploy the concept of nitrogen and phosphorus load reduction targets.
- Improved knowledge on the physical science of climate change.

**Scope:** The quantification of nitrogen and phosphorus emissions reduction necessary to respect ecosystems' health in order to achieve the objectives of EU legislation and the 2030 targets of the biodiversity and farm to fork strategies may be assessed through a nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) load reduction targets approach. The scope of the topic is to develop a regional/river basin approach. The topic is targeted to stakeholders from regions/river basins or clusters of regions/river basins: local agencies of environmental protection, local administrators, scientists and experts in environmental impacts models. A cluster may be formed by two or more regions/river basins, in the EU and Associated Countries, with very similar characteristics in terms of territorial conditions or being neighbouring regions/river basins.

Proposals will:

- a. Develop a robust and transparent methodology to identify safe ecological limit values (e.g. concentration in media) of N/P applicable at regional scale to ensure good status for ecosystems in air/water/soil, inside and outside the local scale and apply the methodology to regions/river basins of the consortium. The local territorial specificity

will be taken into account, in terms of territorial extension, land use, orography, distribution of basins and fresh water bodies, coastline, lagoons, etc. A coherent set of environmental indicators and their limit values at local scale will be selected for each region/river basin, based on legislation, existing and announced objectives and on scientific evidence, including datasets from the long-term environmental monitoring campaign and tools<sup>265</sup>. Indicators of N/P limit values should align to the monitoring capacity of N/P patterns in the environment.

- b. Review scientific knowledge of the contribution of N/P flows to climate change, including their impacts on carbon sink capacity of soils, of any other impact of N/P life cycle in the environment, of short-term and long-term dynamics of P in the soil matrix and its regional variation across the EU;
- c. Develop and/or improve an existing methodology to assess N/P emissions (flows) from all economic activities that may exist in the region/river basin (i.e. agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, industrial sectors, including food/drink sector, water supply, water/waste management, bioenergy, fossil-based energy production, mining activities, transport, etc.) including unintentional losses (e.g. losses and run-off of agricultural nutrients into the soil) and their impacts on air/water/soil environmental quality. Apply the methodology to regions/river basins of the consortium. Data from existing initiatives, consolidated reporting from national authorities, elaboration from EEA, Eionet, ESTAT, etc. and existing modelling capacity, either locally available or based on a twinning process across regions/clusters shall be considered in order to facilitate harmonisation of the approaches;
- d. Develop and/or improve an existing methodology to identify the N/P load reduction targets for all regions/river basins of the consortium to stay within local N/P limit values;
- e. Apply existing<sup>266</sup> /develop new methodologies to model pathways to reduce N/P emissions to meet load reduction targets and at the same time prevent pollution in air, water and soil, contribute to climate change mitigation, protect biodiversity and avoid pollution swapping. Pathways may include but are not limited to: i) integrated land/marine and bioeconomy; ii) limiting livestock stocking density; iii) integrated agricultural practices, including agro-ecology, aiming at limiting N/P flows and any other environmental impacts; iv) nature-based solutions (e.g. in waste water treatments, soil remediation); v) integrated industrial innovation towards circularity, industrial symbiosis and innovative resources use to improve efficiency and reduce N/P emissions from industrial sectors and any other environmental impact;
- f. Identify inter-sectorial governance models and design policy implementation tools at regional level, also to integrate policy requirements for environmental legislation and emission sources from many sectors, including measures to foster a systemic shift in

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<sup>265</sup> For the atmospheric compartment the JRC has developed the global emissions database EDGAR (<https://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu>) and the FASST (<https://tm5-fasst.jrc.ec.europa.eu>) modelling tool,

<sup>266</sup> For example Blue 2: [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/blue2\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/blue2_en.htm)

societal aspects (e.g. approaches to address meat consumption, food waste prevention, greener mobility, consumers' awareness of environmental footprint of goods etc.).

Proposals should include a task dedicated to sharing methodologies and findings with projects funded within this topic. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing, they must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-02: Optimisation of nutrient budget in agriculture**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 7.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: In line with the zero pollution action plan and the farm to fork strategy, the successful proposal will support to limit and reduce pollution due to the excess of nutrients and nutrient losses (especially nitrogen and phosphorus) in the environment, stemming from excess use in agriculture. It will contribute with new and enhance knowledge to the development of integrated nutrient management plan.

Project results are expected to contribute to all following expected outcomes:

- Improve nutrient budget and flows by identification of optimal combinations of nutrients in different farming systems (conventional, agro-ecological and organic systems) following, when possible, a holistic approach of the plant and animal productions system.
- New approaches and methods supported with sound indicators to monitor and measure nutrients flows and practices with the greatest climate change mitigation potential and



water and nutrient leakages, and biodiversity preservation while ensuring economic farm viability.

- Identification and targeted implementation of individual or combined region-specific agricultural practices that help balance nutrient cycles and Nature Based Solutions for plant and animal nutrition and health optimizing the use of external inputs and implementation of regulated deficit strategies.
- Quantification of the potential to save particularly N and P emissions from the implementation of relevant individual or combined agriculture practices, e.g. organic agriculture, agro-ecology, conservation agriculture, improve organic and mineral fertilization management, etc., that enhance soils health and combat eutrophication and water pollution.
- Improved nutrient budget at different scales, by sound quantification of the inputs and outputs of water and nutrients in different agricultural systems including quantitative environmental and economic indicators for farms, regions and/or products.
- Enhanced models to identify contamination and pollution hotspots locally, to extrapolate to regional, national and global solutions.
- Strengthened transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary research and integrated scientific support for relevant EU policies and priorities (common agricultural policy (CAP), Green Deal, the zero pollution action plan, the farm to fork, etc.).

Scope: Sustainable agricultural production systems not only deliver nutritious food and other raw materials, they are also key drivers of economic growth in rural areas. Roughly 25% of the annually produced terrestrial agricultural biomass is used by humans, about 70%<sup>267</sup> (mostly from grassland, by-products, and inedible crop residues) converted through animals into food and manure, and the remainder goes into biofuel. Unsustainable agricultural systems can cause a variety of adverse environmental effects, such as climate change, loss of biodiversity, and air and water pollution due to poor management of nutrients.

When possible, the holistic consideration of plant and animal nutrition within the agricultural production systems could contribute to more sustainability of the food chain by promoting the minimization of nutrients leakage and improved nutritional values of fertilisers, feed and food. This approach could cover the basic nutritional elements (carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen), the macro elements (phosphorous, potassium, magnesium, calcium, sulphur) but also the trace elements (zinc, copper, iron, iodine, selenium, manganese). In line with the European Green Deal, the development of a nutrient budgeting approach could focus on the fluxes of carbon (C).

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<sup>267</sup> A nutrient budget quantifies the inputs and outputs of nutrients in a system and can be used to understand better how the system soil-water-plant-nutrients works, and provide quantitative environmental and economic indicators for farms, regions and products.

However, there are substantial knowledge gaps regarding the measurement and understanding of the impacts of nutrients flow in different farming practices (conventional, agro-ecological and organic systems, specialised and mix farming systems) at various scales, from local to global, and the capacity to model those impacts.

Proposals should build on existing and new knowledge, data, models (including in situ calibration measurement), artificial intelligence and tools to:

- Optimise and harmonise nutrient and water flow models, indicators and data for quantification and assessment to prevent or reduce environmental pollution caused by nutrients, across sectors, for different types of agricultural practices (conventional, organic and agro-ecological agriculture), and scales – farm, local, regional and river basin.
- Explore and assess safe alternative nutrient sources and pathways (e.g. organic vs inorganic), enhance management and recycling of organic wastes and explore nutrient recovery opportunities (e.g. by using treated sewage sludge or wastewater) as well as nutrient mobilisation through microorganisms;
- Build upon available results from previous EU projects funded under the Horizon 2020 topic CE-RUR-08-2018-2019-2020: Closing nutrient cycles.
- Enhance nutrient use efficiency at different levels.
- Analyse climate change effects of certain nutrient flows, including interactions between nutrient, water and carbon cycles.
- Develop biological models for nutrients flows remote sensing tools, in agricultural systems: for physical, chemical and biological parameters, using smart sensors and AI technologies.
- Develop digital platforms to allow precision nutrient management at farm scale and landscape scale.

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure adequate involvement of the farming sector and, as relevant, bio-based industry active in rural areas.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

### **Protecting drinking water and managing urban water pollution**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-03: Preventing and managing diffuse pollution in urban water runoff**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal’s zero pollution ambition, successful proposals will contribute to halt and prevent pollution of freshwater and soils, and consequently also protecting biodiversity, as addressed by several impacts under Destination ‘Clean environment and zero pollution’, in particular “Advanced understanding of diffuse and point sources of water pollution in a global and climate change context, enabling novel solutions to protect water bodies, aquatic ecosystems and soil functionality, and further enhancing water quality and its management for safe human and ecological use, while fostering the EU’s position and role in the global water scene.”

Project results are expected to contribute to some of the following expected outcomes:

- Wider use of an enhanced knowledge base required to assess and monitor pollution sources, transport pathways and impacts of diffuse pollution conveyed to receiving water bodies by urban water runoff and storm water overflows, including forward looking approaches aimed to anticipate and prepare for future or emerging challenges.
- Implement advanced preventive and mitigating strategies to reduce diffuse pollution of urban waters based on source control measures and storm water management that also consider climate change impacts.
- Apply effective risk assessment and risk management strategies enabling early warning systems and delivering ready-made outputs for decision-making and governance in urban areas.
- Deploy innovative concepts, cost effective technologies and advanced sensors and monitoring approaches for sustainable waste water collection and urban drainage systems preventing pollution due to urban run-off.

- Comprehensive urban runoff and storm water management plans implementing holistic approaches at city/catchment level to ensure resilient urban water quality and climate adaptation.
- Broad uptake of advanced knowledge, breakthrough solutions and innovative technologies to enhance competitiveness of the EU water sector and fostering the EU's position and role in the global water scene.
- Increasing the EU scientific and technological base and guidance on measures to manage storm water quality and evidence for policy-making and implementation.
- Science and evidence-based implementation of the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals, notably the SDG 6 “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”.

Scope: Good quality of fresh water is essential for human wellbeing and health, for supporting healthy aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity, and crucial for agriculture and food production, three major components of the European Green Deal. Despite significant progress in reducing conventional water pollutants and improving freshwater quality, pollution loads from urban point and non-point sources remain an important challenge, particularly exacerbated in water scarce areas. Urban storm water runoff is a large contributor to diffuse pollution that impairs the quality of receiving waters and ecosystems and public health. Impacts of climate change, affecting e.g. the variability and intensity of precipitation, the concentration of pollutants and the temperature of runoff water, may further aggravate the problem.

Additional knowledge is needed on sources and transport pathways of diffuse pollution conveyed by urban runoff and storm water overflows, including emerging threats and challenges posed by climate change. This accurate knowledge is essential for developing preventive and mitigation strategies focussing on source control and storm water management measures.

Proposals in this field should aim to develop holistic approaches at city/catchment level ensuring resilient urban water runoff quality by considering different spatial and temporal scales and contexts, and different technologies. Urban runoff water quality management plans should consider micro-pollutants, contaminants of emerging concern, behavioural changes and societal and technical developments, including in relation to urban planning, buildings and mobility, construction and manufacturing materials, as well as sound risk management approaches. The identification and selection of measures to manage storm water quality will require engaging with relevant stakeholders, water utilities, public authorities and industry to develop guidance for decision makers and policy makers on urban runoff and storm water control measures and deploy easy and ready-made options for end users' implementation.

Actions in this topic should also aim to develop innovative and integrated concepts and technologies, including digital advances, for urban drainage systems by combining advantages from blue-green-grey solutions and decentralised approaches to preventing and managing water pollution from urban runoff and storm water overflows.

In general, the participation of academia, research organisations, utilities, industry and regulators is strongly advised, as well as civil society engagement whenever necessary, also aiming to broaden the dissemination and exploitation routes and to better assess the innovation potential of developed solutions and strategies.

If appropriate, applicants are advised to seek complementarities and synergies, while avoiding duplication and overlap, with relevant actions funded under Horizon 2020 calls<sup>268</sup>, as well as targeted topics supported in the last Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe calls, addressing micro/nano-plastics, persistent and mobile pollutants, such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), pharmaceuticals and contaminants of emerging concerns (CECs), pathogens and antimicrobial resistance.

In order to better address some or all of the expected outcomes, international cooperation is encouraged.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

### **Addressing pollution on seas and ocean**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-04: Achieving zero polluted seas and ocean**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

**Expected Outcome:** In line with the European Green Deal's zero pollution ambition and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, successful proposals will support the development and implementation of a policy vision and the transition needed to reach clean European seas, cutting across behavioural, social-economic and governance spheres.

- Better understanding of major obstacles and showcasing of best practices on the implementation of sustainable and effective marine pollution reduction, prevention, mitigation measures and monitoring (e.g. administrative, legal, financial, technical, social);

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<sup>268</sup> Including access and use of data and information collected through long-term environmental monitoring activities supported by national and/or European research infrastructures.

- Improved support, with a set of guidelines, for the needed blue green transition to reach the policy vision of achieving clean European seas by 2030.

**Scope:** To reach the policy vision of achieving clean European seas, a profound transition is needed on how we address and manage marine pollution – a blue green transition. Many national laws, European and international agreements, forbid dumping of harmful materials into the environment, although enforcing these regulations remains a challenge. Proposals should consider all of the following aspects in the move towards this transition: i) encouraging the enforcement of existing or new pollution management related legislation; ii) the incorporation of new circular economy principles (designing materials and processes to enhance the recyclability and reuse of products and wastes e.g. plastics); iii) encouraging responsible chemical-use through consumer and political actions; iv) the definition and uptake of effective sustainability policies e.g. procurement processes – to better capture and uptake green, blue, sustainable, and circular innovations, etc. In summary, this transition embraces all levels e.g. legal, social, economic, industrial<sup>269</sup>, environmental and wide range of stakeholders e.g. decision makers, scientists<sup>270</sup>, citizens, industry, overall all players behind man-made pollution as well as players that can contribute with solutions (e.g. innovators, procurement experts, service providers etc). Proposals should consider ways for improved cooperation within and across sectors, regions and countries (the ocean and seas do not have borders), improved sharing and integration of information, development of joint measures to achieve zero polluted ocean and seas.

Social innovation is encouraged when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake. This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

### **Increasing environmental performances and sustainability of processes and products**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-05: Environmental sustainability criteria for biological resources production and trade in bio-based systems: impacts and trade-offs**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

<sup>269</sup> The need for new ways of working for Europe to strengthen its industry for the transitions, whether it be on skills or circularity (Industry Strategy)

<sup>270</sup> A new generation of sustainability scientists needs to be trained to focus on a holistic vision of the marine ecosystem. Centred on solving societal challenges. Improving management of marine ecosystem/resources:

<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 7-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: The successful proposal will support tracing environmental impacts of biological resources production and trade by primary producers, traders and certification companies to enable responsible production in the industrial bio-based systems, in line with the 2030 Climate Target Plan and the zero pollution ambition. Project outcomes will contribute to establish circular bio-based systems reversing climate change, restoring biodiversity and protecting air, soil and water quality along supply chain of biological resources and industrial value chains, within the EU and across borders. Project results are expected to contribute to the following expected outcome:

- Certification schemes for international trade at EU and global scale of biological resources for bio-based systems include the environmental impacts and trade-offs along the bio-based supply chains.

Scope: Assessment of environmental sustainability of biological resources production and trades in the bio-based systems is still a challenge. Indicators of such sustainability should build on dynamic perspectives at scales ranging, in space, from planetary to local ecosystems and, in time, from next decade to the end of century and beyond.

Proposals should:

- a. Identify the range of biological resources intended for industrial bio-based systems at EU and local (regional/rural/urban/coastal) scale, including primary biomass resources production and biological secondary raw materials from rural/urban/industrial activities. Industrial bio-based systems do not include food/feed, biofuels, bioenergy and cultural/recreation sectors. However, relevant initiatives in the field of assessment and certification of environmental sustainability of biological resources arising from EU policies in the bioeconomy sectors should be taken into account. Aspects of trade of biological resources within the EU and at global level should be part of the analysis.
- b. Collect data and figures on volumes of biological resources identified under a) in global trade flows and imports into the EU and their geographic distribution. The data collection should be based on existing and consolidated statistics and market databases.
- c. Improve existing and/or develop new methodology for the assessment of the environmental impacts and trade-offs of biological resources in the scope addressing, but not limiting to, the following environmental categories: i) GHG emissions/savings and carbon footprint; ii) emissions from nitrogen and phosphorous based fertilisers; iii) land use and land use change and its related impact on land carbon sink capacity; iv) marine space use and marine space use change; v) water use; vi) biodiversity and ecosystem services; vii) energy consumption, viii) any other aspects of air/water/soil environmental

quality. Assessments should consider the life cycle perspective and relevant regulatory requirements in terms of trade (across and within the EU), to the extent possible. Trade-offs and synergies with food production, nature-based solution to protect biodiversity or other resources use and ecosystem services (e.g. recreation, urban creep) should be included in the assessment;

- d. Align methodology in c) with indicators (e.g. environmental, demographic, geophysics indicators) provided by consolidated and available database, including networks of environmental observations, efficiently.
- e. Adapt methodology in c) to be suitable to definition/identification of environmental sustainability criteria compliant with the format of certification schemes in terms of either adopting existing certification schemes or developing of ad hoc ones. Criteria should be aligned with the Commission’s Taxonomy Regulation<sup>271</sup>. Traceability of biological resources at European and global scale should be essential part of certification.
- f. Demonstrate the developed methodologies for the assessment of environmental impacts and trade-offs, sustainability criteria and certification schemes to a range of biological resources intended for industrial bio-based systems in an operational environment and deliver guidelines.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

Proposals’ consortia should involve primary producers of biological resources, trade bodies, bio-based industries, agencies/companies developing certification, consumers’ organisations and any stakeholder along the supply chain of biological resources for bio-based industries.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-06: Increasing the environmental performance of industrial processes in bio-based sectors: construction, woodworking, textiles, pulp and paper and bio-chemicals**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 7.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 5 by the end of the project – see

<sup>271</sup> Regulation on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment (EU) 2020/852



*Readiness Level*

General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: The successful proposal will support circular bio-based systems in industrial sectors in line with the European Green Deal and its zero pollution ambition and 2030 Climate Target Plan by increasing the environmental performance and sustainability of processes, and their ability to reverse climate change, restore biodiversity and protect air, water and soil quality along industrial value chains, within EU and across borders.

Project results are expected to contribute to the following expected outcome:

- Improvement of the environmental performance of industrial processes in the following bio-based sectors: construction, woodworking, textiles, pulp and paper, and bio-chemicals.

Scope: Proposals under this topic should focus on all of the following industrial bio-based sectors: construction, woodworking, textiles, pulp and paper, and bio-chemicals.

Proposals should:

- a. Identify and analyse case studies for each aforementioned industrial bio-based sector at the local (regional, rural, urban or coastal) or international scale within the EU and Associated Countries, and collect data and figures on the environmental performance of industrial processes in these sectors.
- b. Improve existing and/or develop new methodologies to assess the environmental impacts of these processes. The assessment should use, when possible, the Life Cycle Assessment methodology (in line with the existing international standards, the European Commission's Product Environmental Footprint method<sup>272</sup> and other relevant sources of information), and include, but not limited to, the following environmental impacts: GHG emissions and carbon footprint, emissions to air/water/soil, water and primary energy use, biodiversity and ecosystem services. The assessment methodology should also look at social and economic aspects. Relevant data may feed into the European Platform on Life Cycle Assessment<sup>273</sup>.
- c. Assess and analyse the environmental impacts and trade-offs of bio-based processes identified in a) based on the methodology developed in b).
- d. Identify and evaluate possible solutions to improve the environmental performance of bio-based processes based on c). The aspects to be evaluated include, but are not limited to the following: GHG emissions reduction, resource and energy efficiency, shift to renewable energy sources, enhanced circularity of materials (including upcycling and cascading use of biomass), non-toxic substances used in the processes, replacement of toxic substances with non-toxic ones, minimisation of residual waste at all phases of the processes, efficient recovery of any waste and residual flows.

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<sup>272</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/dev\\_methods.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/dev_methods.htm)

<sup>273</sup> <https://eplca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>

- e. Demonstrate, where possible, the best solutions identified under point d) in order to evaluate their effectiveness and assess monitoring procedures.
- f. Develop recommendations and guidelines to improve the environmental performance of processes in each of the aforementioned industrial bio-based sector. These should include a prioritisation of solutions and recommendations for modifications in specific processes and preliminary indications for monitoring procedures.

Proposals should include a task dedicated to sharing methodologies and findings with projects funded within this topic. Moreover, they should build synergies with research and innovation projects funded under Horizon Europe notably under “HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-05: Environmental sustainability criteria for biological resources production and trade in bio-based systems: impacts and trade-offs”, and where relevant, seek complementarities and capitalise on the results of other past and ongoing research projects (especially under the Bio-based Industries Joint Undertaking).

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-07: International and EU sustainability certification schemes for bio-based systems**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: The successful proposals will support tracing environmental impacts along value chains and trades in the bio-based systems for business-to-business communication to enable responsible production and consumption, in line with the 2030 Climate Target Plan and the zero pollution ambition. Project outcomes will contribute to establish circular bio-based systems reversing climate change, restoring biodiversity and protecting air, soil and water quality along supply chain of biological resources and industrial value chains, within the EU and across borders.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Bio-based value chains transparency in international and EU trade is enhanced through business-to-business labels of biological resources and bio-based materials and products.

- Harmonization of existing international and EU certification scheme and the monitoring system and indicators of their effectiveness and robustness.

Scope: Climate neutral circular bio-based systems have the potential to establish a zero-pollution economy provided that they are developed sustainably. Environmental, social and economic impacts and trade-offs should be traced along value chains and trades to enable responsible production and consumption. Activities under this topic should assess scope, potential and requirements of international and EU sustainability certification schemes and business-to-business labels applicable to biological resources including primary biomass resources and bio-waste and residues intended for bio-based industrial value-chains and to bio-based materials and products, also in complementarity with actions on bio-based innovation and market measures. Industrial bio-based systems do not include food/feed, biofuels, bioenergy and cultural/recreation sectors. However, relevant initiatives in the field of assessment and certification of environmental sustainability arising from EU policies in the bioeconomy sectors should be taken into account. Traceability of biological resources and bio-based materials and products on a business-to-business level, at the EU and the global scale, should be part of certification, including aspects on primary and secondary biomass and bio-based intermediates in global trade flows and imports into the EU.

Proposals should:

- a. Review and analyse existing international and EU sustainability certification schemes and business-to-business labels for biological resources. The analysis should encompass schemes applied/applicable to biological resources intended for industrial bio-based value chains. Certified environmental, social and economic impacts and trade-offs should be analysed. Bio-waste and any biological secondary raw materials from rural/urban/industrial activities are included in the definition of biological resources.
- b. Collect data and figures on volumes of biological resources and bio-based materials and products in global trade flows and imports into (exports from) the EU and their geographic distribution, distinguishing between certified and uncertified resources and materials/products. The data collection should be based on existing and consolidated market databases.
- c. Review and analyse existing international and EU sustainability certification schemes and business-to-business labels for bio-based materials and products with the same level of detail apply to the analysis of resources (point a).
- d. Assess existing/develop new monitoring system and indicators of effectiveness and robustness of existing certification schemes and labels reviewed in point a) and c). The task should consider the life cycle analysis perspective and identify minimum requirements of a certification scheme to ensure its completeness covering environmental, social and economic aspects.
- e. Demonstrate/test effectiveness of existing (voluntary) certification schemes and labels and monitor their robustness; this action includes testing the monitoring system and

indicators assessed/developed within the project, point d, on the reviewed schemes, point a) and c). The results should consolidate the optimal monitoring system and indicators and provide a preliminary selection of (parts of) the certification schemes covering the minimum requirements identified in point d). The same for labels.

- f. Assess costs from the adoption of certification schemes and labels in selected industrial bio-based value-chains. The assessment includes selecting a range of value-chains in the EU and Associated Countries and the corresponding biological resources and flows of materials and products among those certified and reviewed in point a and c and collecting data and figures on the known costs: actual economic and internalised environmental and social ones. The evaluation of the externalised environmental and social costs should be part of the overall assessment, based either on primary data or/and on models taken from peer-reviewed literature in the related fields of economy, social and environmental sciences.
- g. Evaluate the feasibility of business-to-business labels that award best performances either of resources or material or products from either environmental or social aspects. The feasibility should include modelled economic costs and benefits.
- h. Analyse and develop recommendations on how to promote the best practices in the adoption of effective and robust certification schemes and business-to-business labels. Promoting actions may include deployment and take-up by industrial sectors of certification schemes, building trust between business stakeholders, deploying corporate responsibility, engagement with and awareness of bio-based sectors.
- i. Engage in cooperation with international partners and organisations, to increase impact and outreach, while ensuring sufficient focus on the EU's situation.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

Proposals should include a task dedicated to sharing methodologies and findings with projects funded within this topic. Proposals' consortia may include, but not be limited to, experts in certification schemes and stakeholders of the international and EU trade of biomass resources and bio-based materials and products.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-08: New genomic techniques (NGT): understanding benefits and risks – focus on bio-based innovation**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a

	proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

**Expected Outcome:** The successful proposal will contribute to Destination ‘Clean environment and zero pollution’ impacts, and European policies it supports, in particular the European Green Deal, the circular economy action plan and the bioeconomy strategy, and specifically in respect to circular bio-based systems in industrial sectors along value chains and supply chains of biological feedstock, within Europe and globally, as well as to delivering the innovative “zero-pollution” bio-based biotechnology solutions.

Project results should contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- Improved understanding of the benefits and risks of new genomic techniques applied for plants<sup>274</sup> and/or animals<sup>275</sup> and microorganisms and consequences for human health and the environment (e.g. environmental balance, biodiversity impacts), aiming at a holistic approach<sup>276</sup>.
- Advancing the potentials of the new genomic techniques (via technical and social innovation)
- Contribution to an improved and more inclusive understanding and awareness, through transparent communication of the risks and benefits of the new genomic techniques and resultant innovation, while supporting societal dialogue and engagement with all stakeholders (academia, industry, including SMEs, NGOs, regulatory institutions, international partners and consumers or civil society to ensure public knowledge and awareness).

**Scope:** There is a need to enable major advances in the life sciences and biotechnology, in new genomic techniques, such as gene/genome editing<sup>277</sup>. This aims to ensure they can contribute safely and sustainably addressing the grand societal challenges of our age, such as climate change mitigation and adaptation, improved resource efficiency by industry and throughout various sectors of the economy. This covers their applicability for bio-based sectors (e.g. development of improved and more resilient feedstocks, plants and livestock to achieve a more efficient use of resources, longer shelf life of the agricultural products, products or agricultural by-products rendered more reusable). These advances must be aligned

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<sup>274</sup> Such as ensuring molecular containment of genetically modified crops

<sup>275</sup> Such as related to gene-drive eradication of vectors of human and animal pathogens, e.g. malaria

<sup>276</sup> E.g. development of long-term environmental and population models concerning the spreading into the environment of organisms obtained by NGTs, taking into account the climate change issues

<sup>277</sup> Including, if relevant, epigenomic control mechanisms

with the relevant EU legal framework<sup>278</sup>, while aiming to support the climate ambition of zero net emissions by 2050, as well as biodiversity protection and resource efficiency goals. A key aspect should be the combination of safety, environmental sustainability and functionality of the developed products. It needs to recognize the need for a holistic approach at the ecosystem level, for both conventional and alternative production systems. R&I activities should result in solutions to develop safe and more environmentally friendly products, allowing for innovation, transparency and inclusiveness for all actors.

International cooperation is strongly encouraged, to exchange best practice, while contributing to the European competitiveness.

Proposals should:

- a. Advance new genomic techniques in bio-based innovation (purely medical applications such as the therapeutical/clinical applications are excluded), to understand and increase their impact, as related, for instance, to the origin of feedstocks and its other features and its applicable conversion pathways (e.g. via biorefinery processing), storage, logistics, enhanced functionalities and environmental sustainability, safety/non-toxic nature and improved end-of-life behaviour (e.g. reuse/reprocessing), etc. for specific applications.
- b. Develop future scenarios taking into account in different environmental, social and economic drivers, to assess potential critical impacts and bottlenecks with respect to the EU and international governance frameworks. This should take into account the expected demand of primary resources needed to satisfy the growing bio-based economy (especially sustainable biomass), the need to protect and restore biodiversity, as well as the increasing environmental pressures under climate change conditions.
- c. Develop new approaches to design innovative aspects of the production process, screening procedures, molecular tools and digital applications.
- d. Outline the necessary scale-up production processes for novel bio-based innovations in order to reach a critical mass for a given application, to achieve economies of scale, address different market segments and applications, etc.
- e. Ensure transparent and inclusive engagement of all actors, including industry and SMEs, scientific community, regulatory institutions, and broader civil society, to ensure necessary impact.
- f. Where relevant, proposals should seek synergies and capitalise on the results of past and ongoing research projects.

For this topic, it is not mandatory to integrate the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) into research and innovation. This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

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<sup>278</sup> Including the EU Court of Justice judgment in Case C-528/16, <http://curia.europa.eu/juris/documents.jsf?num=C-528/16>

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-09: Environmental impacts and trade-offs of alternative fertilising products at global/local scale.**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: The successful proposals will support awareness of environmental performances of alternative fertilising products and their uptake by stakeholders and local administrators, in line with the zero pollution ambition. Projects outcomes will contribute to maintaining nitrogen and phosphorus flows well within safe ecological boundaries at the EU, regional and local scale and to restoring ecosystems.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Orienting the production and the application of alternative fertilising products according with the best environmental performances and practices.
- Local administrations formulate policies to support the development of sustainable local value chains deploying alternative fertilising products.

Scope: The scope of this topic is the assessment of environmental impacts and trade-offs of the production and application of a range of fertilising products derived from secondary raw materials which could replace nitrogen- and phosphorus-based fertilisers produced from conventional processes (including mining and fossil-based processes) in a life cycle perspective. Examples of alternative fertilising products within the scope include products made from secondary raw materials such as, for example: recycled nutrients from urban and industrial waste water and sewage sludge, organic fertilising products from bio-waste, from any biological residue or by-products, from digestate and from treated manure.

Proposals should:

- a. Collect all relevant data and figures on a range of fertilising products derived from secondary raw materials. Information should include all phases of their life cycle: production, distribution/trade, storage, application on lands and consequent transformation/diffusion into the different environments. The range of alternative fertilising products should be selected in order to cover at least one product from each main waste/residue raw material, i.e. at least one from each of: urban waste water, industrial waste water, sewage sludge, bio-waste, biological by-products, digestate and treated manure.

- b. Apply and/or improve existing methodologies to assess the environmental impacts and trade-offs of the alternative fertilising products selected at point a) on a life cycle base, building on and complementing existing assessment results published by European Commission (project SAFEMANURE<sup>279</sup>). In particular, methodology and assessment should include the territorial and practical factors in terms of local vs global production and trade, local management procedures (storage, spreading on soils) also depending on specific agricultural applications and practices (e.g. agro-ecological vs traditional approach, current legislation at national level, within the consortium). Impacts and trade-offs should include categories on: climate change mitigation, including in terms of restoring the carbon sink capacity of soils, biodiversity and ecosystems protection, including soil biodiversity and below-ground ecosystems, land use and land use change, water consumption, energy use, nitrogen and phosphorus flows into the environment and any other pollutants' emission that affect air/water/soil, including microplastics. Methodology and assessment should rely on existing procedures, e.g. Product Environmental Footprint method<sup>280</sup> and other validated/certified modelling and objective techniques, experimental tests, consultation of peer-reviewed scientific literature;
- c. Relevant data may feed into the European Platform on Life Cycle Assessment<sup>281</sup> if feasible;
- d. Analyse technical aspects of the environmental impacts prevention and control operations during all phases of life cycle of the selected alternative fertilising products and their effectiveness. Include preliminary assessment of costs of installation/maintenance and social benefits of such operations. Alternative fertilising products under this proposal seeking market regulatory approval, should consider relevant regulatory requirements.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

Activities should include a thorough analysis of past research projects and studies developed under the EU funding programmes. Proposals should include a task dedicated to sharing methodologies and findings with projects funded within this topic. Proposals' consortia should include stakeholders from the whole value chain such as producers of fertilisers and farmers, as well as scientists and experts in the analysis of environmental impacts of agricultural products.

### **HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-10: Environmental services: improved bioremediation and revitalization strategies for soil, sediments and water**

<b>Specific conditions</b>
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<sup>279</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/technical-proposals-safe-use-processed-manure-above-threshold-established-nitrate-vulnerable>

<sup>280</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/dev\\_methods.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/dev_methods.htm)

<sup>281</sup> <https://eplca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>



<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 11.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

**Expected Outcome:** In line with the European Green Deal and its zero pollution ambition and Climate Pact, the successful proposal should support circular bio-based systems reversing climate change, restoring biodiversity and protecting soil and water quality along the supply chain of biological feedstock and industrial value chains, within Europe and globally, as well as deliver innovative “zero-pollution” bio-based biotechnology solutions and advanced bioremediation methods for environmental protection.

Project results should contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- Improved bioremediation and revitalization strategies for contaminated environments, including soil, sediment, surface water and groundwater using recent advances in biotechnology;
- New approaches for efficient bioremediation and resource recycling;
- Provide science-based evidence and bio-based solutions enabling a better assessment of pollution threats from pollutants’ remobilisation to soil, sediment, surface water and groundwater;
- Reduce the main negative impacts of pollution in terms of loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- Validated newly developed and effective bioremediation methods in different environmental conditions, also based on microbiome exploitation potential;
- Improved overall environmental performance (soil and sediment health, water quality, reduction of emissions, etc.);
- Improved environmental footprint and lower toxicity of processes, products and services by means of biotechnologies;
- Advanced assessment of effective methods of bioremediation with improved environmental, economic and social sustainability.

**Scope:** Environmental pollution has been a major concern over the past few decades influencing the quality of life. Contamination of soils, sediments and water remains a major

ecological problem. This pollution contains dangerous and persistent toxic substances that have adverse effects on human health and the environment. Pollutants resulting from human activity are detrimental to ecosystems at different functional levels, representing an important economic burden for society.

Remediation strategies, such as chemical and physical approaches, are not enough to mitigate pollution problems. Bioremediation using microbes is a sustainable, eco-friendly and socially acceptable alternative to conventional remediation approaches and helps improve the environment. It plays a significant role in monitoring “Zero-pollution”. Many microbes with bioremediation potential have been isolated and characterised but, in many cases, cannot completely degrade the targeted environmental pollutant or are ineffective in situations with complex contamination such as mixed waste.

The topic aims at improving bioremediation and revitalization strategies for soils, sediments, surface water and groundwater while respecting the EU legislation and regulations applicable in this area, including the use of naturally occurring and optimised organisms.

Proposals should:

- a. Identify and analyse optimised proteins, microorganisms, microbiomes, plants, and animals (specifically fish and molluscs/bivalves including mussels) for sediment, watershed and wastewater remediation and revitalization (e.g. novel enzymes to degrade xenobiotic small molecules such as toxins, antibiotics and microplastics, selective uptake of non-degradable metal toxins, bioadsorption);
- b. Identify and characterise plant platforms, microorganisms and microbiomes that can be optimised for efficient remediation of a range of contaminated environments (e.g. enzymes optimised for efficient bioconversion and/or biosequestration of environmental contaminants, biological tools/systems for land-based bioremediation, phytoremediation for contaminated industrial sites);
- c. Identify and characterise plants transformed with pathways and metabolisms that enable the uptake of targeted contaminants and that have clearly visible ‘markers’ for public surveillance (for example, colours that clearly mark the plant as being genetically modified, so as to prevent people from eating these plants);
- d. Develop strategies for efficient metabolic pathways of naturally-occurring species to be re-introduced into the environment;
- e. Develop sustainable and cost-effective technologies for bioremediation of water resources used for water production and effective in situations with mixed waste (e.g. nature-based solutions)<sup>282, 283</sup>; and/or develop sustainable and cost-effective technologies for bioremediation of soil resources, including those effective in situations with mixed waste;

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<sup>282</sup> The EU and nature-based solutions ([link](#))

<sup>283</sup> What nature-based solutions can do for us ([link](#))

- f. Enable new microbial approaches, such as combinations of synthetic auxotrophies, that increase the safety and reduce the risk of deploying optimised microbes in the field;
- g. Develop and analyse the ability of defined consortia of bacteria, fungi algae and/or other organisms to most productively revitalise soil, sediment and water sources (for example, by researching functioning of ecosystems in the hyporheic zone, which plays a crucial role in the purification of bank filtered water and thus in ensuring a safe supply of drinking water in several countries);
- h. Identify and assess (with quantification) the key environmental, economic, social and safety benefits of bioremediation and revitalization strategies for soils, sediments, surface water and groundwater compared to standard physicochemical remediation approaches;
- i. Where relevant, proposals should seek synergies and capitalise on the results of past and ongoing research projects <sup>284, 285</sup>

For this topic, it is not mandatory to integrate the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) into research and innovation

### **Call - Clean environment and zero pollution**

#### ***HORIZON-CL6-2022-ZEROPOLLUTION-01***

### **Conditions for the Call**

#### Indicative budget(s)<sup>286</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>287</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2022		
Opening: 28 Oct 2021 Deadline(s): 15 Feb 2022				

<sup>284</sup> Horizon 2020 call [CE-BIOTEC-04-2018](#): New biotechnologies for environmental remediation (RIA)

<sup>285</sup> Horizon 2020 call [CE-BIOTEC-08-2020](#) : New biotechnologies to remediate harmful contaminants (RIA)

<sup>286</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>287</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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*Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment*

HORIZON-CL6-2022-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-01	RIA	12.00	2.00 to 4.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2022-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-02	IA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-03	IA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-04	RIA	15.00	2.00 to 4.00	4
Overall indicative budget		51.00		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

### **Halting emissions of pollutants to soils and waters**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-01: Preventing groundwater contamination and protecting its quality against harmful impacts of global and climate change**

<b>Specific conditions</b>
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<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal’s zero pollution ambition, successful proposals will contribute to halting and preventing pollution of freshwater and soils, and consequently also protecting biodiversity, as addressed by several impacts under Destination ‘Clean environment and zero pollution’, in particular “Advanced understanding of diffuse and point sources of water pollution in a global and climate change context, enabling novel solutions to protect water bodies, aquatic ecosystems and soil functionality, and further enhancing water quality and its management for safe human and ecological use, while fostering the European position and role in the global water scene.”

Project results are expected to contribute to some of the following expected outcomes:

- Wider use of an enhanced knowledge base and better understanding of pollution sources, pathways and impacts, including surface hydrology, aquifers and receiving water bodies, as well as the synergistic effects of multiple stressors on groundwater quality.
- Implement advanced prevention and mitigation strategies to protect groundwater against pollution induced by global and climate change, including anticipative approaches preparing for future or emerging challenges.
- Apply effective risk assessment and risk management strategies enabling early warning systems and delivering ready-made outcomes for decision-making and governance.
- Deploy innovative monitoring strategies, including advanced sensors, tracers and analytical methods, and integration of IT tools/platforms and advanced modelling.
- Broad uptake of advanced knowledge, breakthrough solutions and innovative technologies to enhance the competitiveness of the EU water sector and foster the EU’s position and role in the global water scene.

- Increasing the EU scientific and technological base on measures to manage groundwater quality and providing evidence and guidance for policy-making and implementation.
- Science and evidence-based implementation of the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals, notably the SDG 6 “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”.

Scope: The European Union has made noticeable progress in terms of reducing concentrations of nutrients in groundwater and in rivers through the implementation of dedicated policy measures. However, Member States identified that diffuse pollution is still a significant pressure that affects 35% of the area of groundwater bodies<sup>288</sup>, while quality standards (pesticides, herbicides, etc.) were exceeded in 15% of the groundwater bodies studied. Climate change and increasing water demand will exert significant pressures on groundwater quality, notably where the combined effect of reduced hydrological flows, water table depletion and sea level rise endanger the integrity of coastal aquifers and groundwater quality due to saline water intrusion. Extreme events like higher tides, storm surges and inland flooding events, and consequent pollutant and pathogen runoff, will put at risk wetlands and reservoirs, estuaries and ecosystems, jeopardising an efficient and qualitatively good groundwater recharge. Rising water tables in urban and rural areas, caused by e.g. higher sea level, changing water use or variable precipitation patterns, could potentially affect pollution sources (sewage, runoff infiltration, dilution of soil pollutants, salinization, etc.) and deteriorate the quality of groundwater.

Additional knowledge is needed to understand the synergistic effects and risks of multiple stressors and pollutants on groundwater quality to better evaluate the impacts of global and climate change, particularly in highly vulnerable areas affected by diffuse pollution, anthropogenic activities and/or water table fluctuations. Actions in this field should aim to identify and assess sources and pathways of groundwater pollution to inform risk management plans at basin/regional scales, with particular consideration of aquifer recharge with reclaimed water and persistent pollutants.

Further developments are expected in terms of cost-efficient monitoring strategies, which could include new tracers and sensors, increased sampling and analytical capacity, as well as integrating IT advances and geophysical modelling.

Proposals in this area should assess possible options and anticipate novel strategies to protect groundwater quality by considering the harmful effects of and threats from climate change. Actions in this field should focus on preventive measures and consider technological and non-technological solutions, and should engage with policy and decision-making bodies.

In general, the participation of academia, research organisations, utilities, industry and regulators is strongly advised, as well as civil society engagement whenever necessary, also aiming to broaden the dissemination and exploitation routes and to better assess the innovation potential of developed solutions and strategies.

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<sup>288</sup> European Environment Agency The European environment — state and outlook 2020 <https://www.eea.europa.eu/soer-2020/intro>

If appropriate, applicants are advised to seek complementarities and synergies, while avoiding duplication and overlap, with relevant actions funded under Horizon 2020 calls<sup>289</sup>, as well as targeted topics supported in the last Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe calls, addressing micro/nano-plastics, persistent and mobile pollutants, such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), pharmaceuticals and contaminants of emerging concerns (CECs), pathogens and antimicrobial resistance.

In order to better address some or all of the expected outcomes, international cooperation is strongly encouraged.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-02: Piloting innovative governance solutions to limit nitrogen and phosphorus emissions at the interface of rural/coastal and urban/industrial environments**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 7-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

**Expected Outcome:** In the context of eliminating pollution to guarantee a clean and healthy environment and in line with the zero pollution ambition, successful proposals will deliver governance solutions that halt nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) pollution and limit N/P emissions to remain within safe ecological boundaries at European, regional and local scale while restoring water, air and soil ecosystems.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

<sup>289</sup> Including access and use of data and information collected through long-term environmental monitoring activities supported by national and/or European research infrastructures.

- Dynamic interfaces between rural/coastal and urban/industrial environments that allow for the exploitation of hitherto untapped synergies in eliminating and preventing N/P pollution
- Mainstreamed circular and sustainable use of N and P recovered from urban/industrial contexts and returned to agricultural/primary production in rural/coastal environments throughout Europe, with a view to closing N/P cycles and stimulating a market for recovered N and P
- Best practice on how to implement innovative governance models shared among relevant stakeholders across the EU
- Better informed and less fragmented policies and regulatory instruments at regional, national and European scale to promote re-balancing N/P flows and restoring ecosystem services to stay within safe ecological and planetary boundaries

Scope: In line with the overarching objective to bring N/P flows back within safe ecological and planetary boundaries and to achieve the deliverables of the European Green Deal and other relevant EU legislation, at regional level, this Innovation Action (Pilot) explores innovative governance solutions to support transferring resources and services between rural/coastal and urban/industrial environments while limiting N/P emissions and other emissions exacerbating pollution, biodiversity loss and climate change. N/P relevant materials and residues discarded in one environment may be a valuable resource in another context but are not always exploited due to systemic or structural barriers. Actions may include piloting incentives (regulatory, structural, financial, behavioural etc.), innovative supply and value chains and novel infrastructures or other governance solutions.

Proposals should

- Develop novel or adapt existing governance models and test in an operational environment how these innovative tools and instruments will drive systemic change to promote circularity, environmental protection and closed N/P circles at the urban/rural interface.
- Demonstrate these innovative governance models in geographically representative regional clusters throughout the EU and associated countries. A cluster may be formed by two or more regions/river basins, in EU and associated countries, with very similar characteristics in terms of territorial conditions or being neighbouring regions/river basins, which feature similar degrees of N/P emission pressures as well as physical, social and economic specificities and governance structures. All relevant stakeholders (local authorities, farmers and other rural stakeholders, urban/industrial actors, environmental protection organisations, academia etc.) should be involved.
- Showcase how innovative governance models at relevant levels can contribute to achieving EU objectives, such as the targets of the farm to fork and biodiversity



strategies on reducing fertiliser use by 20% and nutrient losses by 50% until 2050<sup>290</sup>, by fostering ecologically responsible and sustainable use, recovery and exchange of N/P relevant resources, services and infrastructures between urban/industrial and rural/coastal environments while taking into account local specificities.

- Identify opportunities to exchange N/P flows between both environments and demonstrate novel governance/structural approaches to fully exploit synergies that help bring these flows back within safe ecological boundaries by building on past and ongoing Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe projects that develop a regional N/P load target approach while keeping within safe ecological boundaries.
- Implement innovative practices and technologies at different governance and stakeholder levels in order to promote increased dialogue and collaboration, to encourage behavioural change and public acceptance of recovered products as well as more effective problem-solving mechanisms.
- Assess these novel governance approaches, develop guidelines and recommendations for all concerned stakeholders on how to best implement these novel governance approaches, disseminate results and best practice, and envisage regional twinning and mentoring schemes.
- Review existing EU policies and contribute to designing harmonised, coherent and efficient policies and regulatory instruments that facilitate eliminating and preventing N/P pollution and conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the ecological and economic cost of non-action.

Applicants are encouraged to select different regional clusters per project and to diversify their proposed consortium by involving a wide range of relevant stakeholders, such as primary producers, representatives of administrations at different levels, actors from related industries, value chains, environment organisations, academia, citizens, etc. Proposals should further include a task dedicated to sharing methodologies and findings with projects funded within this topic.

This topic is part of the demonstration projects for the implementation of the European Commission's Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI) and should be carried out in close cooperation with it.

Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

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<sup>290</sup> cf. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/actions-being-taken-eu/farm-fork\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/actions-being-taken-eu/farm-fork_en)

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-03: EU-China international cooperation on nature-based solutions for nutrient management in agriculture**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:            The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p> <p>If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).</p>
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Procedure</i>	<p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Grants awarded under this topic will be coordinated with the Ministry of Science and Technology, China (MOST).</p>
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Grants awarded under this topic will be linked to the specific grants awarded by the Ministry of Science and Technology, China (MOST) to the Chinese partners.</p> <p>The respective options of the Model Grant Agreement will be applied.</p>

**Expected Outcome:** In line with the zero pollution ambition, the farm to fork strategy, in particular promoting the global transition to sustainable food systems, successful proposals will support the development of Green Alliances on sustainable agro-food systems in relation to nutrient management that halt nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) pollution and limit N/P emissions to remain within safe ecological boundaries at European, regional and local scale. Moreover, selected proposals are expected to reinforce the transdisciplinary research and

integrated scientific support for relevant EU policies and priorities (common agricultural policy (CAP), Green Deal objectives, etc.).

Project results are expected to contribute to all following expected outcomes:

- Strengthened international cooperation with actors from China in the areas of nutrient management to halt pollution and limit N/P emissions to remain within safe ecological boundaries at different scales while restoring water, air and soil ecosystems.
- Develop and test Nature based Solutions (NBS)<sup>291</sup> to plant nutrition and health, with innovative technologies that optimise the use of external inputs and helps European farmers in the implementation of regulated deficit strategies.
- Support for the implementation of the nutrient budget methodologies with new or improved technologies for different agricultural systems considering environmental, social and economic factors at different scales farms, regions and/or products.
- Identification and management of potential new sources and pathways of nutrients through distribution/sharing of organic wastes at local level to reduce nutrient loads to soil and water bodies.
- Uptake of knowledge and innovations in implementing a sustainable management of natural resources.

Scope: The success implementation of a sustainable nutrient management plan requires the availability of the technologies to support farmers in their decision-making and applications of the nutrients plans, based on the type of production system, environmental conditions, soil type, water availability and socio-economic aspects of both crops and nutrients. Nature-based solutions (NBS) and innovative agricultural and environmental tools can improve nutrient management and strategies for, among other things, meeting the objectives of the European Green Deal, including the farm to fork strategy, and the biodiversity strategy, the circular economy action plan and the zero pollution action plan for air, water and soil.

Proposals should build on existing and new knowledge, data, models (including in situ calibration measurements) and available tools to:

- Develop smart nutrient management plans and methods to prevent, mitigate and when possible eliminate pollution in soils, water and air caused by nutrients and water management practices, across sectors, for different types of agricultural practices (conventional, organic and agro-ecological agriculture), and scales – farm, local, regional and river basin.

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<sup>291</sup> As defined by the European Commission: Solutions that are inspired and supported by nature, which are cost-effective, simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits and help build resilience. Such solutions bring more, and more diverse, nature and natural features and processes into cities, landscapes and seascapes, through locally adapted, resource-efficient and systemic interventions. Hence, nature-based solutions must benefit biodiversity and support the delivery of a range of ecosystem services. In <https://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm?pg=nbs>

- Explore and assess the potential of alternative nutrient sources (organic vs inorganic), enhance management and recycling of organic wastes and explore nutrient recovery opportunities, for different agricultural systems.
- Analyse the effect of NBS on climate change and crop productivity including nutrient availability, and interactions between nutrients and carbon cycles.
- Develop models and tools to monitor nutrients flow based on remote sensing technologies and data, in agriculture and forestry systems: for physical, chemical and biological parameters.
- Engage with technology development actors, farmers and investors organising large scale online hackathon activities to support tech services for farmers at farm and local level in their nutrient management plans e.g. by allowing targeted field application of fertilisers (organic / inorganic), and addressing geographical imbalances in nutrient flows.
- Develop Decision Support Systems to assess and understand the performance and relative merits of NBS for nutrient management.

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure adequate involvement of the farming sector and, as relevant, bio-based industries active in rural areas.

Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

Actions will contribute to implementing the EU-China Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology (FAB) flagship initiative, which aims to ensure sustainability of agri-food systems, catering for the needs of a growing population, the reduction of food and agricultural losses and waste, and the provision of safe and healthy foodstuffs.

Due to the scope of this topic, international cooperation is strongly encouraged, in particular with China. This topic is envisaged to be implemented as a coordinated call but if no agreement is reached with the Ministry of Science and Technology China (MOST) on the co-funding of Chinese partners, it will be implemented as a normal call. Updates will be published on the Funding & Tenders Portal.

Proposals are requested to collaborate with other relevant projects selected under other relevant topics/calls. In addition, proposals follow FAIR data principles, ensuring that resulting knowledge will be accessible through the Oppla portal.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

### **Protecting drinking water and managing urban water pollution**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-04: Securing drinking water quality by protecting water sources against pollution, providing innovative monitoring and treatment solutions and ensuring safe distribution**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal’s zero pollution ambition, successful proposals will contribute to halt and prevent pollution of freshwater and soils, and consequently also protecting biodiversity, as addressed by several impacts under Destination ‘Clean environment and zero pollution’, in particular “Advanced understanding of diffuse and point sources of water pollution in a global and climate changing context, enabling novel solutions to protect water bodies, aquatic ecosystems and soil functionality, and further enhancing water quality and its management for safe human and ecological use, while fostering the European position and role in the global water scene.”

Project results are expected to contribute to some of the following expected outcomes:

- A wider use of a better understanding and an enhanced knowledge base required to assess pollution sources, pathways and combined effects on drinking water systems, including forward looking approaches aimed to anticipate and prepare for future or emerging challenges.
- Implement advanced preventive and mitigating strategies and measures to protect drinking water sources, treatment and supply against harmful effects of global and climate change.
- Apply effective risk assessment and risk management strategies enabling early warning systems and delivering ready-made outputs for decision-making and governance.
- Exploit advanced, integrated and cost-effective water quality sensors and analytical methods.
- Deploy innovative and robust monitoring systems and real-time information on drinking water quality, from sources to supply.

- Disseminate and use a robust knowledge on the occurrence, persistence and degradability of disinfection by-products (DBPs) in drinking water with due consideration to operational parameters, chemicals, materials and biofilms interactions, including the pathways related to human exposure.
- Spread the use of advanced and cost-effective drinking water treatment and disinfection processes and technologies, including transformative approaches.
- Broad uptake of advanced knowledge, breakthrough solutions and innovative technologies to enhance competitiveness of the EU water sector and fostering the EU's position and role in the global water scene.
- Increasing the EU scientific and technological base and guidance on measures to manage drinking water quality and evidence for policy-making, safety planning and implementation.
- Science and evidence-based implementation of the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals, notably the SDG 6 “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”.

Scope: The European Union policy framework has secured public safety and health objectives by the Drinking Water, Bathing Water and Floods Directives (EU, 1998, 2006, 2007), and the ongoing development and implementation of minimum requirements for water reuse. Despite the valuable output of implemented measures, some persistent problems are still a major, and sometimes unknown, risk factor for human and ecosystem health. Past contaminated sites and industrial activities managing hazardous chemicals, such as highly persistent compounds, together with agriculture and food production (pesticides, herbicides, antibiotics etc.), and household activities release a number of substances that individually or combined represent a concern for the safety of drinking water supplies. Detrimental effects of natural/human-made disasters and increasing water temperatures due to climate change could deteriorate the quality of drinking water sources by favouring the conditions for enhanced eutrophication leading to algal and cyanobacterial outbreaks as well as pathogen development or the spread of invasive species. Emerging concerns are also rising at the level of drinking water treatment and distribution, notably in relation to disinfection operations, materials and products, ageing infrastructure, biofilm growth and possible harmful effects of unintentionally formed by-products and metabolites.

Actions in this field should aim to expand the knowledge base required to identify, assess and prevent pollution threats (micro-pollutants, pathogens, toxins, algal blooms, etc.) and the combined effects of multiple stressors on water sources, including risk assessment and management, to protect drinking water preparation and distribution. Particular attention to extreme weather events and possible synergistic effects affecting hydraulic flows, temperatures and pollutants' loads should be considered, whenever appropriate.

Advanced water quality assessment needs further development of sensors sensitivity, automated routine monitoring and fast analytical responses that fully integrate IT advances.

Proposals in this topic should aim to extend the current analytical capacity to enable among other issues the detection of suspect and non-targeted pollutants, resulting in robust and reliable monitoring systems for consideration in future legislation. They should also consider the requirements of the revised Drinking Water Directive as regards catchment management.

Unintended disinfection by-products (DBP) and interactions with chemical reagents used for drinking water treatment (DWT), engineering and contact materials as well as the combined effects of biofilms formation are emerging as hazardous chemical risks that could affect human health. Proposals in this field should further extend the knowledge base of mechanisms and reactions leading to DBP formation by analysing raw water quality and precursors, as well as assessing DWT operational parameters, including disinfection needs, methods and doses. Advanced DWT solutions should explore integrated systems coupling different treatment technologies and strategies enabling the optimization of the operational DWT effectiveness while removing DBP risks.

In general, the participation of academia, research organisations, utilities, industry and regulators is strongly advised, as well as civil society engagement whenever necessary, also aiming to broaden the dissemination and exploitation routes and to better assess the innovation potential of developed solutions and strategies.

If appropriate, applicants are advised to seek complementarities and synergies, while avoiding duplication and overlap, with relevant actions funded under Horizon 2020 calls<sup>292</sup>, as well as targeted topics supported in the last Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe calls, addressing micro/nano-plastics, persistent and mobile pollutants, such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), pharmaceuticals and contaminants of emerging concerns (CECs), pathogens and antimicrobial resistance. Whenever possible, proposals should consider already developed digital solutions for real-time water monitoring systems. Activities related to water reclamation and reuse, indirect potable use or alternative water sources are beyond the scope of this topic.

In order to better address some or all of the expected outcomes, international cooperation is encouraged.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

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<sup>292</sup> Including access and use of data and information collected through long-term environmental monitoring activities supported by national and/or European research infrastructures.

## **Destination – Land, ocean and water for climate action**

Assessing the impacts of climate change on our land and marine environments, natural resources, agriculture and food systems, and identifying mitigation options and adaptation pathways, requires interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research and investments across a broad range of activities. Research is needed to better understand who or what is exposed and sensitive to these changes, their underlying vulnerability, the associated costs and adaptive capacity. Research is also required to provide mitigation options that reduce the risk of long-term climate change

The conservation and enhancement of Earth's natural carbon sinks such as soils and plants, forests, farmed lands, wetlands and the oceans is crucial. The European Green Deal green oath to “do no harm”, requires a careful examination of the trade-offs and synergies among the sustainability goals, including health protection, food and nutrition security, ecosystem services and biodiversity preservation both on land and at sea. R&I has a significant role to play to support the design and implementation of policies that will ensure the achievement of EU climate objectives.

Agriculture has a significant role to play to reduce and mitigate GHG emissions and to enhance carbon sinks. It also needs to strengthen its capacity to adapt to climate change and its resilience. The forestry sector faces similar challenges.

Freshwater resources are increasingly under stress as a consequence of overuse and climate change with wide-ranging consequences for human societies and ecosystems. It is therefore necessary to define the safe operating space in terms of water quantity and availability, reduce the vulnerability to change and enhance our adaptive capacity.

Strengthening the ocean and climate nexus is another priority for the EU. There is growing political awareness of the importance of ocean and polar regions as an integral part of the Earth's climate system and of the need to ensure the integrity and resilience of these ecosystems.

While new knowledge leading to a better understanding of the impacts of climate change is necessary, a strong priority needs to be granted to the large-scale deployment and uptake of solutions for climate adaptation and mitigation. Environmental observations and related solutions will be necessary throughout, from understanding to deployment.

Understanding the impacts of climate change on primary production and natural systems is a pre-requisite for policy and societal action on climate change adaptation and mitigation. At present, our understanding of the interactions between climate change and ecosystem management, protection and restoration is limited, yet it is crucial to enabling sound decision making for mitigation and adaptation measures. Monitoring and evaluation of the impacts of climate change, land use change and associated biodiversity loss on a range of key issues related to agriculture and forestry are crucial with respect to the transition to net-zero emissions in the EU. R&I are also needed to close knowledge gaps in support of decision-



making aimed at preserving the integrity of ocean and aquatic ecosystems through a better understanding of the drivers of change and of emerging threats. Moreover, since water availability is vulnerable to climate change, it is necessary to improve the projections of changes to the water cycle at different relevant scales and projections of the frequency and intensity of extreme events. We also require improved long-term observations and assessment of the effects of climate change on diverse water uses and on the state of ecosystems and their services.

Reducing GHG emissions and enhancing carbon sinks in primary production and natural systems are key elements of the European Green Deal. Achieving sustainable land management and efficient use of natural resources that foster climate change mitigation implies finding the right balance between productivity, climate, biodiversity and environmental goals in the agriculture and forestry sectors, with a long-term perspective. R&I activities will support solutions for climate- and environmentally-friendly practices, to reduce emissions of major greenhouse gases and the environmental footprint of land use changes and agricultural activities. R&I, new technologies and business models are expected to unlock the full potential of LULUCF<sup>293</sup> activities in the mitigation of climate change. Results of funded activities will benefit land and forest management and the delivery of multiple services provided by land and forests, such as the provision of goods as long-term carbon stocks in harvested wood products, peatlands and wetlands, the protection of soils, water and biodiversity and finally climate change adaptation and mitigation. Ocean is also a large storage system for the global reservoirs of climate-regulating factors. R&I will advance knowledge innovations to foster ocean-based solutions/mitigation options, helping to close the emissions gap.

Climate action calls also for fostering adaptation to climate change of ecosystems, primary production, food systems and the bioeconomy. Climate change is exacerbating existing risks to livelihoods, biodiversity, human and ecosystem health, infrastructure and food systems. There are growing concerns regarding the role of climate change in the spreading of new plant and terrestrial and aquatic animal diseases, which can jeopardise food safety and security. Human activities relying on the availability and use of water are particularly impacted by variable and extreme weather events, which may at the same time lead to desertification. Agriculture and forestry in the EU are vulnerable to climate change. There is in particular growing evidence about the effects of climate change, and of extreme weather events, on agricultural production and crop yields, which need to be mitigated, and also on the forest sector. Coastal areas are also threatened by sea level rise, saline water intrusion, biodiversity loss, ocean acidification, extreme events and a shrinking cryosphere. R&I will, therefore, be critical to foster adaptation and build resilience in agriculture, forestry and coastal areas. They will aim to deliver on the urgent need to foster the adaptation of primary production, notably by providing farmers and other actors in bioeconomy value chains with better-adapted crop varieties and animal breeds with lower impacts on the related ecosystems. R&I efforts are critical to avoiding, reducing and reversing desertification. Water adaptation strategies and approaches will be developed and tested. Appropriate solutions including water allocation

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<sup>293</sup> LULUCF stands for land use, land use change and forestry.

schemes will be developed for businesses, farmers and ecosystems. Potential trade-offs, and measures to mitigate and avoid them, will be assessed to ensure environmental sustainability and to keep the objectives of enhancing soil fertility, increasing carbon storage in soils and biomass, benefitting agricultural productivity and food security and reducing biodiversity loss. R&I will also aim at better understanding how institutions and behaviour shape vulnerability and offer opportunities for adaptation.

### Expected impact

Proposals for topics under this destination should set out a credible pathway to contributing to climate action on land, oceans and water and more specifically to one or several of the following impacts:

- Better understanding and enhancing the mitigation potential of ecosystems and sectors based on the sustainable management of natural resources;
- Advanced understanding and science to support adaptation and resilience of natural and managed ecosystems, water and soil systems and economic sectors in the context of the changing climate;
- Efficient monitoring, assessment and projections related to climate change impacts, mitigation and adaptation potential in order to bring out solutions for tackling emerging threats and support decision-making in climate change mitigation and adaptation policies at European and global levels;
- Fostered climate change mitigation in the primary sector, including by the reduction of GHG emissions, maintenance of natural carbon sinks and enhancement of sequestration and storage of carbon in ecosystems;
- Improved adaptive capacity of water and soil systems and sectors including by unlocking the potential of nature-based solutions;
- Better managed scarce resources, in particular soils and water, thus mitigating climate related risks, in particular desertification and erosion, thanks to informed decision-makers and stakeholders and integration of adaptation measures in relevant EU policies.

When considering their impact, proposals also need to assess their compliance with the “Do No Significant Harm” principle<sup>294</sup> according to which the research and innovation activities of the project should not be supporting or carrying out activities that make a significant harm to any of the six environmental objectives of the EU Taxonomy Regulation.

This destination contributes to support R&I on climate for areas covered by Cluster 6 notably on the implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation solutions while Destination “Climate sciences and responses for the transformation towards climate neutrality” in Cluster 5 concentrates on activities related to climate science and modelling.

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<sup>294</sup> as per Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 2020/852 on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment (EU Taxonomy Regulation)

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Topics under this destination will have impacts in the following impact areas of the Horizon Europe strategic plan for 2021-2024<sup>295</sup>: “Climate change mitigation and adaptation”; “Enhancing ecosystems and biodiversity on land and in water”; “Clean and healthy air, water and soil”; “Sustainable food systems from farm to fork on land and sea”; ”A resilient EU prepared for emerging threats”; “A secure and open EU society”; and “Inclusive growth and new job opportunities”.

The following call(s) in this work programme contribute to this destination:

Call	Budgets (EUR million)		Deadline(s)
	2021	2022	
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01	108.00	10.00	06 Oct 2021
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CLIMATE-01		75.00	15 Feb 2022
Overall indicative budget	108.00	85.00	

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<sup>295</sup> Footnote indicating link to the document.

**Call - Land, ocean and water for climate action**

***HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>296</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)		Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>297</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2021	2022		
Opening: 22 Jun 2021 Deadline(s): 06 Oct 2021					
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-01	RIA	10.00		3.00 to 5.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-02	COFUND	10.00	10.00	20.00 to 126.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-03	RIA	15.00		7.00 to 8.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-04	CSA	23.00		Around 23.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-05	RIA	7.00		Around 7.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-06	RIA	12.00		Around 12.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-07	CSA	3.00		Around 3.00	1

<sup>296</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.  
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>297</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-08	RIA	8.00		Around 4.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-09	RIA	10.00		Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-10	RIA	10.00		Around 10.00	1
Overall indicative budget		108.00	10.00		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-01: Improved understanding, observation and monitoring of water resources availability.**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.

<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: In support of the European Green Deal and EU water-related policies, successful proposals will contribute to foster the adaptation of water resources to climate change, in particular Destination ‘Land, ocean and water for climate action’ impacts “Advance the understanding and science, and support adaptation and resilience of natural and managed ecosystems, water and soil systems and economic sectors in the context of the changing climate” and “Improve tools and technologies for efficient monitoring, assessment and projections related to climate change impact”

Projects results are expected to contribute to several of the following expected outcomes

- Enhanced knowledge base regarding water related climate change impacts, vulnerability, risk and adaptation assessments in Europe and abroad.
- Provide a more complete picture of future water vulnerabilities, including both water quantity and quality aspects, by better considering the interactions among climate change and variability, land surface and groundwater hydrology, water engineering, and human systems, including societal adaptations to water scarcity
- Support decision makers defining the safe operating space in terms of water quantity and availability, i.e., defining sustainable water management and climate change adaptation measures, meeting growing water supply, food, and energy needs, and controlling the high inter-annual variability in water availability
- Improve Member States’ preparedness for climate change impacts with respect to floods and droughts and support more accurate decision making for flood and drought risk reduction and response.
- Improve knowledge of ecological flows in the context of the Water Framework Directive and especially of the impacts of management, infrastructure and climate on ecological flows; improve prediction of drought events and water scarcity and enhance the assessment of the impacts of drought on water quality and biodiversity.
- Minimise the disparities associated with data collection and reporting between researchers and data agencies, enhance the interoperability, in particular through the mainstreaming of community-accepted standards, metadata schemas and data management best practices in line with the FAIR principles, between data providers and data users and strengthen coordination among various monitoring services
- Foster commitments between climate change and water scientists, monitoring services, industry, water utilities and other socioeconomic communities to collect, standardise, and widely disseminate information on water use in different sectors.

Scope: Freshwater resources are under increasing stress as a consequence of overuse and climate change with wide-ranging consequences for human societies and ecosystems. To reduce the vulnerability of ecosystems, society and water consuming economic sectors (agriculture, energy, industry) to climate change, it is necessary to enhance the knowledge on water resource availability and use, on future changes to climate and hydrological systems and on risks of extreme weather events.

Actions should address one or more of the following issues:

- A comparative assessment of the state-of-the-art integrated river basin models that are currently used for assessing water availability and vulnerability in the context of climate change. Models should be capable of simulating both surface and groundwater quantity and quality issues, as well as water supply and use and land use changes. They should be also able to take into account the socio-economic impacts of future climate change scenarios, as well as the costs and benefits associated with the adaptation strategies defined in response to those. In assessing water availability, an estimation should be made of the environmental flows necessary to sustain the health of both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. The impacts of various management and hydraulic infrastructure systems on the ecological flows of water and sediments should also be considered in this estimation. Assessments should be carried out in several river basins within and outside Europe, which are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts and are facing significant water related problems, with a view to providing policy recommendations for long term infrastructure investments and management strategies beyond the river basins addressed.
- Improve accuracy and spatiotemporal resolution of regional scale projections of changes in precipitation, soil moisture, runoff and groundwater availability for management purposes, and quantification of the related uncertainties. Projections of changes in the frequency and intensity of extreme events such as severe storms, heat waves, floods, including flash floods and droughts should be also made. The potential of recent global observation studies and data collections, in cooperation with relevant EU earth observation initiatives, such as ESA, should be considered.
- Development of techniques, monitoring tools and innovative sensors for advance measurement and calculation of current available water balances and future needs and monitoring, leveraging on advanced computation technologies (e.g. high performance computing, edge analytics, cloud computing, and grid computing), artificial intelligence and Internet of Things
- Development of a long-term observation framework and capacity, in collaboration with the Copernicus programme and GEOSS and any other relevant global observation initiatives, to support integrated analysis of water resource availability in Europe, including the development of community-driven, open access, end-to-end data infrastructures. This framework should be linked the European Open Science Cloud, as a pan-European cross-sectoral data space for research and innovation, and should include

all relevant in situ and earth observations needed to monitor and assess the impacts of climate change on water resource availability and to support integrated model developments and adaptation planning responses. Both surface and groundwater resources as well as water quantity and water quality issues should be considered. Particular attention should be given to ensuring availability of data to measure and/or assess relevant water use. In developing this framework, a thorough review of existing observational systems and initiatives at both EU and global level developed over recent years should be undertaken, and experiences and lessons learnt from previous long term water related research studies across a wide range of river basins within and outside Europe should be considered. Cooperation with relevant European water observation institutions and initiatives, such as ESA, EEA and JRC, is important.

Actions should bring together a multidisciplinary and multi-institutional team of researchers to pursue a combination of field data collection, innovative data analysis methods, artificial intelligence and the development of data-driven reduced-complexity models for scientific understanding and to guide management decisions, and to support relevant stakeholders and policy makers.

All in-situ data collected through actions funded from this call should follow INSPIRE<sup>298</sup> principles.

In general, the participation of academia, research organisations, utilities, industry and regulators is strongly advised, as well as civil society engagement whenever necessary, also aiming to broaden the dissemination and exploitation routes and to better assess the innovation potential of developed solutions and strategies.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-02: European Partnership Water Security for the Planet (Water4All)**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 20.00 and 126.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 20.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Programme Co-fund Action
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:

<sup>298</sup> <https://inspire.ec.europa.eu/>



	If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. As financial support provided by the participants to third parties is one of the primary activities of this action in order to be able to achieve its objectives, the 60 000 EUR threshold provided for in Article 204 (a) of the Financial Regulation No 2018/1046 does not apply.
<i>Total indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the duration of the partnership is EUR 126 million.

**Expected Outcome:** In support of the European Green Deal and EU water-related policies, the successful proposal will contribute to foster the adaptation of water resources to climate change, contributing therefore to Destination ‘Land, ocean and water for climate action’ impact “Advance the understanding and science, and support adaptation and resilience of natural and managed ecosystems, water and soil systems and economic sectors in the context of the changing climate”, as well as preserve and restore ecosystems and biodiversity, prevent pollution in land and seas, enhance food security, foster sustainable and circular management of water resources and innovative governance.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Increased protection of water resources and ecosystems and strengthening of biodiversity, by developing a more systemic and integrative policy which considers cross-sectoral interactions (water, biodiversity, agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, energy, health).
- Enhanced resilience, mitigation and adaptation of water systems to climate change and multiple interacting stressors.
- Pooled resources (EU, Member States, Associated Countries, European platforms and economic sectors) and alignment within a shared and co-developed strategic research and innovation agenda (SRIA) and related implementation plans and better embedding of national and regional knowledge and innovation ecosystems within that of the EU.
- Leverage impacts of policies on the water security crisis, by upscaling projects (from research to demonstration) and supporting policy implementation based on cooperation, across stakeholders and sectors.

- Strengthened alignment between funders' programmes and timelines and knowledge transfer, and addressing the lack of continuity of funding from research to implementation and difficulties in securing long-term investments.
- Greater cooperation across sectors, with multi-stakeholder engagement and empowerment, to co-develop and co-implement solutions and to drive the necessary societal transformations required for securing water for all.
- Reinforced role of the EU in the international water agenda (implementation of UN SDGs) and in strengthening water diplomacy.
- Science and evidence-based implementation of the European Green Deal and EU water-related policies.

Scope: Water resources are vital for all human activities and the environment. Ensuring that enough water of high quality is available for all purposes remains a key challenge globally and within Europe.

Global trends project world-wide growth in water use by 55% by 2050, due to growing demands from manufacturing, thermal electricity generation, agriculture and domestic use, all increasing the pressure of human activities on our freshwater resources. Furthermore, water quality is declining due to agricultural, industrial, mining and urban pollution, impacting the availability of water of sufficient quality for users. According to the recently released Global Assessment by the Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES), freshwater biodiversity is declining rapidly. Hydrological extreme events, such as floods and droughts, are going to increase, according to the latest IPCC conclusions, exacerbating the water crisis and impacts across all economic sectors.

Achieving good status of Europe's surface waters and providing enough water for all, is not only important for the implementation of EU water related policies, it is also an essential element for achieving other EU related policies, such biodiversity, agriculture, climate and energy related policies. Water is also central to all components of the European Green Deal. There is, therefore, a need to produce science-based knowledge to support the European Green Deal and other EU policies by monitoring problems related to water and developing feasible technical and managerial solutions.

Water is a dedicated UN Sustainable Development Goal (namely SDG6) but it will not be achieved by 2030 at current rates, considering trends in financing, capacity and political commitments. This will also undermine progress towards most of the other SDGs, particularly the goals related to poverty, hunger, health, clean energy, cities, climate, life below water and life on land, but also gender equality and peace, which are all related to water.

The diversity of challenges we are now facing to secure water for all, requires a new co-funded partnership that brings together all public and private research funders and supports a more efficient collaboration and integration of EU, Member States and Associated Countries R&I activities related to water. This will ensure a transition to a healthy planet, respectful of

planetary boundaries, a resilient Energy Union, and implementation of an EU policy of climate neutrality, in line with Horizon Europe priorities.

It also requires the alignment and/or integration of different research and innovation agendas and of EU and national programmes, coordination of funding agencies and commitments to implement a long-term strategy that would deliver major changes and impacts. Based on a shared and co-constructed SRIA, such a partnership should combine bottom-up and top-down approaches to reconcile needs whilst pooling resources from different sources. It should foster consortium building and help leverage between existing initiatives under common broader or specific objectives. This will give direction and shape to a common water implementation strategy.

A European partnership is also necessary to deliver an objective and impact-driven approach and build critical mass in resources (human and financial), expertise and capacities in the longer-term, in line with the challenge faced. This would allow for the mobilisation of additional national resources with access to other instruments / financing / investments along the same strategic research agenda (e.g. real-life testing sites, research infrastructures, and innovation hubs or competitiveness clusters), contributing from collaboration that benefits existing European, national and local ecosystems.

Tackling the global challenges also requires different forms of cooperation (to maximise the types and number of partners involved). This would allow implementation of a larger range of types of actions, such as development of academic and applied research, innovative solutions, including collaboration with enterprises in projects, transfer of innovation to enterprises, addressing the science/policy interface, while having better access to research infrastructures and connections to implementation tools (financial, regulatory), demonstration and training.

The co-funded European Partnership Water Security for the Planet (Water4All) should address the following vision: “Boosting the systemic transformations and changes across the entire research – water innovation pipeline, fostering matchmaking between problem owners and solution providers to ensure water security for all in the long term”.

Water4All should propose a portfolio of multi-national, multi-faceted and cross-sectoral approaches, encompassing policy, environmental, economic, technological and societal considerations to enable water security for all in the long term. It should therefore be implemented through a joint programme of activities ranging from research and innovation programme coordination to new knowledge and innovation development, transfer to policy-making, operational implementation and demonstration of the efficiency of solutions. It should be structured according to the following pillars:

- Identify research and innovation priorities to strengthen alignment of EU and national RDI programmes and increase the impact and policy relevance.
- Develop new knowledge and innovative solutions for a systemic and inclusive approach to water challenges at operational scale (e.g. river basin, water catchment).

- Transfer knowledge and innovation to i) policy-makers and ii) operators / managers so that they are able to implement the proposed solutions.
- Demonstrate the efficiency and the sustainability of the proposed solutions at local level, in close cooperation with the relevant actors (including policy-makers and decision-makers).
- Increase and strengthen international cooperation to develop a critical mass in relation to the global challenges faced.

This will create a continuum from the identification of the challenges to the demonstration of proposed solutions, ensuring a more rapid translation of research and innovation into concrete applications and uptake by relevant managers and citizens.

Water4All should rely on a core group composed of R&I programme owners and funders from ministries in charge of R&I policy and agencies, policy makers from ministries in charge of environmental policy and environmental / water protection agencies, from the EU, neighbouring countries and beyond the EU, as core members, in close cooperation with a wide range of other research and economic actors (multinational corporations, suppliers & SMEs, research & technology developers, water utilities, civil society organisations). Partners are expected to provide financial and/or in-kind contributions for the governance structure, the joint calls, and other additional activities. To achieve the international cooperation objectives, collaboration with non-European countries is strongly encouraged.

The partnership is open to all EU Member States, as well as to countries associated to Horizon Europe and will remain open to such countries wanting to join.

To ensure the coherence and complementarity of activities, and to leverage knowledge investment possibilities, the partnership is expected to foster close cooperation and synergies with other ongoing EU and nationally funded R&I activities, the Horizon Missions on Healthy Soils; on Ocean, seas and waters; on Climate Adaptation and on Cities, relevant Horizon Europe partnerships (Chemical Risk Assessment, Driving Urban Transition, Waterborne, Biodiversity, Blue Economy, Safe and Sustainable Food System, Agro-ecology living labs) and other programmes/initiatives (such as Cohesion Policy funds, LIFE programme, COST actions, Development and International Cooperation funds, ESA/Copernicus, KIC Climate, PRIMA, follow-up of BONUS). Proposers are expected to describe in details the way to implement such collaborations.

Proposals should pool the necessary financial resources from the participating national (or regional) research programmes with a view to implementing joints call for transnational proposals resulting in grants to third parties.

The Commission envisages to include new actions in future work programme(s) to continue providing support to the partnership for the duration of Horizon Europe.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-03: Key oceanic and polar processes driving regional & global climate change**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 7.00 and 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 3-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:  To ensure a balanced portfolio, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least also to those that are the highest ranked within set topics, provided that the proposals attain all thresholds.

**Expected Outcome:** In support to the European Green Deal and climate initiatives, and the EU Arctic Policy, successful proposals will contribute to strengthening the ocean - climate nexus and our understanding of the ocean and polar regions, as an integral part of the Earth’s climate system. Successful proposals will further the science for understanding key processes that link the ocean to climate and people. They will allow for a better understanding of the nature and magnitude of these processes, and the impact of human activity on them. Given their specific vulnerability to climate change, this knowledge may help formulate the appropriate policy action to better protect the ocean and the polar regions and help ensure their health, integrity and resilience.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Increased predictability and reduced uncertainty associated with key oceanic and polar processes and advanced understanding and science of the ocean-climate nexus.
- Contribution to the next generation observation and modelling of key ocean-climate processes and indicators.

- Contribution to the implementation of the EU Arctic Policy, the All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance, the European Commission-European Space Agency flagship action on polar changes & global impacts, European climate policies and a substantial contribution to key international assessments, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES), World Ocean Assessment (WOA) and other major regional and global initiatives.

Scope: The Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC) is a key component of the Earth climate. It can significantly imprint the vertical structure of global ocean heat uptake and drives a large part of the deep-ocean oxygenation and deep storage of anthropogenic carbon. The AMOC is expected to slow down with climate change with strong impact on the oceanic heat storage, carbon pump, and ventilation. Such change in the AMOC is also expected to impact the polar regions that are already experiencing warming at a faster rate than other places. Indeed, the current climate in polar regions is influenced by interactions between the ice sheets, the ocean, sea ice and atmosphere, and their response to anthropogenic climate forcing. Both the Arctic and Antarctic are connected to global climate through several feedback mechanisms, such as the AMOC, snow albedo effect, sea level rise from melting glaciers and ice sheets, changing terrestrial ecosystems that lead to changes in fluxes of carbon dioxide, and methane nutrients. Several of these processes exhibit tipping points (e.g. methane hydrate release in a warming Arctic Ocean, thawing permafrost and release of carbon). Potential tipping points in the polar regions include a significant slowdown of the AMOC and a destabilization of Greenland and Antarctica ice sheets. There is deep uncertainty regarding the contribution the melting of the Antarctic ice sheet will make to mean global sea level rise towards the end of this century. The potential consequences vary greatly from region to region making the information needed at local and regional level highly relevant for supporting local and regional adaptation decisions. The Southern Ocean controls the natural release of CO<sub>2</sub> from the ocean, helps to absorb anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> and modulates transport of heat towards the Antarctic ice cap. The largest anthropogenic storage of CO<sub>2</sub> is in the North Atlantic. The observational record is not long enough to determine if changes observed in the circulation of the Atlantic and Southern Oceans are due to natural variability, or are a response to anthropogenic forcing.

Actions should aim at developing innovative approaches to address only one of the following options:

- a. Regional & global components of the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation (AMOC)

Actions should further the research on how and why the AMOC has changed over time, and how it will evolve in the future. Actions should endeavour to understand the entire system of the AMOC, as well as its links with the world ocean circulation system, in particular with the polar oceans. Actions should enable the sustained and sustainable observation of the AMOC by improving, developing and/or deploying existing and novel methods and technologies to observe the AMOC and its functions in the Earth system, and may include the development of

advanced methods and digital technologies such as machine learning algorithms and multiple observational constraints. Observations should address climate change indicators, including indicators of past climate change, measurements of ocean heat content and currents, carbon dioxide solubility and fluxes, modifications of ocean circulation and climate feedbacks.

Action should address observational gaps of existing AMOC observing systems, focusing for example on formation regions, ocean boundaries and topographic constriction points, which are not or only poorly observed by large-scale observation systems such as the Argo array of profiling floats, or current generation satellite altimeters. Emerging technologies such as ocean gliders, remote mooring telemetry and autonomous vehicles offer opportunities to streamline traditional transport mooring arrays. This will lead to a more precise assessment (key for e.g. IPCC reports) of the risk of rapid changes using the newly released CMIP6 database and high-resolution models developed, inter alia, within the EU Horizon 2020 framework programme. Actions should add new observations of biogeochemical parameters (including carbon) and ecosystem-relevant quantities to observing arrays, thus providing synergy and optimisation of the long-term research infrastructure. Actions should also include reconstructions of deep boundary current intensities at different time scales to better discriminate/characterise anthropogenic impact from natural variability during the observational period. Actions should focus on improving models to better understand short-term variability and impacts on European and global climate. Moreover, action should interpret the recent changes in this context, to understand how close we may be to a climate tipping point.

- a. Improving understanding and observation of Antarctic key processes and the Southern Ocean circulation

Actions should endeavour to reduce the deep uncertainty regarding the Antarctic contribution to global mean sea level rise towards the end of this century. Action should further the science and understanding of the dynamics of the Antarctic ice sheet and its climatic triggers, which constitute the major source of uncertainty about sea level rise. Actions should endeavour to understand the sensitivity of the low-latitude oceans to freshwater fluxes in order to advance the comprehension of the dynamics and functioning of the southern sources of deep waters, the Antarctic bottom water (AABW) circulation and thus counteract the deficit of scientific knowledge limiting the complete understanding of decadal to millennial time-scale climate change. Actions should focus on the potential importance of feedbacks between the northern and southern sources of deep waters. Actions should endeavour to close the gap towards producing an integrated view of the planet's climate system and the role of Antarctica in it. Actions should focus on understanding the Antarctica climate variability, Antarctic surface mass balance and the forces that control future change and responses to change, including tipping points. Actions should research the Antarctic ice sheet dynamics and integrate this knowledge into coupled ice sheet-climate models adapted to the Antarctic and Southern Ocean region, in order to constrain and improve the accuracy and precision of predictions of future changes in global and regional temperatures, ocean acidification and sea level rise. Actions should reduce the gap in ocean observations in the Antarctica allowing for improved sea ice and weather forecasting and other environmental predictions that could

improve the quality of various applications including search and rescue, coupling with numerical weather and seasonal predictions, historical reconstructions (reanalysis), aquaculture and environmental management including environmental emergency response. Actions should endeavour to understand how ice-shelf loss in Antarctica link with and impact on the ocean’s circulations system, in particular the AMOC, and the relationship between the relative strength of the Antarctic circumpolar current (ACC) and AMOC.

For both options, international cooperation is strongly encouraged, with a strong linkage with the ongoing activities under the All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance, with participation from bordering countries and countries – beyond the EU Member States and countries associated to Horizon Europe – that took part in the Arctic Science Ministerial. Actions under this topic should plan on a close collaboration among each other and with the EU Polar Cluster. Actions should build upon and link with past Horizon 2020 projects, EU PolarNET2, Copernicus, Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (SAON), Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) and Southern Ocean Observing System (SOOS), and other international Ocean Observing Initiatives. The R&I needs to be conducted in a multidisciplinary and ecosystem-based approach. All in-situ data collected through actions funded from this call should follow INSPIRE principles and be made available through open access repositories supported by the European Commission (Copernicus, GEOSS, and EMODnet).

This topic links with research conducted under Cluster 5 (‘Climate, Energy and Mobility’) Destination ‘Climate sciences and responses’ and Cluster 6 (‘Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment’) Destination ‘Land, ocean and water for climate action’ and Destination ‘Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the European Green Deal’, Deploying and adding value to Environmental Observations.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-04: Demonstration network on climate-smart farming – linking pilot farms**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 23.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 23.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the



	multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
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Expected Outcome: The conservation and enhancement of Earth's natural terrestrial carbon sinks such as soils and plants, forests, farmed lands and wetlands is crucial. The European Green Deal gives research and innovation (R&I) a significant role to play in supporting the design and implementation of policies that will ensure the achievement of the EU's climate objectives. Project implementation is expected to contribute to mitigation and adaptation to climate change and help achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- Expand the knowledge base of climate related practices, resulting in increased application of climate neutral farming approaches, assessing and evaluating different methods with all relevant actors involved;
- Speed up involvement and adoption by farmers of innovative / smart farming practices that mitigate emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and that foster adaptation of the sector to climate change. In the long term, this will support a more substantial contribution of the farming sector to mitigation of GHG emissions and to carbon storage;
- Increased involvement of Member States' and Associated Countries agricultural knowledge and innovation system (AKIS) in climate-related farming issues, including through linking to the European innovation partnership "agricultural productivity and sustainability" (EIP-AGRI) national / regional / local projects and to advisors, with a view to wider dissemination and interaction within the Member States.

Scope: A wide adoption of practices contributing to mitigation of climate change and carbon storage by farmers is a priority to ensure that the EU reaches GHG mitigation objectives by 2030 and climate neutrality by 2050. Farming is also vulnerable to impacts of climate change; hence adaptation is of utmost importance. Mainstreaming the use of climate-smart practices has been recognised as a priority at the global level, including at the G-20. In particular, the engagement of farmers in this effort needs to be increased. Therefore, a strong involvement of Member States' AKIS is needed, as well as the development of targeted advice to farmers on climate issues.

The aim is to establish a three level network in a phased manner over Cluster 6 work programmes 2021/2022 and 2023/2024. The first level is a network which will engage front-runner farmers introducing on-farm trials and demonstration of innovations, using existing knowledge both in the EU and Associated Countries. The second level is a network to connect to all advisors on the subject in the Member States, building on achievements of Horizon 2020 projects and EIP-AGRI operational groups and the development of Member States' AKIS, to ensure the provision of targeted advice. The third level of the network will engage and strengthen the capacity of experimental research stations on climate issues.

The present topic deals with the level of commercial farms. This level will engage commercial farms led by sustainability-oriented farmers who are eager to pilot existing or

new ready-for-practice techniques and demonstrate them to other farmers. The second level will aim at sharing broadly climate neutral ready-for-practice solutions through a collaborative innovation ecosystem, involving all advisors and the main AKIS actors and AKIS coordination bodies in Member States. The second level will be implemented through Topic HORIZON-CL6-2022-CLIMATE-01-03 “Demonstration network on climate-smart farming – boosting the role of advisory services”.

Proposals should:

- Network existing nationally or regionally funded trial farms, including those linked to universities and research institutes, and other farms not yet part of networks;
- Exploit existing and develop new solutions through practice oriented on-farm testing and demonstration in a co-creative approach with the pilot farmers and their advisors;
- Collect and compare tool-kits for assessing GHG balances at farm level, performance monitoring, decision tools, climate services, etc. for possible use on average farms;
- Support the implementation of the EU carbon farming manual as foreseen in the farm to fork strategy and the implementation of the third party certification of carbon removals, as foreseen in the circular economy action plan;
- Foster knowledge exchange within and among Member States and regions and establish links with the EIP-AGRI and Member States’ AKIS networks and coordination bodies;
- Link the demonstration farms into an EU demonstration farm network including all Member States to stimulate effective cross-fertilisation among Member States. Include a sufficient number of farmers and their advisors per country, taking into account the size of the Member State and ensuring a broad EU coverage;
- Proposals should include a task to collaborate with project of topic HORIZON-CL6-2022-CLIMATE-01-03 “Demonstration network on climate-smart farming – boosting the role of advisory services” and a topic to be published in Cluster 6 work programme 2023/2024;
- The project should operate for at least seven years and build on the outcomes of the climate-related projects from various funding sources. The project must implement the multi-actor approach and may involve social innovation.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-05: Agroecological approaches for climate change mitigation, resilient agricultural production and enhanced biodiversity**

<b>Specific conditions</b>
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<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 7.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:  The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p> <p>If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).</p>

**Expected Outcome:** A successful proposal should contribute to the European Green Deal and international objectives to foster climate change mitigation and adaptation in agriculture. It should in particular support the farm to fork's strategy objective of a transition to a fair, healthy and resilient European agriculture, notably its objective to promote agroecology, by unfolding its potential as a farming system based on the sustainable management of natural resources. Activities should improve the knowledge base to inform decision-makers and other relevant stakeholders on how agroecology can contribute to these objectives, while remaining a profitable activity for farmers.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Increased and robust evidence of the potential of agroecology for climate change (mitigation and adaptation), its climate neutrality potential, impact on biodiversity, and the potential for improving farm socio-economic resilience. This should be achieved through quantitative and qualitative assessments allowing to identify and monitor the implementation and performance of optimal combinations of agroecological practices and strategies, as well as trade-offs or gains, barriers and drivers, for different crops and systems representative of the diversity of EU and Associated Countries farming, and at the farm and landscape level;
- Qualitative and quantitative data availability of the social, economic and environmental sustainability and performance of agroecological strategies, contributing to a dependable and transparent knowledge base for EU policy design and implementation (common agricultural policy (CAP), European Green Deal, objectives of the farm to fork and biodiversity strategies, etc.);

- Increased understanding, adoption and implementation of agroecological practices by farmers;
- Improved understanding of the definition of agroecology and of its application to EU and Associated Countries farming.

Scope: Achieving sustainable agricultural production that fosters both climate change mitigation and adaptation of agriculture to climate change is a policy objective that implies finding a balance with productivity and wider sustainability goals, such as preserving and enhancing biodiversity. Agroecology<sup>299</sup> can provide an important contribution to achieving these objectives, while at the same time enhancing food and nutrition security, thus contributing to achieving the objectives of the farm to fork and biodiversity strategies and the Sustainable Development Goals. Agroecology is a holistic approach that relies on and maximises the use of ecological processes to support agricultural production. By working more with nature and ecosystem services, agroecology has the potential to increase the circularity, diversification and autonomy of farms, and drive a full transformation of farming systems, from input substitution and beyond. The effectiveness of agroecology is context-specific and practices need to be implemented on a significant proportion of farms to deliver tangible impacts on sustainability. Specific methods and indicators are needed to monitor and quantify the positive effects of these practices on climate change mitigation and adaptation at the farm and landscape levels, along with its impacts on yield stability, farm viability and biodiversity, for different farming systems and pedo-climatic conditions. Moreover, improving farmers' uptake of agroecological practices calls for specific support measures and for the design of specific business cases at the farm and landscape levels.

Activities should improve knowledge of the contribution of agroecological practices to climate change mitigation, increased adaptation of farming to climate change, and preservation and enhancement of biodiversity, while ensuring farm profitability, thus providing an important contribution to policy design. Proposals should cover the wide range of crops and farming systems present in the EU and Associated Countries agricultural sector, from conventional to organic. Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach', and ensure adequate involvement of the farming sector. Projects funded under this topic should build on the results of relevant projects funded under Horizon 2020 and should ensure collaboration with projects funded under calls *HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-02-01-two-stage: Agroecological approaches for sustainable weed management* and *HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-03: Digitalisation as an enabler of agroecological farming systems* in this work programme.

Proposals should identify, evaluate and deliver a method that allows identification of the optimal combinations of agroecological practices and the most suitable agroecological strategies that efficiently contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation while ensuring biodiversity preservation or enhancement and overall farm profitability. Proposals should improve existing indicators and develop new ones where relevant, to monitor and measure the qualitative and quantitative impacts of these strategies, including their climate

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<sup>299</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/i9037en/i9037en.pdf>

neutrality potential and trade-offs or gains in biodiversity, and the associated improvement in farm socio-economic resilience. Proposals should develop tools to identify and monitor both the implementation of agroecological practices in farm management and the full-farm agroecological approaches, analysing the scale-dependent effects from farm to landscape level, as well as the opportunities and challenges derived from regulation and market aspects. Proposals should develop and test innovative mechanisms to accompany farmers in implementing and/or switching to agroecological practices that contribute to mitigating climate change and other negative environmental impacts. Proposals should undertake an analysis of the social, environmental and economic sustainability performance of such strategies and analyse the potential to integrate such practices in business cases at farm level, including exploring the potential of labelling of products linked to agroecological practices in support of and complying with the current relevant legal framework and, where the scope of activities would cover the food system, the future EU framework for food sustainability labelling to promote and scale-up their uptake.

This topic requires the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-06: Resilient livestock farming systems under climate change**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 12.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

Expected Outcome: A successful proposal will contribute to the European Green Deal and international objectives to foster climate change mitigation, pollution prevention and control, and adaptation in agriculture. It will in particular support the farm to fork strategy objective for a transition to a fair, healthy and resilient European agriculture. It will contribute to climate action on land and more specifically towards climate neutrality by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and enhancing natural carbon sinks: better understanding and mobilising the mitigation and adaptation potential of livestock farming and related sectors based on the sustainable management of natural resources.

The following outcomes are expected:

- Enhanced adoption by farmers and other relevant actors of innovations that increase the mitigation and adaptation capacity of livestock farming systems to climate change, at animal, population and farm level, therefore improving the resilience of production systems as well as animal health and welfare.
- Improved capacity to assess the environmental and socio-economic impact of mitigation and adaptation practices and options at different scales, alone and in combination.
- Consolidated transition towards a resilient livestock production with novel integrated approaches (in terms of management, breeding, feeding, local resources use, etc.) defined for different climate change scenarios.

Scope: Terrestrial livestock production is considered a large contributor to anthropogenic GHG emissions worldwide and emissions of pollutants to air and water. Although emission intensity in Europe is lower in comparison to many other regions of the world, options to better assess and improve the emissions balance of terrestrial livestock production, whether intensive or extensive/low input, including organic, are necessary, including the evaluation of appropriate indicators of GHG emissions in different breeds, environments and production systems, in order not to rely solely on a reduction of the demand in food of animal origin to improve the emission balance of the sector. A variety of options have been identified, but are not yet common practice, and the potential of breeding to contribute to an improved GHG balance was not much investigated so far. In addition, the likelihood of further climate change occurring, and the increasing scale of potential climate impacts require addressing agricultural adaptation of the livestock sector as well.

The proposals should investigate at different levels (animal, herd, farm and sector, region) and with a coherent approach, practices and innovations that enable a reduction of the net GHG emissions by terrestrial livestock, while striving to ensure farm viability and resilience of production systems, including adaptation to climate change, and taking into account the impact on the environment and biodiversity. Trade-offs within and between the different levels should be addressed. At animal level, the research should use systems biology to study interactions between host and environment (e.g. feed and microbes) and how this interplay affects the efficiency of feed utilisation (energy and proteins) and GHG emissions, not least methane. Proposals should define and investigate traits/phenotypes, and the potential of breeding, to reduce GHG animal emissions or/and adapt to climate change. At farm level, different husbandry practices should be addressed. At sector/regional level, a system approach should investigate how different actors can cooperate to improve the GHG balance of livestock production, optimising the use of resources, including feed (e.g. production and origin), improving circularity. In addition to biophysical research, the proposals should address the potential socio-economic impact of the proposed practices and innovations, and look at options to facilitate their uptake. Proposals should develop or refine related tools for a proper assessment of practices and proposed innovations. Proposals should take into account novel farming systems and future scenarios, different breeds, particularly local breeds, various

management approaches, climatic conditions and regional specificities. Proposals should address at least cattle and pigs and may address any other relevant species.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement. Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure adequate involvement of the farming sector, terrestrial livestock breeders, advisers and other relevant actors.

The proposals should take into account other EU-funded projects, including those funded under the ERA-NETs SusAn<sup>300</sup> and ERA-GAS<sup>301</sup>.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-07: International Research Consortium on (agricultural) soil carbon**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  International organisations with headquarters in a Member State or associated country are exceptionally eligible for funding.  Legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action.

Expected Outcome: Activities should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- establishment of an International Research Consortium (IRC) on soil carbon and related issues;
- creation of a knowledge platform for sharing information on relevant research activities and results concerning methodologies for soil carbon balance monitoring, and practices for increasing soil carbon (e.g. carbon farming);
- better coordination of research activities and of methods for monitoring soil carbon stock changes at global level, thereby maximising complementarities and avoiding duplication of efforts;

<sup>300</sup> <https://era-susan.eu/>

<sup>301</sup> <https://www.eragas.eu/en/>

- validated methods to support national greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories;
- increased transparency with regard to progress towards commitments on soil carbon under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

On the long(er) term, activities will contribute to meeting international commitments concerning carbon sinks (Paris agreement), as well as to the European Green Deal overall objective to become the world's first climate neutral continent by 2050.

Scope: Soil health is threatened both in Europe and globally by the effects of human activities and climate change. It is estimated that between one fourth and one third of global soils suffer from degradation. Soil degradation negatively impacts on food production, biodiversity or soil's capacity to retain water and store carbon. Urgent action is needed to stabilise and increase soil carbon in soils, thereby also drawing down atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> and monitor its status in more reliable ways, at a range of scales from field to region and at a low cost. Yet, knowledge and methodological gaps exist in relation to measuring soil carbon stocks and changes in soil carbon as well as with regard to effective measures for increasing soil carbon. Furthermore, research and innovation (R&I) efforts are dispersed and results not widely known or taken up.

International research cooperation is needed to pool resources and scale up efforts for monitoring soil carbon stock changes, remote sensing and modelling. Activities should include

- building a formal research cooperation between EU and international partners on soil carbon. While initially focusing on carbon in agricultural soils, the partnership should progressively expand during the lifetime of the project to address also other land uses (e.g. forests, pastures, public areas for recreation including in urban settings);
- an analysis of results of on-going R&I and knowledge sharing through a single online knowledge platform with access to information and data from different existing repositories;
- building a roadmap for R&I priorities at international level based on identified knowledge gaps as well as identifying and developing joint flagship initiatives;
- establishing the methodological basis for a harmonised monitoring and verification of soil organic carbon balance.

For activities involving satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing, the selected project should use as much as possible Copernicus and/or Galileo / EGNOS (taking into account possible limitations on their use by international partners). Other data and services may be used additionally.

Activities should be implemented in synergy with major soil related European initiatives including the European Joint Programme EJP Soil and a planned mission in the area of Soil Health and Food.



In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-08: Agroforestry to meet climate, biodiversity and farming sustainability goals**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:                      The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p> <p>If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).</p>

Expected Outcome: A successful proposal should contribute to the European Green Deal and international objectives to foster climate change mitigation and adaptation in agriculture. It should in particular support the farm to fork's strategy objective of a transition to a fair, healthy and resilient European agriculture, notably its objective to promote agroforestry as a sustainable farming practice that can foster climate change mitigation and carbon sinks in the primary sector, by optimising and deploying agroforestry for climate neutrality and mobilising its mitigation potential as a farming system based on the sustainable management of natural resources. Activities should improve the knowledge base to inform decision-makers and other relevant stakeholders on how agroforestry can contribute to better manage scarce resources such as soil and water in a changing climate. As such, activities should deliver dependable and transparent knowledge base for EU policy design and implementation (common agricultural policy (CAP), European Green Deal objectives, farm to fork and biodiversity strategies, etc.).

Project results are expected to contribute to at least two of the following expected outcomes (depending on the activities covered):

- Improved qualitative and quantitative data availability of the contribution of agroforestry to climate change (mitigation and adaptation), soil conservation and (agro-)biodiversity

(including genetic diversity within species) and to greater economic, environmental and social sustainability of farming;

- Improved configuration and management of agroforestry systems, including systems involving animal production, through models and tools;
- Enhanced capacities of various actors to measure the economic, environmental and social performance of agroforestry, in particular at farm level and in relation with the support scheme designed under the CAP as regards environment and climate objectives, through appropriate methods and indicators;
- A strengthened and more robust agroforestry innovation ecosystem and increased end-user acceptance and implementation of agroforestry in the EU and Associated Countries.

Scope: Achieving sustainable agricultural production that fosters both climate change mitigation and adaptation and biodiversity preservation and enhancement is a policy objective that implies finding a balance with farm productivity, socio-economic viability and wider sustainability goals. Agroforestry systems include both traditional and modern land-use systems where trees are managed together with crops and/or animal production systems in agricultural settings. These systems have the potential to increase ecosystem services - including soil carbon sequestration, water retention, erosion control, soil nutrients, pollination, pest- and disease-control - and biodiversity, while improving farming productivity, profitability and sustainability of farmers' incomes. Implementation of agroforestry in the EU and Associated Countries needs to be boosted in order to maximise this potential. The management of agroforestry systems is critical for their positive impact on climate and the environment as well as to ensure a balance with productivity and profitability for farmers. This is essential to promote the uptake and long-term sustainability of agroforestry.

Proposals should increase knowledge of the contribution of agroforestry to ecosystem services underpinning climate change mitigation and adaptation, increased biodiversity and farming resilience and boost the implementation of this type of farming systems in different pedo-climatic zones across the EU and Associated Countries. Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and ensure involvement of farmers and all other relevant actors in the value chain. Proposals should cover the conventional, agroecological and organic sectors. Proposals should build on and expand existing knowledge, tools and initiatives developed by Horizon 2020 projects, and where relevant ensure coordination with those projects/initiatives. Proposals should include a clear plan to collaborate with other projects selected under this topic. In order to achieve the expected outcomes, international cooperation is strongly encouraged. In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

Proposals should address at least five of the following activities:

- Design agroforestry systems for climate change (mitigation and adaptation) and increased (agro-)biodiversity that also ensure farming resilience to fluctuating climate,

environmental and socio-economic conditions, farm income stability and enhanced ecosystem services, in different regions and pedo-climatic conditions;

- Develop methods and indicators that allow the identification of newly established agroforestry systems and monitor their performance over time. Analysis of trade-offs and synergies (e.g. between ecosystem services and between the environmental and socio-economic benefits) should be included;
- Develop models and tools adapted to real farm conditions and considering the full amount of food, feed (for systems including livestock), timber or biomass and ecosystem services produced, to allow the configuration and efficient management of agroforestry systems that take into account aspects such as tree renewal, adaptation to biotic and abiotic stresses, selection and improvement of agricultural varieties and animals most suited for agroforestry, recovery and improvement of biodiversity, soil water related aspects, and erosion control, in different regions and pedo-climatic zones;
- Building on existing tools and methods where available, enhance quantification of the contribution of agroforestry to ecosystem services underpinning climate change (mitigation and adaptation) in relation to aspects such as carbon sequestration potential, stability of organic carbon in the soil (top- and sub-soil), reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, soil erosion control, pest and disease control, increased organic matter in (top- and sub-) soil, and nutrient recycling, and develop indicators. When animals are present, animal production, health and welfare aspects should be considered;
- Enhance quantification of the contribution of agroforestry to increased (agro)biodiversity, including on pollinators, and the linkages with soil quality and water quality and quantity, and develop indicators, as well as guidance for species selection;
- Improve knowledge of the economic, environmental and social performance of agroforestry systems and their contribution to sustainable food and feed / non-food biomass production, analysing their productivity and profitability for farmers and factors influencing farmers' decision-making, and considering aspects such as crop / tree and livestock / tree combinations, factors explaining yield response variability, tree size, animal production, a mix of traditional and new systems and applications, etc. Identify needs for new equipment, machinery and management tools;
- Building on existing tools where relevant, develop a model to measure the impact of policies on agroforestry, both in terms of barriers or incentives to maintain existing agroforestry systems and to establish new ones. Sharing of experience among stakeholders as regards relevant common agricultural policy (CAP) support to agroforestry should be promoted. The potential of labelling of products linked to agroforestry in support of and complying with the current relevant legal framework and, when the scope of activities would cover the food system, the future EU framework for sustainability food labelling, should be investigated;

- Design and implement a plan to boost networking and research and innovation (R&I) support to agroforestry at regional level, building on and expanding existing networks and initiatives where available and relevant, and involving policy makers, regional authorities, institutions, researchers, consumers and other key stakeholders;
- Develop a training package and guidelines to support farmers in designing business plans linked to value chain development to put in place and manage agroforestry systems in different regions.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-09: Enhancing science-based knowledge on EU forests’, including old-growth forests, capacities to mitigate climate change**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p> <p>The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.</p>

**Expected Outcome:** In line with the EU Green Deal objectives and the EU forest strategy, successful proposals will support the preservation and enhancement of carbon stocks and sinks while supporting biodiversity, genetic diversity within and among tree species, and providing renewable resources for a circular and sustainable bioeconomy contributing to fostering climate change mitigation in the primary sector and carbon sinks and optimising and deploying nature-based solutions for climate neutrality.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Forest managers adapting to sustainable management practices in view of climate change, bioeconomy, genetic diversity and biodiversity objectives;
- Improved knowledge on scenarios and sustainable pathways for forestry and the forest-based sector including measures and management strategies taking into account regional differences in Europe and changes in species composition;

- Increased forest-based carbon removals through forest management practices and uses of long-lived wood products;
- Better understanding on how forest management impacts carbon sequestration in comparison to non-managed forests;
- Pathways to achieve the ambition of the Paris Agreement ambition to limit climate warming;
- Transfer of knowledge from science to practice (good practice).

Scope: Carbon sequestration by forest ecosystems has attracted much interest as a mitigation approach, as it can be considered as a relatively inexpensive option to address climate change in the short- medium- and long term. Forest lands, covered by the regulation on land use, land-use changes and forestry, are expected to contribute to the achievement of Europe's climate ambition for 2030. As shown in the in-depth analysis in support of the “Clean Planet for all” communication, this contribution needs to be increasing to achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

This topic aims to increase the science-based knowledge for an efficient implementation of good management practices that ensure the multiple functions of various forest types in Europe and to increase forest carbon stocks in the short-, medium-, and long-term.

Proposals will:

- Contribute to a better understanding of favourable management practices for both soil and vegetation, within-species genetic diversity upon, species selection and rotations to enhance and climate-proof forest carbon stocks (considering both in situ carbon sequestration and carbon storage in long-lived wood products) and sinks, while considering the broad range of other forest values and ecosystem services.
- Consider the dynamics of the carbon stored in the different pools (above-ground biomass, below-ground biomass, deadwood, litter, soil organic carbon fractions, harvested wood products) under different forest management regimes and at different scales (EU-wide, national, local) to identify possible adaptations to current European models of sustainable forest management, so that the forest-based sector can optimise climate action, and to facilitate the monitoring and reporting of GHG emissions.
- Improve the integration of European forests, including forest practices, in global and regional climate modelling.
- Contribute to progress in the certification and authenticity verification of carbon removals that are nature-based (i.e. through forest protection, afforestation and sustainable forest management) or through the forest biomass used for longer-lived and higher-substitution products.

- Design and monitor the efficacy of forest-based mitigation plans, combining the growing potential of satellite-based remote sensing with surface monitoring.
- Develop recommendations for up-take in practice, including specifying which silvicultural measures to apply to which types of forest in order to maximise their mitigation potential while ensuring the provision of other ecosystem services, under the current and future climate, while fully respecting ecological principles favourable to biodiversity and soil conservation.
- Analyse socio-economic aspects of forest-based mitigation strategies, including forest managers' and users' perception and factors influencing their decision making such as consumer choices, sectorial integration and international/domestic competition.
- Improve knowledge on the environmental integrity, the social acceptability and the economic feasibility of forest-based mitigation actions such as afforestation, reforestation, forest restoration, forest protection, sustainable forest management and enhanced wood harvest and use, especially for long-lived products.

Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach' and should include a task to collaborate with other projects financed under the topic *HORIZON-CL6-2022-CLIMATE-01-05: Forestry - European observatory of climate change impacts and demonstration network of climate smart restoration pilots*.

This topic should involve effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-10: EU-China international cooperation on increasing the resilience of forests**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 10.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must

	make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:  Grants awarded under this topic will be coordinated with the Ministry of Science and Technology, China (MOST).
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:  Grants awarded under this topic will be linked to the specific grants awarded by the Ministry of Science and Technology, China (MOST) to the Chinese partners.  The respective options of the Model Grant Agreement will be applied.

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal objectives and the EU forest strategy, successful proposals will support the resilience and adaptation of forests and the forest-based sector contributing to advance the understanding and science, and support adaptation and resilience of natural and managed ecosystems, water and soil systems and economic sectors in the context of the changing climate.

Project results are expected to contribute to all following expected outcomes:

- Strengthened international cooperation with actors from China in the areas of forest adaptation to climate change
- Comprehensive knowledge base on the impact of climate change on forests and their capacity to adapt
- Increased adaptation efforts in climate change hotspots in the EU/associated countries (mountains, Mediterranean, Northern Scandinavian Peninsula, Central and Eastern Europe, outermost regions) and China
- Informed decision-making by forest managers adopting sustainable forest management practices.
- Knowledge transfer and capacity building at science-policy-practice interface.

Scope: Adaptation and increased resilience of forests is essential for the forests to maintain their function as carbon sinks, to protect existing stocks and to ensure that forests will continue to provide important ecosystem services and to support the forest-based bioeconomy. Due to the high variation of European and Chinese forests, diversity of landscapes as well as governance and ownership structures, adaptation strategies need to be adapted to regional conditions and circumstances, with focus on the most vulnerable forests in climate change hotspots.

Proposals will:

- Develop and refine projections at regional scale, improve the modelling of effects on natural vegetation, both at individual and ecosystem level and support science-based decisions with a view to the sustainable management of forests, including activities related to afforestation, reforestation and regeneration.
- Design adaptation plans to increase the resilience of forests by active management of the species composition and the genetic diversity within these species (including through assisted species migration, and forest regeneration and afforestation with species already adapted and / or further improved to tolerate or even benefit from future climate conditions) while supporting forest production and ecosystem services under climate change in the various regions and forest types of Europe.
- Analyse socio-economic aspects of forest adaptation, including forest managers' and users' perception and factors influencing their decision making such as consumer choices, sectorial integration and international/domestic competition and analyse the potential of incentives and tools to reach forest managers and to encourage changes towards preventive strategies/measures by taking into account the different forms of forest governance and ownership.

The project must implement the multi-actor approach and ensure an adequate involvement of the primary production sector and the wider forest-based value chain.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

Proposals should include a task to collaborate with projects financed under the topic *HORIZON-CL6-2022-CLIMATE-01-05: Forestry: European observatory of climate change impacts and demonstration network of climate smart restoration pilots*. Actions will contribute to implementing the EU-China Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology (FAB) flagship initiative, which aims to ensure sustainability of agri-food systems, catering for the needs of a growing population, the reduction of food and agricultural losses and waste, and the provision of safe and healthy foodstuffs.

Due to the scope of this topic, international cooperation is strongly encouraged, in particular with China. This topic is envisaged to be implemented as a coordinated call but if no agreement is reached with the Ministry of Science and Technology China (MOST) on the co-funding of Chinese partners, it will be implemented as a normal call. Updates will be published on the Funding & Tenders Portal.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**Call - Land, ocean and water for climate action**

***HORIZON-CL6-2022-CLIMATE-01***



## Conditions for the Call

### Indicative budget(s)<sup>302</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>303</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2022		
Opening: 28 Oct 2021 Deadline(s): 15 Feb 2022				
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CLIMATE-01-01	IA	10.00	4.00 to 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CLIMATE-01-02	RIA	15.00	Around 15.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CLIMATE-01-03	CSA	20.00	Around 20.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CLIMATE-01-04	RIA	15.00	Around 15.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CLIMATE-01-05	RIA	15.00	Around 15.00	1
Overall indicative budget		75.00		

### **General conditions relating to this call**

<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General

<sup>302</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.  
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>303</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

	Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-CLIMATE-01-01: Climate sensitive water allocation systems and economic instruments.**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 4.00 and 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: In support of the European Green Deal and EU water-related policies, successful proposals will contribute to foster the adaptation of water resources to climate change, in particular Destination ‘Land, ocean and water for climate action’ impact “Advance the understanding and science, and support adaptation and resilience of natural and managed ecosystems, water and soil systems and economic sectors in the context of the changing climate”.

Projects results are expected to contribute to several of the following expected outcomes

- Achieve transparent water sharing and adjust water allocation across environmental and human uses towards long-term water replenishment capacity and availability,
- Adopt inclusive, forward-looking and climate risk-informed water allocation planning and management processes, foster adoption of digital technologies in water management
- Guide decision makers in transboundary rivers to share transboundary waters equitably, reaping the benefits of appropriate water allocation regimes.
- Identify water efficiency deficiencies and achieve improvement by at least 50% by 2030, in regions under water stress, now or in the future, and for water bodies at risk of failing to achieve good ecological or quantitative status.

- Reduce the water footprint of water-using sectors, especially agriculture, energy and industry.
- Promote financing mechanisms to smoothen the transition to more appropriate water pricing policies in water supply and sanitation and in the different economic sectors, such as agriculture, energy and industry, taking into consideration the opportunities available in various EU (e.g. CAP, Cohesion Policy funds, etc.) and national funding mechanisms and policies.
- Help structure an appropriate policy dialogue to support water allocation reforms and increase stakeholders engagement.
- Support the implementation of the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals, notably the SDG 6 “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”.

Scope: Current water allocation regimes are largely shaped by historical preferences and usage patterns. They are therefore usually not well equipped to deal with the growing water needs and intensifying competition of the different water use sectors, the impacts of climate changes, especially water scarcity and/or shifts in societal preferences, such as increasing value placed on water related ecological services. It is therefore important to assess current water allocation systems in different regions and sectors and to develop pertinent water allocation models that are able to perform well under both average and extreme conditions and could demonstrate adaptive efficiency in order to adjust to climate conditions.

Actions under this topic should address ways to value water appropriately, taking into account the multiple and diverse values of water to different groups and sectors, and ways to develop appropriate tariffs and prices to ensure access to water which should be available and affordable to all, while also securing adequate pricing policies allowing for systematic renewal of water service infrastructure. Actions should develop and demonstrate in relevant river basins and sectors, innovative tools / instruments on intelligent water allocation schemes relevant for decision-making recommendations (e.g. on permits). The opportunities for developing water allocation schemes based on digital technologies should be explored.

The challenges for water allocation regimes, especially in developing countries, are also aggravated by weak water policies which contributes to structural water scarcity, increasing the risk of shortages for users and the environment. The interaction of policies, regulation and implementation mechanisms should be especially assessed, as well as, the interplay between conventional and non-conventional water resources (e.g. wastewater reuse, desalination, etc.).

Water allocation scheme in transboundary river basins should also be addressed with a view to developing an internationally accepted and standardised mechanism for allocation of water in cross-border river basins, by taking into account the various socio-economic and environmental disparities among these countries and making transboundary waters an area of cooperation rather than conflict.

Climate change impacts on freshwater resources can have significant impacts on agricultural production resulting in destabilising effects on agricultural markets, food security and other non-agricultural uses. Current water allocation regimes in agriculture should be reviewed in this context, with a view to developing the necessary combination of various adaptation measures, such as, water pricing, water use restrictions, improvement of water use efficiency, economic incentives, water reuse, shifting to less water-requiring crops and fallowing, etc., to cope with the reduction of water availability anticipated in climate change scenarios.

International cooperation with non-associated third countries with transboundary rivers is encouraged.

In general, the participation of academia, research organisations, utilities, industry and regulators is strongly advised, as well as civil society engagement whenever necessary, also aiming to broaden the dissemination and exploitation routes and to better assess the innovation potential of developed solutions and strategies.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-CLIMATE-01-02: Understanding the oceanic carbon cycle**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 15.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 3-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

**Expected Outcome:** In support to the European Green Deal and its biodiversity and climate initiatives, successful proposals will contribute to strengthening the ocean - climate nexus by reinforcing the scientific capacity to further our understanding of the natural ocean carbon sinks and their potential role in mitigating and adapting to climate change, help identify lasting solutions to climate change by paying greater attention to nature-based solutions for healthy and resilient seas and ocean. The ocean is a large storage system for the global reservoirs of climate-regulating factors. Successful proposals will also close knowledge gaps in support of decision-making aimed at preserving the integrity of ocean and aquatic

ecosystems through a better understanding of the drivers of change in the ocean and emerging threats.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Furthered ocean exploration and increased understanding, predictability and reduced uncertainty associated with the oceanic carbon cycle and the role, capacity, spatial and temporal changes and trends over time in the ocean and its ecosystems in absorbing and storing CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere.
- Improved understanding of the potential of the ocean and its ecosystems for contributing to the next generation of carbon cycling models, such as those used by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, to set global climate policy.
- Significant contribution to closing the knowledge gaps in the ocean carbon cycle and substantial contributions made to key international assessments, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), World Ocean Assessment (WOA) and other major regional and global initiatives.

Scope: The ocean has a key role in regulating atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations and currently take up about 25% of annual anthropogenic carbon emissions. The oceanic carbon cycle is composed of processes that exchange carbon between various pools within the ocean, as well as between the atmosphere, Earth interior, and the seafloor. The oceanic carbon cycle is a result of many interacting forces across multiple time and space scales. The oceanic carbon cycle is a central element of the global carbon cycle and contains three main processes (or pumps): the solubility pump, the carbonate pump, and the biological pump. In order to better understand, quantify and predict the ocean's potential for carbon uptake, actions should further research the oceanic carbon cycle. The deep sea and its water column may be the largest carbon sink on Earth but its large-scale carbon uptake potential and future is still unknown. Ocean carbon sequestration options include the management of natural ocean processes, i.e. actions to maintain the integrity of natural carbon stores and actions that enhance the long-term (century-scale) removal and sequestration of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere by marine systems, primarily by biological means. Actions should aim at developing innovative approaches to understand the complex processes underlying the oceanic carbon cycle, its efficiency, climate sensitivity, and emerging feedbacks. Actions should further the understanding of the resilience to climate change and temporal and regional variability of the natural carbon inventory in the ocean. Actions should further the understanding of how the biological pump and the deep ocean carbon sink will respond to the rapid and ongoing anthropogenic changes to our planet—including warming, acidification, and deoxygenation of ocean waters. Actions should advance the scientific understanding of marine pelagic and benthic invertebrate and vertebrate carbon, the carbon services they provide (i.e. trophic cascade carbon, biomixing carbon, carbon mineralisation, bony fish carbonate, whale pump, twilight zone carbon, biomass carbon, deadfall carbon and marine vertebrate mediated carbon), and the intricate biological pathways involved in carbon cycling

and the associated implications for climate regulation. Actions should assess and model the marine vertebrate carbon services and should link them to population dynamics, with a view to gathering enough evidence to enable their inclusion in the models of carbon cycling. Actions should assess and model the as yet poorly quantified carbonate-forming invertebrate species in the deep sea, such as reef-building scleractinians, as well as their resilience to cumulative impacts of global changes. Actions should contribute to ocean observations and the Digital twin of the oceans by providing an ocean carbon-modelling environment. Actions should improve the sampling of regions and metrics for marine organisms and should gather evidence and data to estimate and quantify the global CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration potential of protecting and restoring populations of invertebrates and vertebrates to previous levels. Actions should explore the efficiency and global magnitude of the biological pump and how this will be affected by climate change. Actions should deliver quantification and predictability of the ocean carbon sink and in so doing, should contribute to resolving the uncertainty in the magnitude and sign of projections of future global ocean primary production. The regional variability in the amplification or reduction of the efficiency of the ocean carbon sink is an important element that actions should take into consideration, as the climate effects on the carbon sink (both on the physical and biological drivers) will have a strong regional correlation. The importance of polar regions in the carbon cycle needs to be kept in mind. Actions should further the regional predictive skill beyond five years.

Actions should further investigate tipping points and irreversibility in the ocean carbon cycle (both for the upper ocean and the intermediary & deep ocean), the biogeochemical feedbacks, the changes that will occur in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, both globally and regionally, and how the multiple stressors will affect the primary production (monitoring strategies to have access to all the compartments - upper, intermediary and deep ocean). Among the stressors, the effects of trawling, drilling, overfishing, deep-sea mining and dredging on carbon cycling and sediment dynamics should be included and investigated using marine monitoring techniques. Actions should look into the policy implications of the findings of this research.

For this action, the multifaceted nature of the ocean carbon cycle necessitates collaboration across disciplines, taking an ecosystem approach. At a minimum, actions should link science on the changing ocean physics and chemistry, and more generally on climate, with the study of the marine biota and their evolution. International cooperation is strongly encouraged. Actions under this topic should plan on a close collaboration among each other and should build upon and link with Horizon 2020 projects and other European and international ocean observing initiatives, including the Integrated Ocean Carbon Research, IOC-R. All in-situ data collected through actions funded from this call should follow INSPIRE principles and be available through open access repositories supported by the European Commission (Copernicus, GEOSS, and EMODnet). Where relevant, creating links to and using the information and data of the European Earth observation programme Copernicus, the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) is expected.

This topic links with research conducted under Cluster 5 ('Climate, Energy and Mobility') Destination 'Climate sciences and responses'; Cluster 6 ('Food, Bioeconomy, Natural

Resources, Agriculture and Environment’) Horizon Europe Mission Ocean, seas and waters, Destination ‘Biodiversity and ecosystem services’, Destination ‘Clean environment and zero pollution’, Destination ‘Land, ocean and water for climate action’, Destination ‘Resilient, inclusive, healthy and green rural, coastal and urban communities’ and Destination ‘Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the European Green Deal’; Horizon Europe Mission Ocean, seas and waters.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-CLIMATE-01-03: Demonstration network on climate-smart farming – boosting the role of advisory services**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 20.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 20.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

Expected Outcome: The conservation and enhancement of Earth’s natural terrestrial carbon sinks such as soils and plants, forests, farmed lands and wetlands is crucial. The European Green Deal gives research and innovation (R&I) a significant role to play in supporting the design and implementation of policies that will ensure the achievement of the EU’s climate objectives. Project implementation is expected to contribute to mitigation and adaptation to climate change and help achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- Expand the knowledge base of climate related practices, resulting in increased application of climate neutral farm approaches, assessing and evaluating different methods with all relevant actors involved in Member States and Associated Countries;
- Speed up involvement and adoption by farmers of innovative / smart farming practices that mitigate emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and that foster the adaptation of the sector to climate change. In the long term, this will support a more substantial contribution of the farming sector to mitigation of GHG emissions and to carbon storage;
- Increased involvement of Member States’ and Associated Countries agricultural knowledge and innovation system (AKIS) in climate-related farming issues, including

through linking to the European innovation partnership "Agricultural productivity and sustainability" (EIP-AGRI) national / regional / local projects and the advisors, with a view to wider dissemination and interaction within the Member States.

Scope: A wide adoption of practices contributing to mitigation of climate change and carbon storage by farmers is a priority to ensure that the EU reaches GHG mitigation objectives by 2030 and climate neutrality by 2050. Farming is also vulnerable to impacts of climate change; hence adaptation is of utmost importance. Mainstreaming the use of climate-smart practices has been recognised as a priority at the global level, including at the G-20. In particular, the engagement of farmers in this effort needs to be increased. Therefore, a strong involvement of Member States' AKIS is needed, as well as the development of targeted advice to farmers on climate issues.

The aim is to establish a three level network in a phased manner over Cluster 6 work programmes 2021/2022 and 2023/2024. The first level is a network which will engage front-runner farmers introducing on-farm trials and demonstration of innovations, using existing knowledge. The second level is a network to connect all advisors on the subject in the Member States, building on achievements of Horizon 2020 projects and EIP-AGRI operational groups and the development of Member States' AKIS, to ensure the provision of targeted advice. The third level of the network will engage and strengthen the capacity of experimental research stations on climate issues.

The present topic deals with the advisory level. Learning from experiences on "real" farms led by sustainability-oriented farmers eager to pilot existing or new practice-ready techniques, this level will aim at enhancing up advisors' competences by sharing widely climate neutral ready-for-practice solutions across the EU. This requires interaction between collaborative innovation ecosystems and will involve the main AKIS actors and AKIS coordination bodies in each Member State.

Proposals should:

- Use advisors to spread solutions from practice oriented on-farm testing and demonstration in project work programme HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-04 "Demonstration network on climate-smart farming – linking pilot farms" and help develop new solutions through taking part in practice-oriented innovation projects such as EIP Operational Groups;
- Collect and provide tool-kits for GHG balances at farm level, performance monitoring, decision tools, climate services, etc. for possible use by a wide range of farms;
- Support the implementation of the EU carbon farming manual as foreseen in the farm to fork strategy and the implementation of the third party certification of carbon removals, as foreseen in the circular economy action plan;



- Foster knowledge exchange within Member States and regions and establish links with the EIP-AGRI and AKIS networks and AKIS coordination bodies of Member States and Associated Countries;
- Link advisors in an EU climate-smart farming network including advisors in all Member States to stimulate effective cross-fertilisation among Member State advisors. Include a sufficient number of various types of advisor per country, taking into account the size of the Member State and ensuring a broad EU coverage;
- Proposals should include a task to collaborate with other projects involved in the network HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-04 “Demonstration network on climate-smart farming – linking pilot farms” and a topic to be published in Cluster 6 work programme 2023/2024);
- The project should operate for at least seven years and build on climate-related projects from various funding sources. The project must implement the multi-actor approach and may involve social innovation.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-CLIMATE-01-04: Fostering the resilience of agricultural production: from observation of changes to the development of resilience strategies**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 15.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:  Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 200 000 as it is one of the main objectives of the action to provide

	financial support to third parties/in order to cover the expenses related to developing resilience strategies.
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Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal climate ambition, project implementation is expected to contribute to mitigation and adaptation to climate change and help achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- Establishment of a comprehensive capacity to observe the short-term to long-term drivers of change and their impacts on agriculture in key areas;
- Better informed policies and strategies regarding mitigation and adaptation to climate change;
- Better resilience of European food security to shocks such as those arising from various drivers of change, including climate change, including through the development of strategies and policies.

Scope: Resilience of the farming sector to exogenous shocks needs to be boosted. Impacts of climate change in the short- to medium-term are gaining more importance and there is an urgent need to develop resilience strategies. It is also necessary to set up a capacity to observe the short-term to long-term impacts of climate change and reinforce strategies to deal with those impacts.

- An observatory of the impacts of drivers of change on food security should be set up. The observatory should cover at least the following issues related to the impact of climate change: 1) biodiversity and genetic resources, with a focus on agro-biodiversity and invasive species and genetic resources under pressure as a consequence of climate change and 2) sustainable productivity (including impact on photosynthesis), animal and plant diseases and nutritional composition
- The observatory should make use of various types of data, at various geographical scales and should include, as appropriate, citizen observations. It should cover the main biogeographical regions of Europe;
- The observatory should contribute to establish / reinforce strategies to deal with those impacts.
- The impact of shocks should be modelled as relevant for use in policy-relevant areas in order to improve resilience of the agro-food sector.
- Project should contribute to the development of a contingency plan for ensuring food supply and food security that is to be put in place in times of crisis as foreseen in the farm to fork strategy.

- Case study strategies should be developed in a participatory manner to foster the resilience in the short- to long term at various geographic scales. These resilience strategies should also take into account the mitigation and adaptation objectives of the EU. Preparation of the strategies may be supported through grants to third parties. In this case, the proposal must define the process of selecting entities for which financial support will be granted, typically in the order of 60.000 – 200.000 EUR per party. It is expected that up to 30% of requested EU contribution will be devoted to grants to third parties.
- Proposals should ensure that the approach proposed is compatible with and improves the tools used at the European Commission.
- The possible participation of the JRC in the project will ensure that the approach proposed will be compatible with and improve the tools used at the European Commission

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-CLIMATE-01-05: Forestry - European observatory of climate change impacts and demonstration network of climate smart restoration pilots**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 15.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).</p> <p>The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.</p>
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants.</p>

	<p>The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 150 000 as it is one of the main objectives of the action to provide financial support to third parties.</p> <p>In this case, consortia must define the selection process of organisations, for which financial support will be granted. It is expected that up to 40% of the project budget will be devoted to grants to third parties.</p>
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Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal objectives and the EU forest strategy, successful proposals will increase the knowledge on climate change impacts and enhance the practical knowledge on adaptive management practices contributing to efficient monitoring, assessment and projections related to climate change impacts, mitigation and adaptation potential in order to bring out solutions for tackling emerging threats and support decision-making in climate change mitigation and adaptation policies at European and global levels. Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Better knowledge on impacts and effects of drivers and pressures on Europe’s forests in the context of climate change.
- Combination of modern monitoring tools (remote sensing) and traditional approaches (demo sites) in European forests.
- Enhanced practical knowledge on restoration, afforestation, reforestation and forest protection addressing forest composition and forest management practices that support mitigation, adaptation, optimal use of genetic diversity within and among tree species, and (biodiversity), maximising the synergies and minimising trade-offs.
- Better knowledge on best practices for effective adaptation and mitigation strategies, including synergies with biodiversity management goals and soil carbon impacts.
- Increased capacity and exchange of scientific knowledge, proven experience and know-how, tools and practices.
- Engagement of the society in forest restoration through information, participation and merging of societal engagement with scientific evidence and professional expertise.

Scope: A holistic approach is needed to ensure that climate, biodiversity and bioeconomy goals can be integrated at different scales in practice and with the engagement of local communities, forest owners and industries. Intensive monitoring of impacts and sharing of experiences in the context of climate change is an important decision support at the science-practice interface to implement adapted forest management practices successfully.

Proposals will:

- Establish a European network to gather information on current developments in demo and long-term observation sites;

- Reinitiate EU participation in the International Co-operative Programme on the Assessment and Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Forests (ICP Forests) for long-term observations of forest ecosystems;
- Develop an evidence-based overview on current and planned forest restoration activities across Europe and their socio-economic and environmental impacts;
- Quantify possible synergies and trade-offs between contrasting forest management objectives at different spatial, temporal scales in different social environmental contexts in Europe;
- Analyse typical restoration cases to systematise knowledge on implementation successes and failures in specific regional settings, and distil best practices cases and business models for upscaling;
- Engage with key stakeholders and citizens to develop regionalised restoration trajectories through assessment of regional restoration pathways;
- Consider forward-looking forest conversion through adaptive forest management to mitigate/prevent future adverse effects;
- Improve communication and network/capacity building and exchange of experience, engagement with key stakeholders including national and regional policymakers and enable knowledge exchange beyond the forest community;
- Pilot climate-smart forestry measures and support forest restoration of damaged areas and degraded ecosystems in view of the diverse forest conditions, value chains and societal needs found across Europe.

Proposals may involve financial support to third parties, particularly for setting up of the observatory and for supporting the implementation and scaling-up of climate-smart restoration pilots. All European climate/biogeographical regions should be covered.

In order to achieve the expected outcomes, international cooperation is strongly encouraged.

The involvement of citizens and civil society in co-creating solutions (e.g. as part of user-led innovation or citizen science), alongside other actors, is encouraged as part of the project's methodology / approach.

Proposals should include a task to collaborate with other projects financed under the topics HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-09: Enhancing science-based knowledge on EU forests', including old-growth forests, capacities to mitigate climate change and associated risks and HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01-10: EU-China international cooperation on increasing the resilience of forests.

Projects should consider to collaborate with the EU Observatory on Deforestation and Forest Degradation, managed by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

## **Destination – Resilient, inclusive, healthy and green rural, coastal and urban communities**

Places and people matter to the achievement of a more sustainable Europe. The Sustainable Development Goals and the ecological and digital transitions brought forward by the European Green Deal<sup>304</sup> and digital strategy<sup>305</sup>, alongside the recent pandemic, bring challenges and opportunities that differ for different places and people. Rural (including mountains and sparsely populated areas) and coastal areas, play a key role in managing, protecting and using natural resources. The provision of both private and public goods from these areas depends on the resilience and attractiveness of rural and coastal communities and the capacity of people who live and work there to access a sufficient level of well-being. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted deficiencies in digital infrastructures and economic opportunities that hamper resilience. Urban communities generally offer better access to many services but are also more vulnerable to supply-chain disruptions, as shown during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, they have a key role to play in fostering sustainable production and consumption as major demand drivers. In all communities, social and behavioural drivers play an important role in enabling or slowing down transitions. Knowledge and innovative solutions need to be developed to enhance every community's resilience and capacity to contribute to and benefit from the upcoming transitions in an economy that works for all territories and ensures a fair and just transition leaving no one behind.

Under this destination, transdisciplinary R&I with a strong social and behavioural sciences dimension, and attention to gender aspects, will foster a sustainable, balanced and inclusive development of rural<sup>306</sup>, coastal and urban areas in three different ways. Firstly, it will aim to increase our understanding of the differential impacts of climate, environmental, socio-economic and demographic changes on rural, coastal and urban areas in order to identify ways to turn these changes into equal opportunities for people wherever they live, enhancing territorial cohesion and enabling a just transition. Secondly, it will explore innovative ways to tailor policy responses to the place-based challenges identified at various levels of governance. Thirdly, it will support bottom-up community-led innovation to empower communities to develop, test and upscale solutions that answer global challenges in locally adapted ways. Achieving policy goals require providing people with more equitable access to the knowledge and skills required to make informed choices and be actively engaged in the sustainable and circular management of natural resources, from production or service provision to consumption. Rural, coastal and urban communities, in particular women, youth, the most vulnerable groups like indigenous people and those hit the hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic, need to see their labour conditions, quality of life and long-term socio-economic prospects improved in the context of major transitions and rising threats to climate, resources

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<sup>304</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en)

<sup>305</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/shaping-europe-digital-future\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/shaping-europe-digital-future_en)

<sup>306</sup> R&I will support the implementation of an [EU-level long-term vision for rural areas](#) to be published in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2021.

and health. Their capacity to drive community-led innovations must be enhanced and their resilience increased across the diversity of European territories including remote places such as mountains and sparsely populated areas. Mobilising the forces of digital transformation, start-up ecosystems, nature-based solutions, as well as social and policy innovation will facilitate necessary changes and support smart, environment and climate friendly and resilient lifestyles.

Activities under this destination are complementary to Cluster 2 activities with attention to spatial differences and specifics in relation with democracy (Destination ‘Innovative research on democracy and governance’), socio-economic transformations (Destination ‘Innovative research on social and economic transformation’) and cultural heritage (Destination ‘Innovative research on the European cultural heritage and the cultural and creative industries’). They are also complementary to Cluster 5’s Destination ‘Cross-sectoral solutions for the climate transition’ on cities and communities that should explore place-based approaches to climate, energy and mobility specifically for all places.

To maximise the intended impacts and to ensure uptake by the communities, actions in the cluster should aim for high standards of transparency and openness for the solutions developed, going beyond ex-post documentation of results and extending to aspects such as assumptions, processes, models and data during the life of projects.

### **Expected impacts**

Proposals for topics under this destination should set out a credible pathway to contributing to resilient, inclusive, healthy and green rural, coastal and urban communities and more specifically one or several of the following expected impacts:

- Rural, coastal and urban areas are developed in a sustainable, balanced and inclusive manner thanks to a better understanding of the environmental, socio-economic, behavioural, cultural and demographic drivers of change as well as deployment of digital, nature-based, social and community-led innovations.
- Rural, coastal and urban communities are empowered to act for change, better prepared to achieve climate neutrality, adapt to climate change, and turn digital and ecological transitions into increased resilience to various types of shocks, good health and positive long-term prospects, including jobs, for all including women, young people and vulnerable groups.
- Rural communities are equipped with innovative and smarter solutions that increase access to services, opportunities and adequate innovation ecosystems, including for women, youth and the most vulnerable groups, improve attractiveness and reduce the feeling of being left behind, even in the most remote locations like mountains.
- The sustainable development of coastal areas including coastal protection and resilience reaps the benefits of social, digital and community-led innovations, to deliver nature-based and scientifically validated solutions to existing coastal socio-economic and



environmental threats. In this way, applications of new social, economic and governance frameworks are enabled.

- Tourism, recreational and leisure activity development in natural and coastal areas respects long-term environmental carrying capacity, and social goals.
- Urban and peri-urban communities – including the most vulnerable individuals and families – can access, afford and choose healthier, nutritious and environmental-friendly food.

When considering their impact, proposals also need to assess their compliance with the “Do No Significant Harm” principle<sup>307</sup> according to which the research and innovation activities of the project should not be supporting or carrying out activities that make a significant harm to any of the six environmental objectives of the EU Taxonomy Regulation.

Topics under this destination will have impacts in the following impact areas of the Horizon Europe strategic plan for 2021-2024<sup>308</sup>: “Climate change mitigation and adaptation”; “Enhancing ecosystems and biodiversity on land and in water”; “Sustainable food systems from farm to fork”; “Good health and high-quality accessible healthcare”; “A resilient EU prepared for emerging threats”; “A competitive and secure data-economy”; and “Inclusive growth and new job opportunities”.

The following call(s) in this work programme contribute to this destination:

Call	Budgets (EUR million)		Deadline(s)
	2021	2022	
HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01	53.00		06 Oct 2021
HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01		42.00	15 Feb 2022
HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-02-two-stage		33.00	15 Feb 2022 (First Stage) 06 Sep 2022 (Second Stage)
Overall indicative budget	53.00	75.00	

<sup>307</sup> as per Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 2020/852 on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment (EU Taxonomy Regulation)

<sup>308</sup> [Link to the strategic plan](#)

**Call - Resilient, inclusive, healthy and green rural, coastal and urban communities**

***HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>309</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>310</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2021		
Opening: 22 Jun 2021 Deadline(s): 06 Oct 2021				
HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-01	RIA	15.00	7.00 to 7.50	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-02	CSA	5.00	Around 5.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-03	RIA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-04	RIA	6.00	Around 6.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-05	IA	12.00	Around 12.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-06	CSA	5.00	Around 5.00	1
Overall indicative budget		53.00		

**General conditions relating to this call**

<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General

<sup>309</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>310</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

	Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-01: Grasping rural diversity and strengthening evidence for tailored policies enhancing the contribution of rural communities to ecological, digital and social transitions**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 7.00 and 7.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:  Proposals focusing on one type of activity or sector (e.g. primary production) are out of scope.</p> <p>The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p>

	The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
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Expected Outcome: The successful proposal will contribute to fostering a sustainable, balanced and inclusive development of rural areas, supporting the implementation of the European Green Deal<sup>311</sup>, in particular its fair and just transition component, the European digital strategy<sup>312</sup>, the European pillar of social rights<sup>313</sup> and the EU long-term vision for rural areas<sup>314</sup>. It will do so by improving the understanding of the environmental, socio-economic, behavioural, cultural and demographic drivers of change in rural areas. Stronger evidence on which to build their strategies and initiatives will empower rural people to act for change and get prepared to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, adapt to climate change, and turn digital and ecological transitions into increased resilience, good health and positive long-term prospects, including jobs, for all including women, young people and vulnerable groups.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- more evidence-based, place-based, integrated and tailored policies, strategies and governance frameworks at local, regional, national and EU levels to drive the sustainable transition of rural areas and communities, building on the specific outcomes below;
- a refined understanding by policy-makers and rural actors of the diversity of rural situations, and of the challenges and opportunities associated with megatrends, potential major shocks and upcoming transitions, in particular climate, environmental and social challenges, to tailor policy interventions to local realities;
- a refined understanding by policy-makers and rural actors of functional characteristics of territories, functional relations between rural places and other rural and/or urban places within a territorial continuum and the importance of these relations for sustainable development, to design synergistic approaches favouring a networked and interlinked development; and
- a refined assessment by policy-makers of the impact of all current and upcoming policies on rural communities (rural proofing<sup>315</sup>), including sectoral or thematic policies (such as climate, energy, mobility, digitalisation, health and social inclusion), or policy frameworks designed to accompany sustainability transitions in general, to tailor interventions to maximise possibilities for rural communities to contribute to and benefit from these transitions.

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<sup>311</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en)

<sup>312</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/shaping-europe-digital-future\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/shaping-europe-digital-future_en)

<sup>313</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en)

<sup>314</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas_en)

<sup>315</sup> See Point 1 ‘Promoting rural prosperity’ of the [Cork 2.0 Declaration \(2016\)](#)

Scope: The EU aims to lead just digital, economic and ecological transitions that will leave no one behind. Close to one third of EU citizens live in rural areas, which represent 83% of the EU territory and supply the whole of society with essential goods and services. These broad figures hide a variety of situations, challenges and opportunities regarding the aforementioned transitions that the current evidence base insufficiently captures.

The design of positive governance frameworks and policy interventions for rural communities is hampered by i) the lack of conceptual frameworks that properly grasp the role of rural areas and communities in sustainable development and sustainability transitions; ii) a lack of data on several aspects at the right geographic scale, in particular on climate and environment performance and on social challenges, quality of life and well-being. The lack of data at the right geographical scale (local in many cases) is hampered by the technical and economic difficulties of finer data collection.

Proposals should explore innovative and out-of-the box ways to describe and characterise rural areas or various forms or degrees of rurality in multi-dimensional ways, screening a wide range of possible (including new) data sources going beyond conventional indicators such as population density and settlement configuration. They should analyse national and other definitions and approaches and engage with stakeholders to understand their perspectives on rurality. Proposals should define and describe functional linkages between various localities and territories and explore and develop ways to apply functional geography approaches to rural areas (e.g. developing the concept of functional rural area), learning from past work<sup>316</sup> and failures on such approaches. Trade-offs in selected approaches should be analysed in regional and national contexts highlighting geographical differences.

Proposals should screen and benchmark the performance and cost efficiency (infrastructure needs, ease and frequency of updates etc.) of data collection methods and technologies including new ones (e.g. digital technologies, geolocation and geospatial techniques, crowd sourcing, citizen science) that could be used to collect the necessary rural data at the local level across a majority of EU Member States and Associated Countries in Europe, at affordable costs and select viable options for testing these options. They should strengthen rural evidence and rural data collection, documentation and access, in particular in the environmental, climate and social fields by generating data and designing, testing and implementing methods to:

- calculate climate and environmental indicators for rural communities, including rural dwellers and secondary-homers;
- upgrade socio-economic (including culture) assessment, analysis, monitoring and evaluation tools (stats, indicators, including the measurement of well-being, quality of life and attractiveness including gender and age differences);

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<sup>316</sup> Such as ROBUST (<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/727988>) and COASTAL (<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/773782>) under Horizon 2020 and projects funded under the ESPON programme <https://www.espon.eu>.

- assess resilience to major threats, with particular emphasis on resilience and vulnerability factors under the COVID-19 pandemic.

This should result in enriched, upgraded and regularly updated platforms, data and indicators mapping, describing and monitoring economic (including sectors, jobs and income), social (including quality of life and well-being) and environmental (including climate mitigation and adaptation and energy) characteristics of rural areas and communities at sub-regional, local or functional levels, contributing to relevant actions of the long-term vision for rural areas in this domain. The analysis carried out should help to grasp the diversity and specificity of rural places in the EU and Associated Countries, their inter-relations, their preparedness for transitions, major shocks and megatrends, their capacity to take advantage of these trends in adaptive and resilient ways.

Proposals should benchmark climate and environmental policies and existing frameworks to describe and measure well-being, quality of life and attractiveness, assess their relevance for rural areas and communities and make recommendations for adapting these frameworks. They should in particular propose innovative schemes to reach climate neutrality by 2050 while taking advantage of the ecological transition and preserving ecosystems (nature-based solutions), landscapes etc. Finally, they should support rural proofing<sup>317</sup> by developing tools completing those already existing on territorial impacts (e.g. under the EU Better Regulation<sup>318</sup>), to assess the impact of EU policies and programmes on rural areas and communities.

Proposals must implement the multi-actor approach, bringing together from the start multiple types of scientific expertise in both hard sciences (e.g. climate, energy, and environment) and social sciences and humanities (e.g. geography, sociology, behavioural sciences, policy, foresight) together with a variety of rural community representatives. This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines. Projects outputs should be scalable at least to the EU as a whole, hence they should be developed using data from a representative diversity of rural contexts across the EU. Proposals should strengthen evidence on rural areas and communities in a multi-dimensional way (proposals focused on one particular sector -e.g. primary production- or dimension of sustainability would not be considered as addressing the challenge appropriately). Proposals should engage with both national authorities and rural communities on their understanding of rurality and on project developments. Proposals should foresee a task to work jointly with other projects funded under this topic and with the European Commission, its common agricultural policy<sup>319</sup> networks<sup>320</sup> and other relevant

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<sup>317</sup> Rural proofing means to ‘systematically review other macro and sectoral policies through a rural lens, considering potential and actual impacts and implications on rural jobs and growth and development prospects, social well-being, and the environmental quality of rural areas and communities’, [Cork 2.0 Declaration, A better life in rural areas](#).

<sup>318</sup> Better regulation tool #33 on territorial impacts: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/better-regulation-toolbox-33\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/better-regulation-toolbox-33_en)

<sup>319</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy_en)

<sup>320</sup> Currently ENRD and EIP-AGRI ([https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development\\_en#enrd](https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development_en#enrd)) to be replaced by the networks to be funded under the future CAP: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/future-cap\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/future-cap_en)

networks (e.g.: future Farm Sustainability Data Network (FSDN)<sup>321</sup>) and projects (including research projects<sup>322</sup>) contributing to building rural evidence.

The possible participation of the JRC in the project will consist of connecting project activities to on-going work on integrated territorial strategies and or various domains mentioned in the topic to ensure complementarities and synergies, in particular advising on the data collection methods to be tested and on filling-in data gaps at high spatial granularity (NUTS3, LAU or grid levels). The contribution is framed on the context of the Knowledge Centre for Territorial Policies.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-02: Expertise and training centre on rural innovation**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in all member states of the African Union are exceptionally eligible for Union funding.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply: Proposals focusing on one type of activity or sector (e.g. primary production) are out of scope.</p> <p>Legal entities established in non-associated third countries may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and support action.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p>

Expected Outcome: The successful proposal will contribute to fostering a sustainable, balanced and inclusive development of rural areas, supporting the implementation of the European Green Deal<sup>323</sup>, in particular its fair and just transition component, the European

<sup>321</sup> Commission Communication ‘A farm to fork strategy’ (in particular section 3.2) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0381>

<sup>322</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/research-area/agriculture-and-forestry/rural-and-farming-dynamics-and-policies\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/research-area/agriculture-and-forestry/rural-and-farming-dynamics-and-policies_en); projects funded under HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-13 "Modelling land use and land management in the context of climate change"

<sup>323</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en)

digital strategy<sup>324</sup>, the European pillar of social rights<sup>325</sup> and the EU long-term vision for rural areas<sup>326</sup>. It will do so by accelerating the deployment of digital, nature-based, social and community-led innovations in rural areas through capacity building and enhanced knowledge exchange, leading to rural communities that will be better equipped with innovative and smarter solutions that increase access to services, opportunities and adequate innovation ecosystems. Enhanced capacities and better knowledge flows and innovation support will empower rural people to act for change and get prepared to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, adapt to climate change, and turn digital and ecological transitions into increased resilience, good health and positive long-term prospects, including jobs, for all including women, young people and vulnerable groups.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- enhanced capacity of rural communities and rural people to innovate for change thanks to the specific outcomes below;
- improved skills and knowledge of rural citizens, entrepreneurs, organisations, local action groups<sup>327</sup> and community leaders of existing tools to develop and implement rural innovation (including social innovation) strategies and innovative actions to implement these strategies in rural communities, in all domains of relevance to rural life and economy;
- shortening of the innovation cycle in rural communities and businesses leading to quicker results and transitions in rural communities, strengthened human capital, including more lively networks and improved attractiveness of rural communities, in particular for women and young people;
- enhanced valorisation by rural communities of the results of rural innovation projects funded under various programmes; and
- enhanced dialogue and cooperation on rural innovation worldwide, with sharing of learning resources.

Scope: Proposals should provide capacity building on rural innovation towards rural communities and actors in the EU and beyond, seeking to valorise the outcomes of projects funded under various programmes. The latter may include Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, the common agricultural policy (LEADER, EIP-AGRI operational groups), regional policy (community-led local development, INTERREG, smart specialisation strategies), preparatory actions such as the Smart rural project<sup>328</sup> or SMARTA<sup>329</sup> and other EU or non-EU relevant

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<sup>324</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/shaping-europe-digital-future\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/shaping-europe-digital-future_en)

<sup>325</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en)

<sup>326</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas_en)

<sup>327</sup> [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld/lag-database\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld/lag-database_en)

<sup>328</sup> <https://www.smartrural21.eu/>

<sup>329</sup> <https://ruralsharedmobility.eu/>



actions. Projects from these programmes should be considered as relevant if they produced practical tools to develop and/or implement strategies and roadmaps in various domains (energy, digital, climate adaptation and mitigation, mobility, environment, social, education and care, food etc.), innovation approaches such as living labs, activities related to smart villages; training packages, videos etc. innovation activities in general and innovative solutions. Proposals should pay special attention to social innovation<sup>330</sup>, which has been demonstrated to have a high potential to meet rural challenges. Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the interface between social and technical solutions and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake. Capacity building should target in particular communities developing smart village strategies<sup>331</sup> as foreseen under the common agricultural policy for 2021-2027<sup>332</sup> or similar initiatives, paying attention to the needs of various groups within these communities (e.g. women, youth etc.). They should map and promote funding opportunities and prepare the ground for rural communities to take part in innovation actions funded under Horizon Europe or other innovation support actions that can be used to support ecological, digital or social transitions in rural areas (whether or not they are targeted to these areas).

Proposals should organise the capitalisation and exchange of knowledge between projects funded under Horizon Europe working on innovation for rural communities. They should feed in and translate results from the research and innovation actions as these results become available. They should allow the portfolio of projects to reflect on rural innovation processes, lessons learnt and ways to improve innovation processes and innovation systems for rural communities in a multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral way. They should also ensure a lively interface between actions supporting rural community-led innovation funded under Horizon Europe (e.g. HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-01 and HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-02-01-two-stage in the work programme 2021-2022) and common agricultural policy networks<sup>333</sup>. The project duration should be adapted to ensure such capitalisation is possible (a duration of at least five years is recommended). They may engage in collaboration with projects funded under other relevant calls<sup>334</sup>.

Proposals should explore with rural communities and benchmark various options and business models to create viable, networked and long-term rural innovation expertise and training mechanisms, centre(s) or hub(s) in Europe, able to capitalise on new knowledge and tools created and process them into training packages and sessions for rural communities in Europe

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<sup>330</sup> Social innovation is defined for this topic as “*the reconfiguring of social practices, in response to societal challenges, which seeks to enhance outcomes on societal well-being and necessarily includes the engagement of civil society actors*”. (SIMRA)

<sup>331</sup> [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/smart-and-competitive-rural-areas/smart-villages\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/smart-and-competitive-rural-areas/smart-villages_en)

<sup>332</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/future-cap\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/future-cap_en)

<sup>333</sup> Currently ENRD and EIP-AGRI ([https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development\\_en#enrd](https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development_en#enrd)) to be replaced by the networks to be funded under the future CAP: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/future-cap\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/future-cap_en)

<sup>334</sup> e.g. HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-26 ‘Deepening the functioning of innovation support’, HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-08 ‘Mainstreaming inclusive small-scale bio-based solutions in European rural areas’; HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-09 ‘Revitalisation of European local communities with innovative bio-based business models and social innovation’ etc.

and beyond. They should engage with international partners, including relevant international organisations (e.g. FAO, OECD) and partners in priority regions of the world for EU international cooperation on rural development (e.g. Africa) or with outstanding expertise in rural development, on resources to support the sustainable development of rural communities. Proposals may include partners from these countries in capacity building activities.

Proposals must implement the multi-actor approach, bringing together the required competencies in communication, dissemination, exploitation and training alongside genuine knowledge of rural communities' context. Training contents and packages should be provided in multiple languages and multimedia formats allowing their wide dissemination in the EU and beyond. They should be developed, tested and validated taking into account the specific needs of various types of rural actors (including women, young people, entrepreneurs, community-leaders, elderly etc.) in various types of rural areas (e.g. close to cities, remote etc.) and cover a wide variety of important aspects of rural life that rural communities may want to innovate on (e.g. energy, mobility, education, services, health, climate, environment etc.). Proposals focusing on one type of activity or sector (e.g. primary production) would not be considered as addressing the challenge appropriately. Synergies may be developed with other actions targeting community-based innovations in specific domains, innovation support or education and training.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-03: Smart XG, last-mile and edge solutions for remote farming, forestry and rural areas**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:  Proposals focusing on one type of activity or sector (e.g. primary production) are out of scope.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:  The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p>
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: In line with the ambitions of the Green Deal, the Digital Age and an Economy that works for people, leaving no one behind, the farm to fork strategy and the European strategy for data in particular, successful proposals will strengthen the capacities of farmers, foresters and rural community through connectivity gains. They will therefore contribute to i) fostering a sustainable, balanced and inclusive development of rural areas thanks to the deployment of digital, nature-based, social and community-led innovations; ii) empowering people to act for change and get prepared to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, adapt to climate change, and turn digital and ecological transitions into increased resilience; and iii) equipping rural communities with innovative and smarter solutions that increase access to services, opportunities and adequate innovation ecosystems.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Reduce (the risk of) digital divides between different types of farms, sectors and regions.
- Contribute to increase the competitiveness and social and environmental sustainability of the agricultural and forestry sectors and rural areas through innovative 5G, last-mile and edge solutions.
- Facilitate decision-making, in particular for municipalities, farmers, foresters and their associations, in the selection of internet connectivity solutions under consideration of technical, economic and environmental aspects.
- Increase energy efficiency through analysing and developing connectivity options and contributing to climate mitigation.

Scope: Missing access to fast broadband still presents a development challenge to many rural and remote areas. Frequently, the investments costs appear to be too high in comparison to the final number of end users in certain regions. Sometimes only investing in the “last-mile” presents a bottleneck to the connectivity. End-user needs vary not only between communities, but also between individual businesses and households, making it more challenging to find a common solution.

5G connectivity is a prerequisite for the running of several real-time applications, including of applications in the agricultural and forestry sectors, and has thus theoretically the potential to increase the economic and environmental performance of the sectors.

Overall, a range of possibilities to establish different types of broadband access at e.g. community-, farm- or field level are available going along with different investment and running costs.

Edge technologies allow under certain conditions the processing and analysis of data in remote systems, independently from larger data centres, which are frequently far away from rural communities. Edge technologies have the potential to reduce energy consumption.<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> See e.g. “A European Strategy for Data” published by the European Commission in Q1 2020 (<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/policies/building-european-data-economy>).

Communities and businesses in rural areas considering upgrading their internet connectivity are confronted with decision-making challenges regarding the choice of technologies in which they should invest in to achieve best outcomes at system level under consideration of technical, economic, environmental and social aspects and the location-specific requirements and systemic resilience.

Proposals should cover all of the following aspects:

- Assessing the socio-economic and environmental effects of innovative and existing 5G/4G/3G provision options (at regional-, community-, and farm-level) and making them feasible for non-scientists).
- Developing innovative cost-effective and environmentally friendly solutions to 5G-and last-mile provision in remote areas tailored to the needs of communities, farms and forestry.
- Assessing the socio-economic and environmental effects of innovative and existing edge technology options (at regional-, community-, and farm-level) and making them feasible for non-scientists.
- Developing innovative cost-effective and environmental friendly edge solutions tailored to the needs of communities, farms and forestry, including an energy balance at system level.
- Developing innovative business models (including at systemic level and cross-sectoral approaches).

Proposals are expected to undertake a comprehensive stocktaking exercise of solutions towards 5G, last-mile and edge solutions existing in the EU and globally (including satellite-based solutions<sup>336</sup> and other solutions, such as drones-assisted broadband provision), and of related studies and assessments. This review may also cover connectivity solutions developed in other domains, such as expedition, emergency or military services.

The aspects of regional and/or systemic resilience and energy efficiency should be elaborated, including the contribution to climate mitigation. Different regional contexts in the EU and Associated Countries as it regards environmental framing conditions, as well as the structure of the society and economy are to be reflected. To tailor solutions to practitioners' and citizens' needs, proposals must implement the multi-actor approach.

Project results are to be made feasible to rural communities, farmers and foresters associations, and policy-makers. A decision-making support tool, which includes assistance in business model development, is to be provided. – Practitioner-orientation has to form a key element of the project(s).

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<sup>336</sup> See e.g. OECD (2017) "THE EVOLVING ROLE OF SATELLITE NETWORKS IN RURAL AND REMOTE BROADBAND ACCESS", for reflections on the potential of satellite-based broadband provision for rural areas.

Proposals are not expected to develop innovative technology solutions for the general use of 5G, but should reflect and build – as far as possible – on the (interim) results of relevant projects funded under Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe Cluster 4, the Digital Europe Programme, the Connecting Europe Facility and other research and innovation projects, to develop innovative solutions tailored to the needs of remote farming, forestry and rural communities.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-04: Socio-economic empowerment of the users of the sea**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:  Proposals focusing on one type of activity or sector (e.g. primary production) are out of scope.</p> <p>The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:  The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p>

**Expected Outcome:** The successful proposal will contribute to fostering a sustainable, balanced and inclusive coastal development, supporting the implementation of the European Green Deal, incorporating a better understanding of the environmental, socio-economic, behavioural, cultural and demographic drivers of change. Conducted research activities and innovative results will empower people to act for change through education and upgraded skills, leading to positive long-term prospects, including jobs, for all including women, young people and vulnerable groups. Among several potential coastal sectors being addressed, the proposal will ensure inclusion of tourism, recreational and leisure activity development in coastal areas to respect long-term environmental carrying capacity, and social goals.

Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- Better understanding of the environmental, socio-economic, behavioural, cultural and demographic drivers of change for users of the sea in coastal areas is taken into account by the policy making community.
- Better understanding of the nature connectedness of coastal communities and preconditions, hurdles and success factors for social transition and nature-based social innovation inspired the policy making community to take measures.
- Socio-economic resilience and well-being of coastal communities (including gender related) are measured, understood and enhanced through a properly developed and established link with coastal ecosystem services and cultural heritage.
- Empowerment of coastal communities and sectors to innovate for the ecological transition and feel part of it, through a multi-actor approach.
- Design of transition mechanisms and identification of the means to make necessary changes socially acceptable, that among others may include curiosity-driven citizen science initiatives and outcomes connected to specific societal and blue bioeconomy-related socio-economic challenges on coastal climate adaptation and mitigation, coastal pollution, coastal biodiversity, circularity and sustainability or other aspects of coastal (eco)tourism and cultural events etc.
- Creation of a well-connected community, involving companies, local businesses, social innovators, private investors, researchers, citizens and policy makers, which will bring together on the one hand research actions and results and on the other implementation actions, new initiatives, and policy developments for their own companies or local communities.
- Improved skills in ocean literacy education and awareness raising, social sciences, green skills and digital transformation to process and integrate large network input of gradually more ‘Green and Blue Literate’ citizens that are more engaged to take direct and sustainable action.
- Contributions to Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Maritime Policy, including the Water Framework Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.
- Contribute to the UN SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 3, SDG 5, SDG 10, SDG 11 and with a specific emphasis on UN SDG 14.

Scope: The multi- and trans-disciplinary proposals should undertake a thorough analysis of gaps in ocean literacy, marine environment connectedness like monetary and non-monetary values of the marine environment, socio-economic vulnerability and resilience (including gender-related) and preparedness for the social transition of coastal communities and stakeholders in order to advance understanding of the preconditions and success factors for social transition and nature-based social innovation. Proposals should deal with environmental and socio-economic challenges related to coastal climate adaptation and mitigation, coastal pollution, coastal ecology, coastal habitability and entrepreneurship, blue spaces and well-

being, coastal (eco)tourism and cultural events, coastal food and energy production and consumption among others. Proposals should identify opportunities based on coastal ecosystem services and active engagement and participation of the users of the sea in designing, implementing and maintaining nature-based solutions (including monitoring activities on the performance and impacts of the solutions), taking into account cultural heritage aspects where relevant. SSH approaches should serve through a multi-actor approach to orient and contextualise coastal STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) activities related to the above-mentioned challenges in terms of social and economic impact as well as in terms of the deep impact of human behaviour, culture (including indigenous knowledge and practices) and history (including religion literacy) on all societal innovation and integrated sustainable coastal zone development and management. Proposals should engage or create appropriate multi-stakeholder platforms who should jointly evaluate cultural, societal and economic marine or coastal practices that are not compatible with sustainability principles, avoiding duplication with other projects, existing initiatives or platforms. They should jointly identify required cultural and societal changes for a sustainable use of the sea, design transition mechanisms and identify the means to achieve necessary changes. Attention needs to be given to different learning arrangements (e.g. multi-actor networks, producer-consumer association, hybrid innovative networks, territorial alliances, twinning approaches) as well as to innovative governance mechanisms at various levels, and their potential implications for social transition and nature-based social innovation. Activities should cover diverse types of coastal areas across the EU and Associated Countries and non-European (Black Sea and Mediterranean) countries. In line with the objectives of the EU Global Approach to Research and Innovation<sup>337</sup>, proposals are strongly encouraged to include third country participants, especially those established in Black Sea and Mediterranean countries.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

The involvement of sea-based businesses, and economic and local development bodies is required to implement the multi-actor approach (cf eligibility conditions). Engaging with managing authorities of European Structural and Investment Funds during the project would help increase implementation of the project outcomes and support further uptake.

Projects should build on existing knowledge and integrate results from multiple origins, including other EU, international or national projects. Some cooperation activities with projects financed under Destination ‘Biodiversity and ecosystem services’ and topics of the Green Deal Call could be included, as well as with relevant projects from other EU programmes or with relevant EU initiatives and thematic networks.

This topic should be linked to the Horizon Europe Missions Ocean, seas and waters and Adaptation to Climate Change including Societal Transformation, the Partnership for a

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<sup>337</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Global Approach to Research and Innovation. Europe's strategy for international cooperation in a changing world. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research\\_and\\_innovation/strategy\\_on\\_research\\_and\\_innovation/documents/ec\\_rtd\\_com2021-252.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research_and_innovation/strategy_on_research_and_innovation/documents/ec_rtd_com2021-252.pdf)

climate neutral, sustainable and productive Blue Economy, the Biodiversity Partnership or other partnerships where relevant.

Social innovation<sup>338</sup> is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

The possible participation of the JRC<sup>339</sup> in the project will consist of contributing to the analysis of patterns and practice of participation of local and urban communities into place-based ecosystems developing integrated sustainable development strategies and action.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-05: Integrated urban food system policies – how cities and towns can transform food systems for co-benefits**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 12.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:  Proposals focusing on one type of activity or sector (e.g. primary production) are out of scope.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:  The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p>

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal priorities and the farm to fork strategy for a fair healthy and environmentally friendly food system, as well as of the EU's Climate ambition for 2030 and 2050, the successful proposal will support the development of policies, business models and market conditions contributing to the sustainable, balanced and inclusive development of urban and peri-urban areas and to the empowerment and resilience of their communities, who can access, afford and choose healthier, nutritious and environmental-friendly food.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

<sup>338</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/policy/innovation/social\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/policy/innovation/social_en)  
<sup>339</sup> For the participation of the JRC, see General Annex B.



- City-region food systems and of the urban-rural linkages across Europe are better understood and taken into account in urban policies;
- The concept of local food environments is better understood and taken into account in local planning, with a view to driving people towards healthier food choices and transforming urban food systems to be healthier, circular and resilient;
- More cities and towns build on good practice initiatives (e.g.: signatory cities of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact) to develop integrated urban food policies and planning frameworks linking health, environment and food systems, bridging the national and the local level and including risk prevention and reduction plans to anticipate and manage food systems shocks, as well as to develop resilience;
- Strengthened urban food systems governance through increased multi-stakeholder engagement in designing and implementing urban food policies in cities and towns across Europe, representing different cultural and geographical settings;
- More Higher Education Institutes engaging in structured and long-term collaborations with local/regional actors to help transform their urban food system through participatory R&I;
- Improved decision-making by government actors willing to commit to change their local food systems, based on ready-to-use knowledge on the typologies, evolution, outcomes and impacts of integrated local food policies, throughout and within Europe, and in comparison with other regions.

Scope: Urban areas face a serious challenge to ensure healthy, affordable, safe and sustainably produced food to their residents. Many cities and their inhabitants are disconnected from their food – e.g. where it comes from, how it is produced, the impact food production and consumption have on the environment, climate and health, and the complexity and fragility of food value chains –. The way in which cities deal with food is highly variable and often fragmented, but integrated urban food policies and social innovations providing co-benefits are progressively emerging throughout Europe.

A key issue to be addressed is that of poorly planned urban food environments that drive citizens, and children in particular, towards unhealthy packaged food that is high in calories, sugars, salt and saturated fat, which contributes to obesity and diet-related illnesses. Furthermore, different shocks disrupting urban food systems worldwide can exacerbate the already limited access to healthy food, in particular for the urban poor.

Cities have the potential to make healthy and sustainable food available, affordable and attractive to all, which will in turn reduce consumption-based GHG emissions, in a win-win situation for people and the planet.

Proposals under this topic should address the following four issues and be targeted to help at least 5 cities/towns lacking integrated food systems policies to take ambitious and decisive action:

- a. **Understanding:** map local food systems, policies and actions, with a special focus on assessing short supply chains and urban food environments (including harmful marketing and advertising and unequal access to healthy food for the urban poor), and on developing local indicators and monitoring frameworks. This should be built on existing tools such as the “Food systems dashboard framework” and should include the development of food systems stakeholder maps, maps of the formal and informal food flows and retail channels and, especially relevant in case of food shock crisis, maps identifying the most vulnerable people and their access to nutritious food. This should include analysing the local responses to emergencies and take into account the environmental, social and economic dimension.
- b. **Governance:** develop and evaluate innovative, multi-actor, urban food systems governance processes and capacities for science-backed integrated policy making and implementation actions that deliver on farm to fork strategy objectives and Food 2030 co-benefits for health, environment, climate, circularity and inclusion, while minimizing trade-offs. Special attention should be given to improving food environments, providing increased food access to vulnerable groups and fostering short supply chains.
- c. **Engaging:** mobilise a wide diversity of food system actors from farm to fork (i.e. public and private, the financial sector, civil society and academia). Higher education institutions and research centres, in particular, should be engaged to collaboration with local actors to support evidence-based food policy development and to help provide local solutions to integrated food system challenges.
- d. **Mutual learning:** reinforce or create new networks of cities and towns to share good practices and learn from and support each other. This implies involving cities with well-developed food policies to provide guidance and lessons learned, as well as new forms of collaboration/twinning.

Proposals should address inequalities in urban food systems, whether they be due to gender, race and other social categories.

Conducting inter and trans-disciplinary research and involving a wide diversity of food system actors is required to implement the multi actor approach (cf eligibility condition). In particular, a strong involvement of citizens and civil society, together with urban designers, design thinkers, social innovators, planners, social scientists and public authorities to strengthen relationships between urban planning and food choices and to develop new methods and approaches to innovation have to be ensured.

Proposals should set out a clear plan on how it will collaborate with other projects selected under this and any other relevant topic/call, e.g. by participating in joint activities, workshops, as well as common communication and dissemination activities.

Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-06: Inside and outside: educational innovation with nature-based solutions**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).

Expected Outcome: A successful proposal will contribute to the EU’s goal of leading just digital, economic and ecological transitions that will leave no one behind, supporting in particular European Green Deal priorities such as the biodiversity strategy for 2030. It will support the empowerment of rural, coastal and urban communities to act for change and to contribute to the Green Deal objectives through education and upgraded skills regarding the design, implementation and benefits of nature-based solutions (NBS)<sup>340</sup>. By doing so, communities will be better prepared to adapt to climate change through the deployment of NBS, and turn digital and ecological transitions into increased resilience and positive long-term prospects, including jobs for all, notably for young people.

Project results are expected to contribute to all following expected outcomes:

- Increased awareness of the value of NBS to educate children and young people in an innovative and holistic way, developing 21st century competencies, values and attitudes through an active and engaging pedagogy.
- NBS teaching programmes and materials are more widely available across the EU.

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<sup>340</sup> As defined by the European Commission: Solutions that are inspired and supported by nature, which are cost-effective, simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits and help build resilience. Such solutions bring more, and more diverse, nature and natural features and processes into cities, landscapes and seascapes, through locally adapted, resource-efficient and systemic interventions. Hence, nature-based solutions must benefit biodiversity and support the delivery of a range of ecosystem services. In <https://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm?pg=nbs>.

- Local communities across the EU are stimulated to co-create NBS, thus contributing to greater upscaling and impact of these solutions.
- Increase awareness and long-term public engagement on NBS and their benefits, enhancing citizens' capacity to act as responsible and participative actors in a knowledge-based society.

Scope: Citizens and experts have identified better awareness of the opportunities, benefits, and limitations of nature-based solutions (NBS) as one of the main factors that could facilitate the transition to more sustainable cities and territories, and help build physical and mental resilience. Examples of NBS include green roofs and green walls that cool down cities in the summer; parks that may contribute to air purification and provide leisure and exercise opportunities to citizens; green corridors connecting natural areas; urban food gardens, etc.

NBS build on nature and ecosystems to deliver social, ecological, and economic benefits, increasing biodiversity and contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation. Their large educational potential remains quite unexplored, whilst innovative programmes and resources around NBS for children and families have only recently started to appear in formal and informal education. Building on scientific evidence and experiences from NBS projects in cities and involving teachers in different countries, an educational pilot study in 2020 exploited research results to develop educational programmes and resources, raising awareness on NBS and their benefits in primary and secondary schools<sup>341</sup>.

The scope of the present topic is to upscale that pilot, broaden its geographical and educational reach, and increase its impact. The successful proposal should set up a multidisciplinary, pan-European network of education professionals, researchers, public authorities, multipliers and civil society to integrate and help create awareness and mainstream NBS-related EU research and innovation into primary and secondary schools, vocational training and higher education centres (e.g. architecture and engineering), influencers, mass media and other multipliers.

The successful proposal should develop learning scenarios, formal and informal education activities and training programmes for teachers to mainstream biodiversity and NBS in education at all levels, in a broad range of disciplines (not exclusively STEM), adaptable, freely available in all European languages, to be used inside and outside (remote learning, classroom, in/with nature, outdoors).

Actions should build on the results of the pilot project and the growing corpus of EU-funded project results, networks and initiatives to develop innovative, open-access educational programmes and materials to raise awareness on NBS and their social, economic and environmental benefits among children, young people and their families in an interdisciplinary, problem-based learning approach. They should combine the use of ICT (e.g. games, apps, etc), remote learning, audio-visual productions and social media with real-life experiences in nature and local NBS, such as educational green roofs and urban gardens. All

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<sup>341</sup> [www.scientix.eu/pilots/nbs-project](http://www.scientix.eu/pilots/nbs-project).

programmes and materials should be tested in a network of pilots and should convey a call for action for students to engage with local stakeholders (e.g. involving celebrities as NBS 'ambassadors', where appropriate) and reflect on the different ethical, economic, environmental and social aspects related to NBS, including gender aspects. Responsible research and innovation (RRI) guidelines and tools should be applied. The work that the JRC may have developed on a competence framework for sustainability during the lifetime of the project should also be taken into account.

Relationships should be considered between educational programmes, together with practitioners and policy-makers (e.g. linking up living-lab models and embedding demonstration approaches and NBS projects in conjunction with local schools, universities and colleges).

Proposals should ensure that all evidence, information and project outputs will be openly accessible through the Oppla (the EU repository for NBS) and Scientix (the community for science education) portals<sup>342</sup>.

Applicants should create synergies with projects under the same topic and other relevant ongoing or up-coming projects, notably the Horizon 2020 NBS project portfolio and its task forces; 'HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-05: The economics of nature-based solutions: cost-benefit analysis, market development and funding'; 'HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-03: Network for nature: multi-stakeholder dialogue platform to promote nature-based solutions'; 'HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-05: Assessing the socio-politics of nature-based solutions for more inclusive and resilient communities'; 'HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-02-02-two-stage: Developing nature-based therapy for health and well-being'. To this end, proposals should include dedicated tasks and appropriate resources for coordination measures, foresee joint activities and joint deliverables.

Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

### **Call - Resilient, inclusive, healthy and green rural, coastal and urban communities**

***HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01***

#### **Conditions for the Call**

##### Indicative budget(s)<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> <https://oppla.eu/> and [www.scientix.eu](http://www.scientix.eu), respectively.

<sup>343</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

**Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2021-2022**  
**Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment**

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>344</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2022		
Opening: 28 Oct 2021 Deadline(s): 15 Feb 2022				
HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-01	RIA	6.00	Around 3.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-02	RIA	5.00	Around 5.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-03	IA	9.00	Around 9.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-04	IA	10.00	Around 10.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-05	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
Overall indicative budget		42.00		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

<sup>344</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-01: Boosting women-led innovation in farming and rural areas**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

**Expected Outcome:** The successful proposal will contribute to fostering a sustainable, balanced and inclusive development of rural areas, supporting the implementation of the European Green Deal<sup>345</sup>, the EU farm to fork strategy<sup>346</sup>, the European pillar of social rights<sup>347</sup>, the European gender equality strategy<sup>348</sup> and the EU long-term vision for rural areas<sup>349</sup>. It will do so by increasing the understanding of the social and behavioural drivers of change, especially in relation with gender norms and relations and by favouring the deployment of women-led innovations in farming and rural communities. Improved knowledge of the specifics of women-led innovation, more supportive innovation ecosystems and smart solutions coming from women-led innovations will empower rural people to act for change and get farming and rural communities prepared to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, adapt to climate change, and turn digital and ecological transitions into increased resilience, good health and positive long-term prospects, including jobs for all, in particular women.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- more effective policy and governance frameworks and knowledge and innovation systems to boost women’s roles in the sustainable development of rural areas and in innovation in farming, in the rural economy and in rural communities;

<sup>345</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en)

<sup>346</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/food/farm2fork\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/farm2fork_en)

<sup>347</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en)

<sup>348</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_20\\_358](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_358)

<sup>349</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas_en)

- improved understanding, awareness and recognition of women's role in the future of the farming sector (in particular ecological transitions), rural economies and communities and related innovation by policy-makers, rural citizens, innovation support services and scientists;
- combating and transforming gender norms and stereotypes, fostering broad social equalities and advancing Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality; and
- enhanced capacity of rural women to innovate for change, including improved skills, solutions to challenges faced by rural women, stronger networks and enhanced knowledge flows from, between and towards women innovators in rural areas and in farming, facilitating the uptake and dissemination of successful innovations and innovation-support tools, in particular those contributing to ecological transitions.

Scope: The role that European women play in rural development and in farming is still widely under-researched. And so is their role as entrepreneurs and innovation leaders, the specifics of the innovations they develop and how the current governance framework contributes to boosting their innovation capacity or to hampering it. Current evidence suggests that this role is underestimated and that the potential of rural women to contribute to sustainability transitions remains partially untapped, in particular due to a lack of targeting in policy frameworks and innovation support systems.

Proposals should analyse the role that women play and will play in the future of rural areas considering megatrends in European rural economies and communities in general and in farming in particular (proportion of official and non-official farm labour, involvement in innovative activities, role in social capital, specific social challenges and risks, relation to environment and environmentally-friendly farming practices etc.), highlighting differences between and within studied countries. They should analyse the specifics of women-led or gendered innovations in farming and in rural communities (specific needs and challenges, sectors and activities, scope, outcomes and benefits, hurdles and obstacles, knowledge and support sources and various forms of social capital involved), the relevance of the agricultural and rural knowledge and innovation systems for women, including education, training and advice. To this end, proposals should actively support a number of practical user-centred women-led interactive innovation initiatives to create knowledge of the specifics of women-led innovation processes, favour exchanges across initiatives and derive new knowledge and practical tools for women, support organisations and policy makers at national (including Associated Countries) and EU level to enhance change.

Proposals should benchmark EU and national policy and legal frameworks on farming and rural development for their gender equality performance, taking into account the new European gender equality strategy. They should also formulate recommendations on how to improve legal, policy or governance frameworks in rural economies in general and in farming in particular to support women-led innovation and women's role in farming and rural economies.



Proposals should be transdisciplinary, with a key role for social sciences and humanities (SSH) such as sociology, psychology, economics and innovation studies. This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines. Social innovation should be considered alongside other types of innovation<sup>350</sup>. Proposals must implement the multi-actor approach, involving women rural innovators and supportive organisations in all tasks alongside scientists, innovation support services and other relevant actors all along the project. The consortia and practical innovation initiatives supported should be located in a set of different locations representing the diversity of European rural socio-economic conditions. Proposals should include a task to coordinate with other proposals funded under this topic, as well as under topics on the ‘expertise and training centre on rural innovation’ (HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-02), ‘smart solutions for smart rural communities’ (HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-02-01-two-stage), other relevant projects<sup>351</sup> and with future common agricultural policy networks<sup>352</sup>, to build synergies in engagement activities and dissemination and exploitation of results.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-02: Assessing and improving labour conditions and health and safety at work in farming**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

<sup>350</sup> Social innovation is defined for this topic as “*the reconfiguring of social practices, in response to societal challenges, which seeks to enhance outcomes on societal well-being and necessarily includes the engagement of civil society actors*”. (SIMRA)

<sup>351</sup> These could include for example projects that will be funded under HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-02: Assessing and improving labour conditions and health and safety at work in farming; ‘HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-26: Deepening the functioning of innovation support’ and ‘HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-14: Improving preparation of multi-actor projects to enable the relevant actors to work in a co-creative way’.

<sup>352</sup> Currently ENRD and EIP-AGRI ([https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development\\_en#enrd](https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development_en#enrd)) to be replaced by the networks to be funded under the future CAP: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/future-cap\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/future-cap_en)

Expected Outcome: The successful proposal will contribute to fostering a sustainable, balanced and inclusive development of rural areas, supporting the implementation of the EU farm to fork strategy<sup>353</sup>, the European pillar of social rights<sup>354</sup> and the long-term vision for rural areas<sup>355</sup>. It will do so by increasing the understanding of the social and behavioural drivers of change, especially in relation with social inclusion, labour, health and safety aspects, and by favouring the deployment of innovations that improve labour conditions, health and safety in farming, equipping the sector with smarter and innovative solutions that increase opportunities for most vulnerable groups, improve attractiveness of farm work and reduce the feeling of being left behind. Improved knowledge leading to more supportive policy frameworks alongside practical innovations will empower people and businesses to act for change and get prepared to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, adapt to climate change, and turn digital and ecological transitions into increased resilience, good health and positive long-term prospects, including jobs, for all including women, young people and vulnerable groups.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- enhanced understanding and awareness by policy makers, farmers organisations, trade unions and health authorities of farmers' and farm workers' health and safety, and on the implications of the perceptions of their work on the future of the sector and hence on long-term food security;
- improved policy and governance frameworks favouring safer and more inclusive working environments for farmers and farm workers;
- wider use of corporate social responsibility innovations by farm businesses; and
- improved health, safety and labour conditions in farming thanks to better performing European and national policy and legal frameworks and innovative bottom-up initiatives.

Scope: Proposals should analyse health and safety at work issues in the farming sector with a specific focus on working conditions (and how they will evolve with digital transitions, climate change, health risks, regulatory developments on chemicals, farmers mental health, injuries, etc.) and labour conditions (seasonal patterns, working time, income and work outside legal contracts, including mobile EU and non-EU workers) also in relation to the perceived attractiveness of farming or working in farming as a job. They should analyse work risks and the vulnerability of farm workers of different genders and ages. They should engage with current and potential future farmers and farm workers on their perception of work in farming and their perspectives and plans for the future, including farm inheritance/take over, seeking to understand the attractiveness of the job (e.g. in relation to wages, stability, seasonality etc.). They should assess the impact of the type of labour force involved (family,

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<sup>353</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/food/farm2fork\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/farm2fork_en)

<sup>354</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en)

<sup>355</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas_en)

local, external) on society and on the farm (including from the workers’ perspectives) and the consequences in case of external shocks such as the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

Proposals should explore the potential of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives and social economy and entrepreneurship to improve the situation of farm workers, including business models that reward improved working conditions through premium prices or other forms of reward, including for non-productive functions such as social inclusion, empowerment and care (non-EU good practices could be considered). They should analyse consumers’ willingness to pay for more ethical working conditions and enabling conditions for market development in this arena. To this end, they should support social innovation<sup>356</sup>, social entrepreneurship or corporate social responsibility pilots in a limited number of localities to serve as role models or positive examples to learn from and be scaled-up.

They should explore the policy implications of the outcomes (including regulation and control); benchmark policy design and delivery and make recommendations for improved policy frameworks at the right level of governance considering the various competencies involved (EU, national, regional etc.). Finally, they should develop training and education actions to raise farmers, farm workers, trade unions and farmers organisations awareness of health-protecting innovations that can be scaled up.

Proposals must implement the multi-actor approach, bringing together multiple science fields, in particular the social sciences and humanities (SSH) (e.g. sociology, behavioural sciences, psychology etc.), actors with complementary knowledge of health, employment, farm contracts, taxation etc., farmers and farmer organisations or trade unions and support groups for farmers facing difficulties. This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines. Proposals should cover a representative variety of countries and sectors at least in the EU, covering in particular countries and sectors in which intra-EU and non-EU mobile workers are a significant part of the sector’s labour force. Attention should be paid to gender and age disparities in the cases analysed and pilots supported. For gender-related issues, the project may engage in collaboration with projects funded under HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-01: Boosting women-led innovation in farming and rural areas.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-03: Integration of marine ecosystem service valuation, conservation and restoration in socio-economic models**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 9.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

<sup>356</sup> Social innovation is defined for this topic as “*the reconfiguring of social practices, in response to societal challenges, which seeks to enhance outcomes on societal well-being and necessarily includes the engagement of civil society actors*”. (SIMRA)

<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <p>The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p>

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal, the successful proposal will contribute to fostering a sustainable, balanced and inclusive development of coastal areas, thanks to deployment of digital, nature-based, social and community-led innovations, to deliver nature-based and scientifically validated solutions to existing coastal socio-economic and environmental threats. People are empowered to act for change through upgraded skills and innovative governance that favours an integrated and interlinked territorial development. Coastal communities are better prepared to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, adapt to climate change, and turn digital and ecological transitions into increased resilience to various types of shocks, good health and positive long-term prospects, including jobs, for all including women, young people and vulnerable groups. Tourism, recreational and leisure activity development in coastal areas respects long-term environmental carrying capacity, and social goals.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- Nature-based and community-led socio-economic development in the coastal sector, revitalising social capacities in fragile communities and supporting environmental improvements, based on integrated marine ecosystem service valuation, management, conservation and restoration.
- Lasting cooperation between local communities and coastal sectors and authorities through enhanced governance and social innovation in different regional contexts.
- Properly assessed and transdisciplinary scientifically validated, supported and monitored social innovation experiments related to coastal climate adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity, water quality, pollution, seafood production, ecotourism etc.
- Innovative socio-economic models resulting from the projects, based on a long-term perspective using a participatory process of visioning and experimentation, are implemented in integrated coastal zone management.
- Improved employment prospects through job creation, development and training of knowledgeable regional/local ambassadors for natural habitat restoration and transformation.

- Scientifically validated recommendations for tourism development in coastal areas reflecting long-term carrying capacity and social goals.
- Nature-based scientifically validated solutions to existing socio-economic and environmental threats, are embedded in new regulations and European Directives like the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive, the Water Framework Directive, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the NATURA 2000 Directives.

Scope: Coastal ecosystems play an important role in nutrient recycling/regulation, sediment stabilisation and transfer, food production, reducing risks and impacts of climate change, etc. They are the basis of important socio-economic activities such as tourism and wellbeing, fisheries and aquaculture, housing and transport, trade, renewable energy. Integrated coastal zone management requires more and better integration of ecosystem services' valuation, management, conservation and restoration in socio-economic models through partnerships and collaborations between a range of multi-sector organisations, authorities and coastal communities for a balanced sustainable development and management of potentially vibrant coastal areas.

The multi- and trans-disciplinary proposals should design, scientifically guide and develop nature-based coastal socio-economic models, businesses and marine spatial planning, based on the limits and potential of coastal ecosystem services. These scientific activities should aim to avoid traditional conflicts between human-based activities, reduce urban pressures, protect and restore coastal ecosystems, and support critical ecosystem services in order to ensure good environmental or ecological status, social cohesion and resilience. The proposals should stimulate and benefit from increased nature connectedness of coastal communities; cultural heritage including traditional skills, nature-based social and frugal innovation, active engagement and employments of knowledgeable regional/local ambassadors for natural habitat restoration and transformation, ocean literacy training towards and within companies, digital transformation and collaborative (e)governance improvements. Activities could usefully include innovative business models integrating land-based and sea-based production or service provision with simultaneous benefit for the local economy, local jobs and the environment.

The proposals should cover a representative set of coastal areas or regions across Europe varying according to size and geographical, environmental, socio-economic, institutional and administrative conditions (regional, inter-regional, macro-region, cross-border). Interactive research approaches should be used to engage with relevant stakeholders, local businesses and citizens and elaborate options for cooperation, networking and integrated governance seeking to enhance partnership. Proposals could seek to create long-lasting relationships within and between the case study areas benchmarked by the project in order to generate knowledge exchange to foster synergistic relationships in different coastal areas of Europe.

The potential use of instruments provided by the European Structural and Investment Funds for the period 2021-2027 should be explored. Some cooperation activities with projects financed under topic HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-04, Destination

‘Biodiversity and ecosystem services’ and Green Deal Call topics could be included; as well as with relevant projects from other EU programmes or with relevant EU initiatives and networks.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

Proposals must involve coastal actors and other land and sea-based businesses, and economic and local development bodies to implement the required multi-actor approach (cf eligibility conditions). Engaging with managing authorities of the European Structural and Investment Funds during the project would help increase implementation of the project outcomes and support further uptake.

This topic should be linked to the Horizon Europe Missions Ocean, seas and waters and Adaptation to Climate Change including Societal Transformation, the Partnership for a climate neutral, sustainable and productive Blue Economy, the Biodiversity Partnership or other partnerships where relevant.

Social innovation<sup>357</sup> is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-04: Social innovation in food sharing to strengthen urban communities’ food resilience**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 10.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal priorities and the farm to fork strategy for a fair healthy and environmentally friendly food system, as well as of the EU's Climate ambition for 2030 and 2050, the successful proposal will support the development of policies, business models and market conditions contributing to the sustainable, balanced and inclusive development of urban and peri-urban areas and to the empowerment and resilience

<sup>357</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/policy/innovation/social\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/policy/innovation/social_en)

of their communities, who can access, afford and choose healthier, nutritious and environmental-friendly food.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all following expected outcomes:

- The concept of urban food-sharing economy and of its impacts on the society, the planet and the economy at urban and peri-urban level are better understood, as well as the drivers to its development and the implementation gaps;
- Urban and peri-urban communities develop or strengthen their food-sharing economies as a step towards more innovative, inclusive, sustainable and resilient local food systems and supply chains that can also address emerging problems, such as the challenges posed by the measures to contain the Covid-19 pandemic;
- Prevention and reduction of food waste.

Scope: With the recent Covid-19 pandemic, it is now evident that the risk of disruptions of food systems needs to be given greater attention. Strengthening the resilience of communities (in particular the most vulnerable and isolated, and those at risk of food poverty) to potential food system disruptions is at the heart of this topic.

The Pandemic has contributed to the emergence of territorialised and community-based food economies spontaneously created by citizens. These new sharing and circular economies are based on the redistribution of value, knowledge-sharing and reciprocal support, and are often supported by local governments.

Urban food sharing initiatives have been multiplying across a wide range of diversified cities, far beyond the wealthiest ones, and are often facilitated by new technologies such as apps, websites and social media. Such initiatives develop strategies that support an increase in resilience, social justice and empowerment of vulnerable and marginalised populations.

However, urban food sharing is still an unexplored – and debated – field; there is currently no agreed definition and many activities can be considered as part of it (e.g., kitchen spaces, meal sharing, food business incubators, collaborative delivery services, food donation). The lack of political interest, financing and sufficient data, as well as the existence of regulatory barriers and risks (both real and perceived), are holding back the rise of new food systems economies that work for all people and the planet.

The proposals should foster social innovation, with a special focus on building a more widespread and resilient food sharing economy, where different practices can be considered, while working on 5 distinct areas:

- Mapping, tracking and monitoring: building on the work of the EU-funded project ‘Sharecity’<sup>358</sup>, proposals should investigate the food sharing landscapes of at least 100 EU/Associated Countries cities to understand how food sharing landscapes differ within

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<sup>358</sup> <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/646883/>

and across countries; moreover, proposals should develop automated systems to search, collect and – especially – update existing urban and peri-urban initiatives;

- Cost-benefit analysis: proposals should define appropriate measures and indicators to assess the social, economic and environmental benefits of urban and peri-urban food sharing, including developing new indices to describe the specificity of food sharing economy. This should include the production of new knowledge on the challenges, implementation gaps and innovative mechanisms to foster for sustainable food sharing in cities, towns and neighbourhoods;
- Comparative governance analysis: proposals should investigate how different food sharing landscapes evolve and, also through a scenario analysis, how to transform the existing regulatory regimes, governance structures and habits, to promote sustainable food sharing;
- Strategic planning: proposals should exploit the potential for replicability/scale up of existing food sharing initiatives across the EU and associated countries and bring innovation into urban food systems design to integrate sustainable food sharing and build the urban food systems of the future;
- Challenging the existing theories: proposals should study the relationship between the evolution of social norms, culture and local conditions, including their change due to the global pandemics, and the rise of food sharing initiatives.

Furthermore, proposals should support the definition of innovative local strategies to overcome the barriers to food and nutrition security in urban areas and boost community resilience. This can include the creation and evaluation of distributive food systems (e.g. mutual aid programmes, local food systems networks) based on local needs and capacities, where value, knowledge and power would be redistributed fairly across actors and territories; tailored solutions - including social innovations, frugal innovation, technologies, new/adapted business models -, as well as new market places.

Proposals should address inequalities in urban food systems, whether they be due to gender, race and other social categories.

Proposals should implement the multi-actor approach by conducting inter and trans-disciplinary research and involving a wide diversity of food system actors, with a special attention to consumers and civil society organisations. They should ensure a strong involvement of citizens and civil society, as well as of academia, industry and public authorities in the development of the methods and approaches to innovation.

Proposals should explain and map how the co-benefits relevant to the four Food 2030 priorities will be achieved: Nutrition for sustainable healthy diets, Climate and environment, Circularity and resource efficiency, Innovation and empowerment of communities.



Proposals should set out a clear plan on how they will collaborate with other proposals selected under this and any other relevant topic/call, e. g. by participating in joint activities, workshops, as well as common communication and dissemination activities.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-05: Assessing the socio-politics of nature-based solutions for more inclusive and resilient communities**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).

**Expected Outcome:** A successful proposal will contribute to the EU’s goal of leading just digital, economic and ecological transitions that will leave no one behind, supporting in particular European Green Deal priorities such as the biodiversity strategy for 2030. R&I will contribute to develop rural, coastal and urban areas in a sustainable, balanced and inclusive manner thanks to the deployment of nature-based solutions (NBS)<sup>359</sup> and to a better understanding of the environmental, socio-economic, behavioural and cultural drivers of change. R&I will also further support the empowerment of communities to deploy NBS to adapt to climate change and turn digital and ecological transitions into increased resilience, well-being and positive long-term prospects, such as jobs for all (including for women, young people and vulnerable groups).

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

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<sup>359</sup> As defined by the European Commission: Solutions that are inspired and supported by nature, which are cost-effective, simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits and help build resilience. Such solutions bring more, and more diverse, nature and natural features and processes into cities, landscapes and seascapes, through locally adapted, resource-efficient and systemic interventions. Hence, nature-based solutions must benefit biodiversity and support the delivery of a range of ecosystem services. In <https://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm?pg=nbs>.

- Enhanced contribution of nature-based solutions (NBS) to social and economic targets, especially in vulnerable communities and notably regarding the transformative change needed to address the biodiversity and climate crises.
- New NBS governance models and co-creation approaches and tools, as well as NBS design and technologies that enhance social benefits while providing ecological and economic benefits.
- NBS are better suited to respond to different socio-political contexts and have higher replicability in the diverse environmental, economic and social conditions across Europe.

Scope: Nature-based solutions (NBS) are already being delivered with increasing evidence on their effectiveness, but implementation issues persist, hindering NBS uptake and upscale. There is a need to move beyond seeing the implementation challenge as primarily a technical issue, to develop our understanding of the economic, social, political, moral and cultural dimensions of designing and implementing NBS<sup>360</sup>.

Most of the available approaches seem inadequate to fully take into consideration synergies and trade-offs among different actions, notably in what concerns the social and cultural benefits of NBS. They often also fail to understand the social, political and institutional contexts and the material and discursive elements that shape NBS implementation. This, in turn, affects the long-term success of NBS, notably in contributing to the transformative change needed to address the biodiversity and climate crises. This understanding is particularly crucial when implementing NBS to support vulnerable communities and regions to cope with transformative change in old-industrialised, low-income, outermost or disaster-hit areas. NBS can also contribute to addressing inequities and well-being in communities and regions who need it most, especially in terms of the post-COVID19 recovery. Additionally, our understanding of how diverse actors – who may operate at different scales and through multiple networks – are engaged in the development and implementation of NBS is still limited, especially when the deployment of NBS implies collaboration across different regions, administrative areas or simply different types of land owners.

The successful proposals should:

- Gain a wider understanding of the role of actors involved in NBS, considering: a) particular groups of actors that have been under-researched (e.g. land holders such as churches, charitable organizations, educational establishments, utilities, etc.); b) sectors of the economy (e.g. agriculture, forestry, tourism, finance, etc.) and c) landscapes (e.g. coastal areas, river catchments, wetlands, etc.);
- Investigate how different NBS designs and governance can contribute to environmental justice, prevent environmental racism and gentrification, insure the inclusion and active participation of women, youth, minority groups, immigrant communities, etc.;

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<sup>360</sup> The economic aspects of NBS are the focus of HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-05: The economics of nature-based solutions (NBS): cost-benefit analysis, market development and funding.

- Develop innovative governance models: a) exploring different forms of engagement, inclusion and stewardship; b) enabling the breaking of silos in public administration and between different administrative domains; and c) tackling other legal, management and administrative issues;
- Propose ways in which NBS governance and design can contribute to transformative change and to a just transition in support of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- Understand and propose solutions to functional conflicts in land-use for better and more integration between NBS, land-use planning and other (possibly conflicting) sectors, their policies and planning processes;
- Explore governance techniques (e.g. standards, certification, incentives, subsidies, etc.) that develop private and voluntary governance alongside formal regulatory and planning powers, with a view to mainstreaming NBS in the public and private sectors.
- Identify the possibilities for, and limits to, the full co-creation approach in NBS (including co-design, co-implementation, co-maintenance and co-monitoring), their underlying governance arrangements and instruments;
- Provide approaches based on citizen science, big data or artificial intelligence tools to better communicate the science of NBS and promote citizen engagement in the co-creation, co-implementation and co-monitoring of NBS;
- Understand how the meanings and values attached to nature in urban, rural, coastal, periurban or post-industrial areas affect the long-term success of NBS. To this end, investigate what counts as nature, what is valued and why this varies amongst individuals and communities as well as how this can be taken into account in the development of NBS.
- Investigate the impact of citizens' perceptions and expectations towards NBS on management decisions and delivery of ecosystem services, while considering also the role of NBSs in generating new kinds of connections and values for nature and with what consequences.

Proposals should address all of the above points.

Proposals should bring together from the start multiple types of scientific expertise in both natural sciences and social sciences and humanities (e.g. geography, sociology, political ecology, behavioural sciences, anthropology, philosophy, etc). In particular, this topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

Projects should seek to contribute to the New European Bauhaus initiative by supporting the green and digital transitions in communities' living environments through merging sustainability, inclusiveness and quality of experience. Small-scale pilots could be envisaged to explore NBS which are innovative either in their functional scope, socio-economic reach, integrative approaches or application in new settings.

Applicants should create synergies with projects under the same topic and other relevant ongoing or up-coming projects, notably the Horizon 2020 NBS project portfolio and its task forces; HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-05: The economics of nature-based solutions: cost-benefit analysis, market development and funding; HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-06: Nature-based solutions, prevention and reduction of risks and the insurance sector; HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-03: Network for nature: multi-stakeholder dialogue platform to promote nature-based solutions; HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-02-02-two-stage: Developing nature-based therapy for health and well-being; HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-06: Inside and outside: educational innovation with nature-based solutions. To this end, proposals should include dedicated tasks and appropriate resources for coordination measures, foresee joint activities and joint deliverables.

Proposals should ensure that all evidence, information and project outputs will be accessible through the Oppla portal (the EU repository for NBS)<sup>361</sup>.

Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

In order to achieve the expected outcomes, international cooperation is strongly encouraged, in particular with the Latin American and Caribbean region and the USA.

**Call - Resilient, inclusive, healthy and green rural, coastal and urban communities**

***HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-02-two-stage***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>362</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>363</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2022		
Opening: 28 Oct 2021				
Deadline(s): 15 Feb 2022 (First Stage), 06 Sep 2022 (Second Stage)				

<sup>361</sup> <https://oppla.eu/>.

<sup>362</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
 The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
 All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.  
 The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>363</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

*Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2021-2022*  
*Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment*

HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-02-01-two-stage	IA	14.00	Around 7.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-02-02-two-stage	RIA	19.00	Around 6.00	3
Overall indicative budget		33.00		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-02-01-two-stage: Smart solutions for smart rural communities: empowering rural communities and smart villages to innovate for societal change**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 14.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions

<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:  The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p>
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	<p>Where relevant, activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-7 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.</p>
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000. Maximum 20% of the EU funding can be allocated to this purpose.</p>

Expected Outcome: The successful proposal will contribute to fostering a sustainable, balanced and inclusive development of rural areas, supporting the implementation of the European Green Deal<sup>364</sup>, in particular its fair and just transition component, the European digital strategy<sup>365</sup>, the European pillar of social rights<sup>366</sup> and the EU long-term vision for rural areas<sup>367</sup>. It will do so by supporting digital, social and community-led innovations and by equipping rural communities with innovative and smarter solutions that increase access to services, opportunities and adequate innovation ecosystems, including for women, youth and the most vulnerable groups, improve attractiveness and reduce the feeling of being left behind, even in the most remote locations like mountains. The increased availability of smart solutions and support to community-led innovations will empower people to act for change and get prepared to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, adapt to climate change, and turn digital and ecological transitions into increased resilience, good health and positive long-term prospects, including jobs, for all including women, young people and vulnerable groups.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

<sup>364</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en)

<sup>365</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/shaping-europe-digital-future\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/shaping-europe-digital-future_en)

<sup>366</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en)

<sup>367</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas_en)

- Enhanced capacity of rural communities and rural people to innovate for change thanks to the specific outcomes below;
- Enlarged set of smart solutions for rural communities (practical and transferable innovative solutions to challenges faced by rural communities in a variety of fields e.g. social services, health, energy, mobility, climate adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity and ecosystem management, education, access to culture, etc.).
- Upgraded approaches, methods, tools and skills to design, implement, monitor and evaluate community-led innovations contributing to the implementation of smart village<sup>368</sup> strategies and social innovation<sup>369</sup> initiatives improving i) rural people's well-being, ii) rural community resilience to shocks, iii) rural contributions to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and to the EU long-term vision for rural areas<sup>370</sup>.
- Strengthened human capital, including networks, enhanced relations and knowledge exchange between smart villages and rural community innovators on transferable innovations and innovation processes.

Scope: Proposals should start from past work conducted in the framework of i) EU action on smart villages<sup>371</sup>, including the related preparatory actions<sup>372</sup>; and ii) Horizon 2020 projects dedicated to social innovation in rural areas<sup>373</sup>. Proposals should support a large number of rural community-led, social innovation or smart village pilot initiatives in a set of locations in the EU and Associated Countries representative of the diversity of social and geographical contexts. They should prototype, test, pilot and demonstrate innovations that answer the most pressing rural challenges found at these locations, with particular attention to social and environmental challenges.

Proposals should explore various forms of innovations: technical, technological, business, organisational and social. Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the interface between social and technical solutions and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake. Proposals should exploit in particular the

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<sup>368</sup> Smart villages are defined for this call as “communities in rural areas that use innovative solutions to improve their resilience, building on local strengths and opportunities”. A more complete definition is available on p.2 of the briefing note from February 2019: <https://digitevent-images.s3.amazonaws.com/5c0e6198801d2065233ff996-registrationfiletexteditor-1551115459927-smart-villages-briefing-note.pdf>

<sup>369</sup> Social innovation is defined for this topic as “the reconfiguring of social practices, in response to societal challenges, which seeks to enhance outcomes on societal well-being and necessarily includes the engagement of civil society actors”. (SIMRA)

<sup>370</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas_en)

<sup>371</sup> [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/smart-and-competitive-rural-areas/smart-villages\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/smart-and-competitive-rural-areas/smart-villages_en);

<sup>372</sup> [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/smart-and-competitive-rural-areas/smart-villages/smart-villages-portal\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/smart-and-competitive-rural-areas/smart-villages/smart-villages-portal_en)

<sup>373</sup> <http://www.pilotproject-smartvillages.eu>;

<sup>373</sup> <https://www.smartrural21.eu>

In particular:

SIMRA: <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/677622>

- RURITAGE:

<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/776465> RURACTION: <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/721999>

potential of digital technologies to answer rural communities' challenges, respecting the principles of the declarations on "joining forces to boost sustainable digital transformation in cities and communities"<sup>374</sup> and on "a smart and sustainable digital future for European agriculture and rural areas"<sup>375</sup>. Proposals should build on the work of projects funded under the topic DT-ICT-09-2020<sup>376</sup> and avoid duplications.

Criteria for selecting the pilot initiatives supported should include the contribution to rural people's well-being, rural community resilience to shocks, Sustainable Development Goals and the EU's long-term vision for rural areas as well as the potential transferability or replicability of the innovations to other European villages facing similar conditions. The experience gained from supporting these community-led innovation pilot initiatives should lead proposals to formulate upgraded approaches, methods and tools that should be widely disseminated in close coordination with the 'expertise and training centre on rural innovation funded under HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-02. Proposals should also capitalise on i) rural innovation processes and knowledge and innovation systems or ecosystems needed to support rural community-led or social innovation and smart villages; and ii) lessons learnt to improve policies and governance frameworks, especially on instruments supporting the development of social capital, social networks, social economy and social innovation and with attention to various needs of various target groups.

Proposals must implement the multi-actor approach, bringing together scientists alongside rural community organisations, action groups or networks with a demonstrated ability to connect to a large number of local communities and disseminate and exploit project results. The consortium should bring together a multiplicity of competences and science disciplines with an effective contribution of SSH disciplines, to ensure a skilled accompaniment of a wide range of innovation areas likely to come from the pilot initiatives (climate mitigation and adaptation, social care and services, energy, mobility, culture, education etc.) and innovation approaches and technologies (technical, organisational, social, digital...). It should demonstrate substantial prior experience in facilitating community-led bottom-up innovation initiatives.

As an option, proposals may provide financial support to third parties, particularly for SMEs or entities who would develop specific innovative solutions needed in the pilot initiatives. Consortia who decide to use this option should define the selection process of entities for which financial support will be granted.

Proposals should include a task to cooperate with other projects funded under this topic, other relevant innovation projects and with the 'expertise and training centre on rural innovation' funded under HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-02 from the beginning of the project (taking up tools and training kits) until its end (dissemination of upgraded tools and smart solutions) and with the projects funded under HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-

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<sup>374</sup> <https://www.living-in.eu/declaration>

<sup>375</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/eu-member-states-join-forces-digitalisation-european-agriculture-and-rural-areas>

<sup>376</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/dt-ict-09-2020>



01-01 for issues related to women-led innovation. Proposals should also foresee close coordination with the common agricultural policy networks<sup>377</sup> to maximise the contribution of project activities to the achievement of future common agricultural policy (2021-2027) objectives<sup>378</sup>, in particular in relation with smart villages<sup>379</sup>. Finally, proposals are encouraged to liaise with the relevant European Institute of Technology knowledge and innovation communities<sup>380</sup>.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-02-02-two-stage: Developing nature-based therapy for health and well-being**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 19.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).

**Expected Outcome:** A successful proposal will contribute to the EU’s goal of leading just, digital, economic and ecological transitions that will leave no one behind, supporting in particular European Green Deal priorities such as the biodiversity strategy for 2030. R&I will support the development of nature-based therapy to help communities turn the ecological transition into opportunities for good health and well-being, increased resilience, and positive long-term prospects such as the creation of green jobs.

Project results are expected to contribute to all following expected outcomes:

- Sharper view of green space management, nature protection, agriculture and forestry sectors as care providers and their possible linkages with the healthcare, social and educational sectors;

<sup>377</sup> Currently ENRD and EIP-AGRI ([https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development\\_en#enrd](https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development_en#enrd)) to be replaced by the networks to be funded under the future CAP: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/future-cap\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/future-cap_en)

<sup>378</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/future-cap\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/future-cap_en)

<sup>379</sup> [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/smart-and-competitive-rural-areas/smart-villages\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/smart-and-competitive-rural-areas/smart-villages_en)

<sup>380</sup> <https://eit.europa.eu/our-communities/eit-innovation-communities>

- Stronger evidence base for the causal relationships between nature and health and well-being for more effective nature therapy prescriptions;
- Cost-effective nature therapy prescriptions are more widely used in the health care sector;
- Greater citizen and policy-maker awareness of the positive benefits of nature for health and well-being;
- Wider utilization by healthcare professionals and citizens of nature therapy as a form of preventive medicine.

Scope: Nature affects human health in different ways. In particular, urban environments can have a negative impact on physical and mental health. This is due to urban stressors such as increased noise levels, higher crime rates and higher levels of pollution. The total global burden of disease attributable to mental illness has recently been estimated to be as high as 32% of total years lived with disability and 13% of disability-adjusted life-years, on par with cardiovascular and circulatory diseases. It is important, therefore, to determine the degree to which nature experience might lessen and address this burden. Even more so in view of the fact that the opportunities and time spent in nature are decreasing.

However, despite many putative positive correlations identified between nature and health and well-being, the causal understanding of relationships between health and nature exposure are not well understood. The long-term effects are also less well studied and recognised in policies. Social, economic and cultural factors strongly mediate the strength and direction of linkages between health and nature. Age, gender and especially socio-economic status may modify the association between greenness and health behaviours and outcomes and need to be better understood to create more effective nature therapy. Additionally, mental health benefits may vary with the type of interaction with nature and the form of sensory input. Furthermore, the health and well-being benefits of exposure to nature are affected by cultural perspectives and experiences relating to social interaction and contact with the natural environment.

A successful proposal should:

- Develop a common framework to increasingly recognise and promote contact with nature, including protected areas and other green and blue spaces, as a cost-effective response for the prevention and treatment of human health and well-being;
- Propose an interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach, including the involvement of the health care sector, land owners, as well as green space management and nature protection sectors;
- Improve schemes monitoring nature-health linkages to enhance the evidence base and tools for the health care sector, green space management, nature protection, urban planning and landscape architecture;

- Develop longitudinal prospective methods, (quasi-) experiments or well-controlled interventions, to provide more evidence of the causal relationships between nature and health and well-being:
  - Understanding of when people explicitly choose to go to an urban green space and what experiences they have there (e.g., active versus passive activities).
  - Determining the type of interactions and dose of interactions necessary for long-term health and well-being benefits.
  - Understanding the mediators of the health-nature relationship, such as age, gender, socio-economic status or culture.
  - Considering the difference between greenness quantity and quality and determining which aspects of natural features are relevant to mental health.
  - Understanding how different geographical locations and factors such as population density affect the health-nature relationships;
- Test nature therapy sessions, identify best-practices and develop the necessary tools and guidelines for integration of nature-based care in the public health sector;
- Identify legal and administrative arrangements, partnerships, and financial mechanisms for implementation of nature therapy sessions.

The proposals should address all of the above points.

Proposals should bring together from the start multiple types of scientific expertise in both health and natural sciences, as well as social sciences and humanities, together with a variety of community and health sector representatives, businesses, civil society organisations and citizens.

Proposals should ensure that all evidence, information and project outputs will be accessible through the Oppla portal (the EU repository for nature-based solutions)<sup>381</sup>.

Applicants should create synergies with projects under the same topic and other relevant ongoing or up-coming projects, notably the Horizon 2020 NBS project portfolio and its task forces; HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01-05: The economics of nature-based solutions: cost-benefit analysis, market development and funding; HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-03: Network for nature: multi-stakeholder dialogue platform to promote nature-based solutions; HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-05: Assessing the socio-politics of nature-based solutions for more inclusive and resilient communities; HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-06: Inside and outside: educational innovation with nature-based solutions. To this end, proposals should include dedicated tasks and appropriate resources for coordination measures, foresee joint activities and joint deliverables.

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<sup>381</sup> <https://oppla.eu/>.

Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

In order to achieve the expected outcomes, international cooperation is strongly encouraged, in particular with the USA, Japan and the LAC region.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

## **Destination – Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal**

Transformative changes such as the ones required within the Green Deal are dynamic processes that require appropriate governance. At the same time, to ensure coordination and for collaborative decision-making, governance requires multiple channels and networks that provide readily available data and information coming from different sources.

R&I activities under this destination aim at both: experimenting with new ways to govern the transition process and modernising the governance, in particular by making information and knowledge available and accessible. R&I for governance to support the Green Deal shall provide insights into institutional barriers such as lock-ins, path dependency, political and cultural inertia power imbalances and regulatory inconsistencies or weaknesses.

Innovative governance supporting the Green Deal objectives needs to recognise, cope with and promote resilience in the face of on-going shocks and disruptions both globally and across Europe, whether these be climatic, ecological, economic, social, geo-political or related to health. Critical risk assessment and reduction strategies need to be incorporated, including the diversification of infrastructures, resources and knowledge through more self-sufficiency and autonomy.

Taking advantage of the use, uptake, deployment and exploitation of environmental observations<sup>382</sup> as well as digital solutions, assessed through the “do not harm” principle of the Green Deal, is key for innovative governance models and a more science-based policy design, implementation and monitoring. To maximise impacts of R&I on the ground and spark behavioural and socio-economic change, the knowledge and innovation produced throughout the whole cluster should be widely disseminated to key stakeholders of the relevant sectors of the cluster. In particular, the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) needs to be reinforced to accelerate the required transformative changes.

Data and information obtained through Environmental Observation is of great value when assessing the state of the planet and is delivering crucial information to support the Green Deal and the climate and ecological transition. Integration of this information from different sources (space-based, airborne including drones, in-situ and citizens observations) with other relevant data and knowledge while ensuring (better) accessible, interoperable or deployable information, delivers information necessary for shaping the direction of the development of policies in the broad context of Cluster 6 of Horizon Europe. A strong link to the European Earth observations programme Copernicus (in Cluster 4) and the European Space Agency’s (ESA) Earth observation programme, as well as support to the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), its European regional initiative (EuroGEO) and the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) is foreseen for topics on environmental observations under this destination. R&I activities relevant to ocean, seas and coastal waters will complement and

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<sup>382</sup> The capacity to observe the environment, including space-based, in-situ-based (air, sea, land) observation, and citizen observations

support the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and UN Decade on Restoration, the G7 Future of the Seas and Oceans Initiative, the pan-Commission Destination Earth initiative, the European Global Ocean Observing System (EOOS) and the GOOS 2030 strategy.

Digital innovation, in complementarity with Cluster 4 and Digital Europe Programmes activities, should bring benefits for citizens, businesses, researchers, the environment, society at large and policy-makers. The potential of the ongoing digital transformation, and its wider impacts, positive and negative, need to be better understood and monitored in view of future policy design and implementation, governance, and solution development

This destination will develop innovative digital and data based solutions to support communities and society at large, and economic sectors relevant for this cluster to achieve sustainability objectives. R&I activities will add value to the knowledge and cost-effectiveness of innovative technologies in and across primary production sectors, food systems, bioeconomy, ocean and biodiversity.

Knowledge and advice to all actors relevant to this cluster are key to improve sustainability. For instance, primary producers have a particular need for impartial and tailored advice on sustainable management choices. Knowledge and Innovation Systems are key drivers to enhance co-creation and thus speed up innovation and the take-up of results needed to achieve the Green Deal objectives and targets. This will include promoting interactive innovation and co-ownership of results by users, as well as strengthening synergies with other EU Funds in particular the CAP, reinforcing the multi-actor approach and setting up structural networking within national/regional/local AKISs. AKIS goes beyond agriculture, farming and rural activities and covers environment, climate, biodiversity, landscape, bio-based economy, consumers and citizens, i.e., all food and bio-based systems including transformation and distribution chains up until the consumer.

### Expected impact

Proposals for topics under this destination should set out a credible pathway to contributing to innovative governance and sound decision making in policy for the green transition, and more specifically to one or several of the following impacts:

- Innovative governance models enabling sustainability and resilience notably to achieve better informed decision-making processes, societal engagement and innovation;
- Green Deal related domains benefit from further deployment and exploitation of Environmental Observation data and products ;
- A strengthened Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS)<sup>383</sup>;

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<sup>383</sup> The European Commission is a member and co-chair of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), as such the European Commission adopted the GEO Canberra Declaration ([https://earthobservations.org/canberra\\_declaration.php](https://earthobservations.org/canberra_declaration.php)) and Commission Decision C(2019)7337/F1)

- Sustainability performance and competitiveness in the domains covered by Cluster 6 are enhanced through further deployment of digital and data technologies as key enablers;
- More informed and engaged stakeholders and end users including primary producers and consumers thanks to effective platforms such as Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS)
- Strengthened EU and international science-policy interfaces to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

When considering their impact, proposals also need to assess their compliance with the “Do No Significant Harm” principle<sup>384</sup> according to which the research and innovation activities of the project should not be supporting or carrying out activities that make a significant harm to any of the six environmental objectives of the EU Taxonomy Regulation.

Topics under this destination will have impacts in the following areas: “Climate change mitigation and adaptation”; “Clean and healthy air, water and soil”; “Enhancing ecosystems and biodiversity on land and in water”; “Sustainable food systems from farm to fork on land and sea”; “High quality digital services for all”; and “A Competitive and secure data-economy”.

Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

The following call(s) in this work programme contribute to this destination:

Call	Budgets (EUR million)		Deadline(s)
	2021	2022	
HORIZON-CL6-2021- GOVERNANCE-01	223.00		06 Oct 2021
HORIZON-CL6-2022- GOVERNANCE-01		147.00	15 Feb 2022
Overall indicative budget	223.00	147.00	

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<sup>384</sup> and committed to contribute to the GEO objectives, including to the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS).  
as per Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 2020/852 on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment (EU Taxonomy Regulation)

**Call - Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal**

***HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>385</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>386</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2021		
Opening: 22 Jun 2021 Deadline(s): 06 Oct 2021				
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-01	CSA	3.50	Around 3.50	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-02	RIA	17.00	Around 6.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-03	CSA	5.00	Around 5.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-04	CSA	4.00	Around 4.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-05	CSA	4.00	Around 4.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-06	RIA	8.00	2.00 to 3.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-07	CSA	5.00	Around 2.50	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-08	CSA	5.00	Around 2.50	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-09	CSA	5.00	Around 2.50	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-10	CSA	4.00	Around 4.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-11	CSA	2.00	Around 2.00	1

<sup>385</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.  
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.  
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.  
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>386</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.



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HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-12	RIA	10.00	Around 10.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-13	RIA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-14	RIA	20.00	3.00 to 5.00	4
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-15	CSA	2.00	Around 2.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-16	IA	13.00	Around 13.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-17	IA	10.00	3.00 to 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-18	RIA	10.00	Around 10.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-19	RIA	4.00	2.00 to 4.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-20	RIA	4.00	2.00 to 4.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-21	RIA	12.00	Around 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-22	RIA	15.00	Around 7.50	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-23	CSA	4.00	Around 2.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-24	RIA	15.00	Around 15.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-25	CSA	10.00	Around 10.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-26	CSA	5.00	Around 5.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-27	CSA	8.00	Around 4.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-28	CSA	8.50	Around 3.00	3
Overall indicative budget		223.00		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex

<i>exclusion</i>	C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

### **Innovating with governance models and supporting policies**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-01: Mobilising the network of national contact points in Cluster 6**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.50 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Applicants must be Horizon Europe national support structures (e.g. NCP) responsible for Cluster 6 ‘Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment’ and officially nominated by a Member State or Associated Country.</p> <p>Only if and for as long as Horizon Europe structures have not been officially nominated, will national support structures responsible for Societal Challenges 2 (SC2) and 5 (SC5) be eligible.</p>
<i>Procedure</i>	<p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The granting authority can fund a maximum of one project.</p>

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal priorities, the successful proposal will interconnect national contact point (NCP) service across Europe and will help develop innovative governance models enabling sustainability and resilience notably to achieve better informed decision-making processes, societal engagement and innovation.

- An improved and more interconnected national contact point (NCP) service across Europe, in the areas covered by Horizon Europe Cluster 6 ‘Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment’, thereby simplifying access to Cluster 6 Horizon Europe calls, lowering the entry barriers for newcomers, and raising the average quality of proposals submitted.
- A more harmonised level of NCP support services across Europe.
- Enhanced integration of all the crosscutting issues throughout Horizon Europe.
- Increased participation of less active member states, associated countries, regions and stakeholders in the actions funded under Horizon Europe Cluster 6 programme to leverage the full R&I potential.
- Connection with NCP Academy activities.
- Increased cooperation of NCPs with the enterprise Europe network.

Scope: Proposals should aim to facilitate trans-national co-operation between national contact points (NCPs) in the areas covered by Horizon Europe Cluster 6 ‘Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment’, with a view to identifying and sharing good practices and raising the general standard of support to programme applicants, taking into account the diversity of actors that make up the constituency of this cluster. In addition, the action is expected to provide important feedback on issues relating to programme planning, design and evaluation.

Proposal should aim to facilitate trans-cluster cooperation in the areas covered by Pillar 2, with a view to identifying synergies, to make it possible to share good practices and tools. Close coordination and cooperation are key to achieve the objectives and impacts of the NCP networks.

The activities of this topic should build on the knowledge and tools already generated by the NCP networks developed under Horizon 2020.

In view of the changes brought about by the adoption of Horizon Europe, the network of NCPs is expected to organise transnational events to communicate with all interested actors regarding new research activities; to draw lessons from previous research programmes on best practice for cooperation; to help interested stakeholders prepare for new funding schemes and structures.

The network is expected to organise NCP Information Days, NCP trainings, brokerage events for interested actors, dissemination of relevant results and provide appropriate tools and

instruments to support NCPs, researchers and other actors. Activities will support researchers and other actors in the areas of food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment to connect into all clusters of Pillar 2 and across the three pillars of Horizon Europe. To achieve its expected outcomes and objectives, the NCP network should cooperate with, but should not duplicate actions foreseen in other thematic and horizontal Horizon Europe NCP networks, and in other networks such as the Enterprise Europe Network.<sup>387</sup>

Proposals should include a work package to implement matchmaking activities to link up potential participants from widening countries with emerging consortia in the domain of Cluster 6 ‘Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment’. Matchmaking should take place by means of online tools, brokerage events, info days and bilateral meetings between project initiators and candidate participants from widening countries. Other matchmaking instruments may be used as appropriate. Attention should be paid to increase participation of newcomers throughout Europe less active member states, associated countries, regions and stakeholders. Where relevant, synergies should be sought with the enterprise Europe network to organise matchmaking activities in accordance with Annex IV of the NCP minimum standards and guiding principles.”

Special attention should be given to enhancing the competence of NCPs, including helping new and less experienced NCPs rapidly acquire the know-how built up in other countries. This should contribute to increase the quality of proposals submitted, including those from countries where success rates in Horizon 2020 Societal Challenges 2 and 5 were lower than average.

The consortium should have a good representation of experienced and less experienced NCPs.

Submission of a single proposal is encouraged and it should cover the whole duration of Horizon Europe.

Countries not participating as beneficiaries of the action may benefit from the activities carried out by the network.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-02: Furthering food systems science and federating researchers across the European Research Area**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 17.00 million.

<sup>387</sup> Building notably on the booklet of good practices for the NCP-EEN Cooperation developed by NCPs CaRE the network of SC5 NCPs <http://www.ncps-care.eu/?wpmpro=booklet-good-practices-for-the-ncp-een-cooperation>

<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <p>The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p>
<i>Procedure</i>	<p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>To ensure a balanced portfolio, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least also to one project within Action a) that is the highest ranked, one project highest ranked within Action b) and one project highest ranked within Action c), provided that the applications attain all thresholds.</p>

Expected Outcome: The selected project results are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

- New game changers to provide sustainable diets and nutrition for all, ways to meet the Green Deal targets, establish cross cutting priorities, establish knowledge as a legitimate player/enabler in public debate, accelerate scientific progress, redesign farming systems, cope with unforeseen system shocks, and develop smart diversification.
- A food systems transformation, which achieves co-benefits for nutrition and health, climate mitigation and adaptation, environment, biodiversity, circularity, inclusion and overall sustainability.
- Novel understanding on how, and to which degree, such a transformation can be catalysed and sustained in the long term, and how the resulting trade-offs can be mitigated.
- Knowledge and understanding of how to move towards true cost accounting of food and food systems services that adequately integrate social and environmental externalities and embed environmental accounting (e.g. LCA).
- New insights, methods and tools to assess and manage the full systemic complexity of food systems and their multiple drivers, their dynamics and the issues and opportunities that relate to them.
- Ways to measure food system performance across all three dimensions of sustainability, which can provide more informed decision and policymaking, and implementation.
- An increase in the scientific understanding of food systems, in particular their systemic aspects, as to how they function, and how to transform them for co-benefits and minimised trade-offs.

- Engagement of academia and the necessary practitioners in science, innovation and beyond, that can deliver the necessary scientific methodologies and approaches to support policymakers to put complex transformations into practice.
- The establishment of a broad interdisciplinary network of researchers, scientists, universities and research centres covering a wide diversity of food systems-related disciplines, as well as those dealing with complex systems, to further systems science in this area.
- A strengthened European Research area for food systems transformation for co-benefits

Scope: This topic should support and strengthen the science, and the science-policy interface relevant to food systems, in particular in relation to delivering on farm to fork and Green Deal policy priorities. Successful proposals are expected to address one of the three inter-connected transformation actions:

Action a) Advance food systems science through:

- Mapping of existing food systems and typologies and design of new/existing indicator sets that could be applied at different spatial levels (local to global), with a focus on Europe.
- Development of methods and means to assess food system sustainability, such as establishing an overall food systems sustainability score incorporating common agreed Life Cycle Analysis methodologies.
- Development of innovative cause-effect simulation models that include all food system sectors and actors beyond the economic focus and which can integrate the three pillars of sustainability to explore the potential impact of different food systems transition options and scenarios delivering co-benefits, while minimising trade-offs.
- Providing sound evidence for policy and regulatory science needs to deliver food systems transition towards sustainability; including on how to transition to a true cost of food and food systems services that adequately embed social and environmental externalities relevant to various levels (global to local).

Action b) Contribute to building up a food systems European Research Area – part 1 - through:

- Launching new and assessing ongoing food systems foresight activities (building on existing ones including the fifth SCAR Foresight), detecting emerging trends, and delivering early warnings to policy makers and other relevant actors.
- Establish a project for policy support capacity to extract, summarise and disseminate findings and achievements of relevant EU Horizon projects and clusters of projects to policy makers, food systems actors and the public.

- Perform measurement of, and increase research impact of food system science (for example by assisting scientists to adopt inter and transdisciplinary approaches), and encourage the exchange of scientists for mutual learning and knowledge transfer across disciplines
- Foster citizen science in support of food systems transformation by assessing existing attempts, communicating successes, and catalysing new citizen science initiatives across Europe, in particular by engaging with youth, women, and under-represented communities

Action c) Contribute to building up a food systems European Research Area – part 2 – by creating an interdisciplinary pan-European academic network for food system science that integrates the social sciences and humanities, natural science and engineering, and design. This should:

- Federate universities, academics and researchers across Europe to support and engage in inter and trans-disciplinary research, foster debate, reflexivity and responsible research and innovation (RRI) in support of food systems transition and improved policymaking at all levels from global to local.
- Develop and share freely available open access educational material/curricula to be used by Higher Education Institutes (bachelors and post-graduate levels) to help strengthen their existing food systems-related teaching and research with an inter and transdisciplinary systems dimension that integrates all three aspects of sustainability, and farm to fork policy and Green Deal priorities.
- Support researcher training, mobility, mutual learning and knowledge sharing, and open science approaches.
- Disseminate and communicate scientific outcomes adapted for multiple audiences including researchers, policy makers, industry, science media and society. This will also include the organisation of a major international annual/bi-annual conference dedicated to advancing food systems science.
- Establish a high-level liaison with EU and relevant international initiatives.

Proposals must involve a wide diversity of food system actors and conducting interdisciplinary research to implement the required multi actor approach (cf eligibility conditions).

All projects should explain and map how co-benefits should be achieved relevant to the four Food 2030 priorities: nutrition for sustainable healthy diets, climate and environment, circularity and resource efficiency, innovation and empowerment of communities.

All projects should ensure a clustering mechanism with each other and feedback mechanisms with other governance topics and provide general scientific advice for related food systems oriented Horizon Europe projects.

All projects should set out a clear plan on how they should collaborate with other projects selected under this and any other relevant topic/call, by participating in joint activities, workshops, as well as common communication and dissemination activities and channels.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-03: Preparatory action for the Horizon Europe Food System Partnership**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: In line with the objectives of the European Green Deal priorities and the farm to fork strategy for a fair healthy and environmentally friendly food system, the successful proposal will support the establishment of innovative governance models, to establish the EU Horizon Europe Partnership entitled “Safe and sustainable food systems for people planet and climate, to underpin the needed transition to sustainable food systems, provide solutions to the farm to fork strategy by connecting national, regional and European research and innovation programmes and food systems actors, to deliver co-benefits for nutrition and health, climate and biodiversity, circularity and communities.

The results of the project will support European Green Deal priorities and the farm to fork strategy for a fair healthy and environmentally friendly food system, and for tackling the EU's Climate ambition for 2030 and 2050.

- It is a Horizon Europe food systems governance topic that is dedicated to the alignment of European R&I policy priorities, programmes, agendas, and the leveraging of R&I investments to transform food systems for co-benefits.
- It will seed the creation of a more structured Food Systems *European Research Area* as a preparatory action towards the build-up of the EU Horizon Europe Partnership entitled “Safe and sustainable food systems for people planet and climate”, expected to be launched in 2023, that will mobilise public authorities designing and implementing more coherent and ambitious EU R&I policy.

Scope: This project should:

- Convene R&I funders to help shape a more impactful and ambitious European Food Systems Research Area.



- Maximise alignment, leverage focus, and impact by exploring and building on common R&I policy priorities with and between R&I public funders in Member States.
- Support the relevant SCAR Strategic and Collaborative Working Groups, in particular the SCAR Food Systems Working Group and relevant Joint Programming Initiatives, to map potential co-funders on regional and national level and play a leading role as a convener of stakeholders in framing the partnership.
- Liaise with other relevant Horizon Europe partnerships to avoid overlap and benefit from collaboration, taking advantage of SCAR.
- Support the development of a partnership approach and a strategic research and innovation agenda based on operational objectives that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound (SMART).
- Foresee a mechanism to engage in a responsive and flexible way with EU and national farm to fork policy makers, relevant EU Agencies, industry, academia, civil society organisations, philanthropic organisations, education establishments, and finance sectors to leverage investments and support the deployment of good practices and responsible research and innovation-driven business opportunities, as well as outcomes for the public good.
- Liaise with international organisations and initiatives (e.g. FAO, WFP, WHO, OECD, WEF, Project Drawdown, etc.) and private funders (EIT FOOD KIC and relevant European Technology Platforms and foundations), urban and regional food systems strategies (including actions relevant to smart specialization).
- Foster programmes that should encourage the greater take up of digitalisation and social sciences and humanities, to improve social legitimacy and focus more on consumer and citizens needs and aspirations, and foster behavioural changes at all levels.
- Assess existing and foster improved food systems education and training programmes across member states, in cooperation with Higher Education Institutes (HEI) and professional/vocational training centres to fill skills and knowledge gaps.
- Explain and map how co-benefits should be achieved relevant to the four Food 2030 priorities: nutrition for sustainable healthy diets, climate and environment, circularity and resource efficiency, innovation and empowerment of communities.
- Establish a branded network of European universities, where rectors develop and adhere to code of practice and action plan that motivates the organisation, staff and students to foster Food 2030 inspired food system transition for co-benefits relevant to their internal corporate practices, local/regional communities, link to similar international networks for example in the EU-AU Partnership on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture.

The project should set out a clear plan on how it should collaborate with other projects selected under this and any other relevant topic/call, by participating in joint activities, workshops, as well as common communication and dissemination activities.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-04: Strengthening bioeconomy innovation and deployment across sectors and all governance levels**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

Expected Outcome: The successful proposal will contribute to the development of a Strategic Deployment Agenda for the Bioeconomy, including Food Systems, one of the actions in the 2018 bioeconomy strategy and Action Plan. The European bioeconomy strategy and Action Plan<sup>388</sup> aims to deploy innovations across Europe to ensure that the bioeconomy as a whole is a vehicle for inclusive and sustainable growth at the local level, and is a key contributor to EU's Climate ambition for 2030 and 2050. It will contribute to improved governance for innovation ecosystems and enable advances in sustainability and resilience.

Project results are expected to contribute to all following expected outcomes:

- Improved understanding about which measures should be taken, by EU, Member States, and others to strengthen the innovation ecosystem within and across food systems and bio-based sectors, based on a detailed mapping exercise and on a comprehensive view on issues related to deployment
- Improved impact and efficiency of bioeconomy innovation and innovation systems

These outcomes will also support the farm to fork strategy for fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food systems, the EU Green Deal policy priorities and the EU's Climate ambition for 2030 and 2050.

<sup>388</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1583773927512&uri=CELEX:52018DC0673>

Scope: Innovation today and the initiatives and structures that are part of it at EU, national, regional, and local level already contribute to the uptake and deployment of innovative solutions for example by supporting testing, demonstration, and training, and by investing in the infrastructure that enables these activities. However, more action is needed to (1) address the fragmentation of this innovation ecosystem across food systems and bio-based sectors, (2) to create linkages between the different levels of governance, and (3) to improve the interfacing between the research communities, the innovation communities, investors and citizens. Actions that address these areas of improvement across the bioeconomy are to be preferred because their crosscutting nature and trans-disciplinarity might be a further source of innovation and system transformation, and because they enable sharing of best practices across sectors and actors.

Proposals are expected to:

- Identify instruments and initiatives that contribute to spreading knowledge and deploying innovations in and across food systems and bio-based sectors, at EU, national, regional, and local level. Identify links with other policies (e.g. education) and instruments (e.g. financial instruments, regulation);
- Analyse possible interactions and complementarities between initiatives, instruments and policies;
- Identify opportunities for improved governance and for enhanced cooperation between instruments and initiatives within the bioeconomy's innovation ecosystems, across the EU, Member States and private sector;
- Recommend actions to improve bioeconomy innovation and the deployment of new knowledge, technologies and practices, in particular by strengthening cooperation between entities and activities that support different forms of innovation.

Proposals should:

- Map the structures, instruments and initiatives that make up the innovation ecosystem of the bioeconomy with respect to food systems, bio-based sectors (including the blue economy), at local, regional, national and EU level
- Put in place networking and matchmaking activities to allow these structures, instruments and initiatives to raise their profile, to identify opportunities for new collaborations both amongst themselves, and across the different sectors of the bioeconomy
- Provide advisory support to these structures, instruments and initiatives to align themselves to policy priorities at different levels of governance, and in full awareness of existing schemes of sustainability and circularity indicators of the bioeconomy

- Identify best practices to improve the exploitation of outcomes from funded research within innovation communities, innovators and entrepreneurs, and public and private investment communities
- Examine the possibilities for improved reporting on the state-of-play and results of innovation in the bioeconomy
- Address specific barriers to reducing the fragmentation of the innovation ecosystem
- Deliver specific recommendations related to thematic financial instruments and tools applicable to sectors of the bioeconomy and to innovation. Targets of this activity should be previously mapped public and private investors, entrepreneurs and all the structures, institutes, programs and initiatives. Advice should focus on the effective and integrated use of financial tools to support innovation in the long term, and on the contribution to building a sustainable and responsible financing framework in Europe
- Where appropriate, link to Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe projects that demonstrate innovative and cross-sectoral solutions, as well as to relevant EU initiatives (for example those linked to : European Innovation Partnerships, European Innovation Council, European Institute of Innovation & Technology).
- Engage with policy makers and other stakeholders/initiative-owners that are responsible for innovation support at different levels of governance, to co-create recommendations to improve bioeconomy innovation and the deployment of new knowledge, technologies and practices

Proposals should set out a clear plan on how they foresee to collaborate with other projects selected under this and any other relevant topics/calls, by participating in joint activities, workshops, as well as common communication and dissemination activities.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-05: Fostering strategic advice and synergies between national and EU research and innovation agendas, including SCAR foresight**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: Improved coordination of national research programmes on food, agriculture and the wider Bioeconomy with a view to integrate them better within the European Research Area (ERA) through:

- Regular portfolio analysis to support a better structured organisation, facilitation and reporting of SCAR Strategic and Collaborative Working Groups` (SWGs/CWGs) activities on the various themes of main relevance for Horizon Europe, the common agricultural policy, the Green Deal, Digital Europe and the farm to fork and biodiversity strategies. This will lead to enhanced R&I cooperation between Member States and Associated Countries and to synergies at national and EU level;
- Improved linkages between Horizon Europe, the CAP and the Green Deal, including its farm to fork and biodiversity strategies through enhancing Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) in the countries and a more efficient European Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI) on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability, bridging the gap between science and practice;
- More inclusive SCAR SWGs and CWGs, fostering mutual learning, covering as much as possible all European Member States and Associated Countries and serving the development and implementation of foresight based research and innovation policy strategies on European and national level.

Scope: The main focus of the successful proposal should be to support the work of the SCAR SWGs and CWGs. This includes notably the organisation and facilitation of the activities, particularly meetings and workshops of SCAR SWGs, CWGs and potential ad hoc task forces, according to the initiatives taken by the Working Groups themselves.

This should in the short- to medium-term improve the quality of outputs of the SCAR SWGs or CWGs in the different areas covered, thus having a positive impact on achieving the objectives of the European Green Deal, the farm to fork strategy, the common agricultural policy, the biodiversity strategy, the wider food systems and bioeconomy research and innovation policies and the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems in Member States and Associated Countries.

Main activities are the collection of a portfolio of ongoing or finished projects at national, regional and EU level relevant to the various themes covered in the work plans of the SCAR SWGs and CWGs, as well as on other issues that may arise in light of policy developments and priorities. This includes the search, the summarising and analysis of relevant project content and outputs in order to help prepare the activities of each SWG/CWG, including their regular meetings, according to the specific theme(s) covered. This should support the depth of strategic discussions in the Working Groups. At the end of each year, an annual overview document of all portfolios per theme should be made.

Activities should consider the linkages to Horizon Europe partnerships and missions, to Joint Programming Initiatives and ERA-Nets, other relevant policies (e.g. Education policy) and interesting Member States/Associated Countries networking activities. Support for phasing-in

of SCAR SWGs or CWGs that may be set up in the future also forms part of the scope. Ad hoc task forces may be used to support specific activities for short time periods.

This proposal should furthermore ensure broader dissemination of the outputs of the SCAR SWGs and CWGs, including the portfolio analysis, to any actor interested in their respective domains, both in classical ways (e.g. with reports, factsheets, videos, workshops, conferences, etc.) as by using up to date IT tools and websites, providing on a case by case basis interactive linkages with the young generation of scientists, innovators and citizens for example by hackathons. These materials and tools should be widely spread and also be made available to the SCAR Steering Group and the SCAR Plenary. It includes helping to prepare the input from the SWGs/CWGs for the SCAR Foresights and to help disseminate outcomes, as well as supporting its take-up by SCAR Working Groups and possible ad hoc task forces, including linking to international R&I partnerships (EU-AU) and processes, such as the UN Food Systems Summit follow-up.

The consortium should be representative of the EU Member States and Associated Countries. Entities in EU Member States and Associated Countries not integrated in the consortium should be identified and the reasons for not participating in the Consortium clearly explained in the proposal. These countries should nevertheless be invited and encouraged to participate in the project activities (e.g. meetings, workshops).

A project duration of 4 years is expected.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

The foreseen services stated under the tender specifications (Annex II to the invitation to tender) of the on-going public procurement procedure on “Framework Services Contract for Strategic Analysis and Support for Enhanced Research Cooperation in Agriculture and Food” (see procurement documents available at <https://etendering.ted.europa.eu/cft/cft-display.html?cftId=7758>) are out of the scope of this topic.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-06: Environmental and social cross-compliance of marine policies**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

**Expected Outcome:** Successful proposals will enhance new knowledge and design or improve tools to achieve better informed decision-making processes and better integrated policies,

supporting the implementation of the European Green Deal, with particular focus on supporting the Water Framework Directive, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Nature Directives. In this way proposals will contribute to the development or improvement of innovative governance models enabling sustainability and resilience and of EU and international science-policy interfaces.

Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- Better understanding of policy (in)coherence, potential weaknesses in cross-compliance, trade-offs and underexploited synergies between marine/maritime policies, legislation and regulation is used by the policy making community
  - to halt biodiversity decline and enhance biodiversity and ecosystem restoration and conservation for the benefit of local communities
  - to favour nature-based climate adaptation and mitigation measures
  - to achieve progress towards zero pollution.
- Analytical contributions, orientations and proposals to improve international, European, national or regional marine/maritime policies, legislation, regulation and their implementation, are provided to the policy making community in order to fully integrate the environmental, social and health requirements and considerations, enabling a better integration and harmonisation of policies.
- Better understanding of (a potentially regulatorily consolidated) lack of biodiversity, pollution or climate related considerations and socio-economic power balances in decision making that could disadvantage biodiversity and ecosystem conservation and restoration and ecosystem services' benefits to local communities or disadvantage pollution prevention, reduction and remediation; is used to the benefit of international cooperation and development aid for local communities.
- Better understanding of the effects of different climate adaptation measures on good ecological, environmental or conservation status, is leading to tangible support for nature-based and socially acceptable climate adaptation and mitigation strategies with low carbon footprint.
- Better understanding of the weaknesses in consistency between emission control regulation and fresh water and marine environmental quality standards for chemical substances and user or prohibition guidelines at local level (communes, garden maintenance companies etc.), as well as food quality and safety or other health standards is used by the policy making community.
- Better understanding of the weaknesses in cross-compliance between common agricultural policy and the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) such as in relation to eutrophication in fresh and marine waters has inspired the policy making community to introduce improvements.

- The policy making community exploited a better insight in how the Member States' Maritime Spatial Plans, River Basin Management Plans and MSFD measures link together concerning climate adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity and ecosystem conservation and restoration, and pollution.

Scope: Proposals should focus on implementation research on environmental and social cross-compliance of a broad range of marine and maritime policies to detect inconsistencies between different policies, legislation and regulations as barriers for the Green Deal and its strategies (EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, Climate Adaptation Strategy, the zero pollution ambition) in the marine domain.

Actions should address one or more of the following options:

1. Environmental and social cross-compliance and coherence of marine policies for nature-based climate adaptation and mitigation

A sufficient scientific knowledge base is needed to be able to judge and avoid potential exemptions of Water Framework Directive and Marine Strategy Framework Directive requirements or conflicts with NATURA 2000 legislation for new coastal infrastructure licences for climate adaptation and mitigation actions. The implementation of Article 4(7) of the WFD on how to deal with new physical modifications to (including coastal) water bodies currently differs considerably from one Member State to another<sup>389</sup>.

Proposals should analyse European, national or regional marine/maritime policies, legislation and regulation, in particular related to the Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Nature Directives versus marine sectorial and marine spatial planning legislation, regulation and implementation focusing on climate adaptation and mitigation. Proposals should review the knowledge on the effects of different climate adaptation and mitigation measures on good ecological, environmental or conservation status, also taking into account the benefits of traditional and indigenous knowledge and experience on climate adaptation and mitigation ecosystem services for integration in policy implementation.

Proposals should identify weaknesses in cross-compliance and coherence of marine/maritime policies, legislation and regulation to favour nature-based climate adaptation and mitigation measures. They should make proposals for improvement and define research and innovation needs to cover gaps in knowledge to assess effects of different climate adaptation and mitigation measures on good ecological, environmental or conservation status to support environmentally friendly decision making.

2. Environmental and social cross-compliance and coherence of marine policies to halt biodiversity decline and enhance restoration and conservation for the benefit of local communities

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WFD fitness check EC Staff Working Document SWD(2019) 439 final



Proposals should analyse international, European, national or regional marine/maritime policies, legislation and regulation (Convention on Biological Diversity, Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction, Environmental Impact Assessment etc.) versus marine sectorial (such as International Seabed Authority, international fisheries regulation, fossil fuel exploration/exploitation, marine wildlife trade, agriculture, waste, etc.) and marine spatial planning legislation, regulation and implementation focusing on biodiversity and ecosystem conservation and restoration, including Marine Protected Area assignments.

Proposals should identify weaknesses in cross-compliance and coherence of marine/maritime policies, legislation and regulation to halt biodiversity decline and enhance restoration and conservation for the benefit of local communities. They should make proposals for improvement to support environmentally friendly decision making at all governance levels, also taking into account the benefits of traditional and indigenous knowledge and experience on biodiversity and ecosystem services for integration in policy implementation.

### 3. Environmental and social cross-compliance and coherence of marine policies to achieve progress towards zero pollution

Proposals should focus on implementation research on environmental and social cross-compliance and coherence of a broad range of marine and maritime policies to detect inconsistencies between different policies, legislation and regulations in order to achieve progress in the elimination of historical and future pollution. Proposals should analyse international, European, national or regional marine/maritime policies, legislation and regulation, versus marine sectorial legislation, regulation and implementation focusing on all kinds of pollution. They should make proposals for improvement to eliminate inconsistencies at all relevant governance levels and define potential scientific needs to achieve them.

The size of requested EU contribution should be commensurate to the breadth of the project scope.

The proposals should cover a representative set of coastal areas or regions across Europe varying according to size and geographical, environmental, socio-economic, institutional and administrative conditions (regional, inter-regional, macro-region, cross-border).

Interactive research approaches should be used to engage with local, regional, national and – where relevant - international authorities, as well as local communities, citizens and other relevant stakeholders, considering gender, age and socio-economic background, where relevant.

Projects should build on existing knowledge and integrate results from multiple origins, including other EU, international (for example UN) or national projects or studies. Some cooperation activities with projects financed under topics from Destinations “Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services” and “Clean environment and zero pollution” and Green Deal calls (like LC-GD-7-1-2020 Restoration of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) could be included. This topic should also be linked to the Horizon Europe Missions Ocean, seas and waters and Adaptation to Climate Change including Societal Transformation, the Partnership for a

climate neutral, sustainable and productive Blue Economy, the Biodiversity Partnership, the Partnership Water security for the planet (Water4All) or other partnerships where relevant.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-07: Regional governance models in the bioeconomy**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: Successful proposals will contribute to the expected impacts of Destination ‘Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal’, and the European policies it supports, in particular the European Green Deal, and EU bioeconomy strategy, by supporting the establishment of the innovative governance models notably to achieve better-informed decision-making processes, social engagement and innovation. In addition, the topic supports the strengthened EU and international science-policy interfaces to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Creation of a supporting governance structure and related capacities for regional authorities, contributing to the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI)<sup>390</sup> and aiming at developing comprehensive and innovation- and sustainability-driven bioeconomy strategies.
- Support to local economic and implementing authorities, including at bioeconomy clusters’ level, to improve engagement of regional and local actors, considering hierarchy of use, trade-offs, synergies, business models, participatory approaches etc. with improved environmental, social and economic impacts.
- Support to the development of regional/local strategies, aiming at exploiting and developing balanced local potentials and innovation (in terms of feedstock, infrastructures (e.g. biorefineries) for logistics, services and production, investments) within the framework of local development and investment as well as environmental protection plans.
- Integration of the opportunities created by the local bio-based economy within broader bioeconomy transition, e.g. by linking ecosystem/nature services’ valorisation with

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<sup>390</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm?pg=circular>

sustainable biomass production, processing, product design and manufacture, circular use and upcycling to new applications.

- Development of the best practice guidelines for local operators and innovation developers, supporting climate-neutrality and low environmental footprint improvements of bio-based products and services;
- Development of novel business models and related social measures to enable consumers, industry and public bodies to switch to socially and environmentally responsible behaviour within their choices (e.g. regulatory measures, corporate responsibility initiatives, education); ensuring synergies, transparency and inclusiveness of all actors;

Scope: Improved and informed governance including social innovation contributes to reducing resource consumption and results in an increased innovation capacity of all actors, and reducing the risk of leaving anyone behind. This should take into account the regional and local peculiarities, including feedstock availability, industrial development, consumption patterns, market measures and available investment streams (financial models), while ensuring effective sharing of best practices across European regions. This also helps to advance innovation at local scale and engage all actors.

This action should support the implementation of sustainable bio-based value chains, in regional settings (toolbox of instruments including strategies, plans and programmes, including the social dimension). Proposals should benefit from social creativity and opportunities at regional scale unleashed for bio-based systems, ensuring their low environmental footprint, and providing for its operational verification. Robust environmental protection plans should underpin the effort undertaken.

The local dimension refers to regional scales, in terms of rural/urban/coastal areas, to be identified/defined in their specific characteristics to act as optimal frameworks for coherent and replicable strategies of bio-based systems. The proposals should seek complementarities with related actions<sup>391</sup> on the governance of bio-based innovation and ensure inclusiveness and the engagement of all actors.

Proposals should:

- a. Analyse and structure the regional bioeconomy-related policy mix (e.g. regional operational programmes, bioeconomy strategies under the common agricultural policy instruments, innovation action plans, business models, environmental protection plans) to understand the potentials, bottlenecks, and opportunities, capacities etc. for feedstocks, infrastructure, investment, human skills, innovation actors (including community knowledge) etc. to enable sufficient impacts/benefits/positive trade-offs and performances of the specific bioeconomy/bio-based value chains;

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<sup>391</sup> Such as the POWER4BIO and BE-Rural projects funded under Horizon 2020 or the projects under the call SwafS-14-2018-2019-2020: Supporting the development of territorial responsible research and innovation.

- b. assess existing/develop a new policy monitoring system and key performance indicators of the effectiveness and robustness of existing governance schemes, to allow replication across Europe (e.g. income generation for all stakeholders, labour conditions, environmental indicators, social engagement, innovation parameters etc);
- c. ensure efficient exchange of best practice and engagement of all actors (regional and local authorities, SMEs, civil society organisations including NGOs, knowledge providers) via robust and transparent communication and awareness-rising campaigns;
- d. analyse social and economic barriers and potentialities to enable the transition towards socially and environmentally responsible behaviour within all ranges (e.g. regulatory measures, corporate responsibility initiatives, education), ensuring inclusiveness of all actors (NGOs, civil society etc, considering gender and age, where relevant.)

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-08: Improving understanding of and engagement in bio-based systems with training and skills development**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: Successful proposal(s) will contribute to the expected impacts of Destination ‘Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal’, and the European policies it supports, in particular the European Green Deal and EU bioeconomy strategy, by supporting the establishment of the innovative governance models notably to achieve better-informed decision-making processes, social engagement and innovation. In addition, the topic supports the strengthened EU and international science-policy interfaces to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Creation of guidelines for training and mentoring programmes in specific European regions and local communities, on knowledge and skills useful in the bioeconomy, and in particular bio-based sectors.
- Increased awareness, understanding and engagement of all actors (especially stakeholders involved in adult learning, retraining and skills’ development) with focus on co-creation, and social innovation.

- Support to the local balanced local potentials and innovation (in terms of feedstock, infrastructures, capacities) within the framework of local development and investment as well as fostering sustainability-driven policy.
- Integration of the opportunities created by the human-centric principles, offered by art, culture and (eco)-design, in respect to the bio-based feedstocks, including traditional and novel biological materials.
- Support to the feedback loops from the society to the policy makers, by developing the best practice guidelines for local operators and innovation developers, supporting climate-neutrality and low environmental footprint improvements of bio-based products and services;
- Development of skills leading to the novel business models and related social measures to enable consumers, industry and public bodies to switch to socially and environmentally responsible behaviour within their choices (e.g. regulatory measures, corporate responsibility initiatives, education); ensuring synergies, transparency and inclusiveness of all actors.

Scope: Improved and informed governance including social innovation contributes to reducing resource consumption and results in an increased innovation capacity of all actors, and reducing the risk of leaving anyone behind. This should take into account the need to promote social engagement, supporting the permanent learning and re-training, in the area of bio-based economy.

This needs to take into account local specificities, such as the sustainable biological resources available (both traditional materials such as wood, cork or straw), but also innovations such as sustainable bio-textiles, bio-composites, 3-D printed biomaterials, recycled agro-food residues etc. This also helps to advance innovation and awareness including on social level, looking on the role of design, arts and culture, as technological capacities. The improved understanding of the social attitudes in diverse European regions forms an important part of this action.

This action should support the implementation of sustainable bio-based value chains, in the regional settings, by developing guidelines and creating feedback loops to the respective policy makers. Proposals should benefit from social creativity and opportunities for bio-based systems unleashed at regional scale ensuring their low environmental footprint and sustainability. Robust environmental evaluation should underpin the effort undertaken.

The proposals should seek complementarities with related actions on governance of bio-based innovation and ensure inclusiveness and engagement of all actors, especially SMEs, civil society organisations including NGOs and broader civil society (e.g. educational institutions, museums, science, art centres).

Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake. Proposal could explore intersectionality approaches and consider aspects like gender, ethnicity, migrant

or refugee status, social class, sexual orientation and disability to ensure inclusion of marginalised groups in decision-making, citizen engagement and training activities.

Proposals should:

- a. Analyse and develop guidelines on the regional bioeconomy-related skills/(re)-training/adult learning programmes to allow replication across Europe, taking into account the diversity of regional/local approaches, including the existing support measures (e.g. bioeconomy strategies, sectorial public and industry programmes and initiatives).
- b. Assess and integrate the contribution from the humanities/art/design/culture into bioeconomy/bio-based economy sectors (e.g. role of innovation and sustainability for the new bio-based materials, new functionalities, safety, user-friendliness, understanding);
- c. Ensure efficient exchange of best practice and engagement of all actors (e.g. regional and local authorities, SMEs, civil society organisations including NGOs, University alliances and professionals' associations, knowledge providers, artists, designers and architects) via robust and transparent communication and awareness-rising campaigns;
- d. Analyse and develop recommendations on social and economic barriers and potentialities (e.g. job creation capacity and its quality) to enable the transition towards socially and environmentally responsible behaviour within all ranges (e.g. regulatory measures, corporate responsibility initiatives, education), ensuring inclusiveness of all actors (NGOs, civil society, including women, ethnic and religious minorities, migrants and refugees, the LGBTIQ community, disabled persons, youth and the elderly, etc);
- e. Link with relevant activities under H2020, BBI JU, BIOEAST Initiative and EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities, in particular their education efforts.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-09: Revitalisation of European local communities with innovative bio-based business models and social innovation**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: Successful proposal(s) will contribute to the expected impacts of Destination 'Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in

support of the Green Deal', and the European policies it supports, in particular the European Green Deal, and EU bioeconomy strategy, by supporting the establishment of the innovative governance models notably to achieve better-informed decision-making processes, social engagement and innovation. In addition, the topic supports the strengthened EU and international science-policy interfaces to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all following expected outcomes:

- Higher awareness of stakeholders (e.g. by development of a programme that focuses on helping local stakeholders, including primary biomass producers, civil society organisations including NGOs and SMEs to be integrated in and benefit from bio-based value chains) – identifying local actors and improve communication between them, showing opportunities for collaboration along the bio-based value chain.
- Increased opportunities to develop skilled jobs and small-scale establishments in the bioeconomy, thus helping to revitalise local communities (by supporting the local and regional rural development, economic and implementing authorities, to raise awareness of bio-based options)
- Advancement of the role of 'social enterprise' model for local communities, including the low-income populations, benefiting from creativity linked to bio-based solutions and promoting inclusiveness and cooperation at all levels.
- Increased opportunities created by the local bio-based economy within broader bioeconomy transition, e.g. by linking valorisation of ecosystem/nature services' (e.g. recreation) with sustainable biomass production, processing, product design and manufacture, circular use and upcycling to new applications.
- Supporting the development of for small businesses and for business-to-consumers communication of innovation, climate-neutrality and low environmental footprint/benefits/trade-offs and performances of bio-based products and services (e.g. by development of best practice guidelines);
- Supporting novel business models and related social measures to enable consumers, industry and public bodies to switch to socially and environmentally responsible behaviour within their choices (e.g. guidelines on regulatory measures, corporate responsibility initiatives, education); ensuring synergies, transparency and inclusiveness of all actors)

**Scope:** The action advances the role and impact of bio-based innovation to accelerate the transition from a linear fossil-based economy, which leads to overuse and depletion of natural resources, into a resource-efficient and circular bio-based systems operating safely within planetary boundaries. Improved and informed governance and especially social innovation contributes to reducing resource consumption and results in an increased innovation capacity of all actors, while reducing the risk of leaving anyone behind, particularly in the areas and communities in need of revitalisation. This also helps to advance innovation at local scale and

engage all actors (especially the ‘social enterprise’ model relevant for vulnerable populations).

Proposals should benefit from social creativity and opportunities at regional scale unleashed for bio-based systems, ensuring their low environmental footprint, in terms of feedstock, resources, processes, materials and products. Impacts and trade-offs, such as the carbon footprint and environmental footprint of the whole value chains should be part of the assessment of the bio-based systems. The proposals should seek complementarities with related actions<sup>392</sup>, under rural development programs on the governance of bio-based innovation and ensure inclusiveness and engagement of all actors.

Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake. Proposal could explore intersectionality approaches and consider aspects like gender, ethnicity, migrant or refugee status, social class, sexual orientation and disability to ensure inclusion of marginalised groups in citizen engagement and the development of tools and guidelines.

Proposals should:

- a. select a range of bio-based systems where value chains can be tailored to specific needs in respect to the revitalisation of local communities (understood both in territorial and social sense), to their environmental and social impacts (benefits and trade-offs) from trade in the primary materials to the final products;
- b. focus on relevant new or updated business models and local capacities (feedstocks, infrastructure, human skills, etc), and innovation actors (including community knowledge and marginalised groups), to enable sufficient impacts/benefits/positive trade-offs and performances of the specific value chains;
- c. assess existing/develop new monitoring system and indicators of the effectiveness and robustness of existing governance schemes, to allow replication across Europe (e.g. income generation for all stakeholders, labour conditions, environmental indicators, social engagement, innovation parameters etc);
- d. ensure efficient engagement of all actors (public authorities, SMEs, NGOs, knowledge providers) via robust and transparent communication and awareness-rising campaigns;
- e. analyse social and economic barriers and potentialities to enable the transition towards socially and environmentally responsible behaviour within all ranges (e.g. regulatory measures, corporate responsibility initiatives, education), ensuring inclusiveness of all actors (NGOs, civil society etc).

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<sup>392</sup> such as the topic “HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01-02: Expertise and training centre on rural innovation”



**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-10: Raising awareness of circular and sustainable bioeconomy in support of Member States to develop bioeconomy strategies and/or action plans**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: Successful proposal(s) will contribute to the expected impacts of Destination ‘Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal’ “Innovative governance models enabling sustainability and resilience notably to achieve better informed decision-making processes, social engagement and innovation”. This action will support Member States that do not have a bioeconomy strategy and/or an action plan in developing one as part of their preparation for a sustainable economic, social and environmental transition to climate neutrality as called for in the European Green Deal.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Increased awareness of decision makers and public administrators in different ministries about the various bioeconomy sectors, the role of the bioeconomy in the EU policies, the benefits of the bioeconomy and particularly the circular bio-based sector, including products substituting fossil-based and carbon-intensive products and reducing of respective emissions of GHGs and other pollutants.
- Improved inter-ministerial interaction and engagement in Member States that are developing or are preparing to develop their Strategy and/or Action Plan through exchange of good practices and experiences at meetings and conferences.
- Increased awareness of the bioeconomy and its potential among a broad range of national stakeholders, such as the general public, knowledge providers, universities, investors, industry, primary producers and NGOs, through tools such as for example workshops, living lab activities, exhibitions.
- Better interconnection of stakeholders into national bioeconomy hubs with the aim of providing a framework and the assurance that even without national level strategic orientation they are in line with the EU objectives.

- Improved information about current policy instruments and solutions to bridge between strategies and actual policy, including exploitation of opportunities offered by the current EU policy framework (e.g. related to circular economy, energy, innovation, agriculture).

Scope: The European Green Deal, the Commission’s growth strategy, has set Europe on its path to be the first climate neutral continent by 2050 and achieve a green transition that must be just, fair and inclusive. One of the seven core pathways to deliver on climate neutrality, identified in the Clean Planet Strategy is the bioeconomy. The updated EU bioeconomy strategy has highlighted the relevance of developing national bioeconomy strategies and action plans to deploy a sustainable and circular bioeconomy across Europe taking into account economic, social and environmental aspects.

To date, there are still Member States, including many from Central and Eastern Europe that do not have a national bioeconomy strategy and/or action plan despite their high biomass resource base and new bioeconomy potential. This topic should support Member States to develop strategies and/or action plans by improving knowledge and raising awareness of a sustainable, circular bioeconomy, its challenges and opportunities as well as experiences made elsewhere.

Moreover, the topic should help to bring together national stakeholders in deploying and fostering the bioeconomy related research and innovation developments by engaging local stakeholders into the participation in macro-regional and European thematic networks and into building the common European Research Area.

The focus of the topic should be two-fold: reaching out to decision makers and public administrators in different ministries as well as to a wide range of stakeholders crucial for the development of the national strategies and bioeconomy deployment across Europe. These stakeholders could consist for example of investors, industries, SMEs, feedstock providers (e.g. waste, side streams, farmers, foresters, fishermen). It is also relevant to cooperate and establish links with relevant existing initiatives such as the BIOEAST, EUBIONET, BBI JU and the Circular Bio-based Europe (CBE) Partnership.

This topic should ensure that Member States without bioeconomy strategies and/or action plans become equally empowered to make the transition to climate neutrality as those that already have a bioeconomy strategy in place.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-11: Education on the bioeconomy including bio-based sectors for young people in primary and secondary education in Europe**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 2.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: Successful proposal(s) will contribute to the expected impacts of Destination ‘Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal’s and support the European Green Deal priorities and the updated European bioeconomy strategy with the aim to accelerate the transition to a sustainable and circular bioeconomy in Europe. This will contribute to achievement of a climate-neutral Europe by 2050.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Increased awareness of the environmental, social and economic benefits of sustainable and circular bioeconomy and its sectors, in particular bio-based sectors among young people at pre-school, elementary and high school level.
- Increased interest among new generations to join education and training on sustainable and circular behaviours and to become responsible consumers that will take on a sustainable and circular lifestyle; and new ways of attracting talent in the life science, technology and the bioeconomy opportunities.
- Innovative approaches to provide a toolkit with educational and information material, such as videos, games, social media, prize competitions, including nomination of “Bioeconomy Youth Ambassadors” campaigns for children and young adults in high schools.
- Preparing the younger generation to assume their role in the transition to a circular and sustainable bioeconomy, e.g. through the uptake of innovative solutions.
- Strengthened cooperation between teachers, parents and youth by developing new approaches.

Scope: The updated European bioeconomy strategy highlights the importance of education and increasing public awareness of all areas of the bioeconomy as crucial to understanding the challenges and the opportunities offered by the bioeconomy.

This topic should focus on the bioeconomy in general but with a specific focus on circular bio-based sectors and their potential, to prepare citizens for a future that should assume a sustainable and circular lifestyle (in terms of consumption, recycling, etc.) and to inspire young people to pursue education in life science, technology and bioeconomy related areas. The actions should promote the bioeconomy and bio-based solutions that provide environmental, climate-neutral and socio-economic benefits through education, training and awareness raising on sustainable production, consumption and lifestyles by engaging children and young adults.

Strengthening the knowledge and sensitivity of future generations to environmental issues, sustainability and circularity through information and education programmes targeting younger generation can contribute to raising a future generation of decision-makers and a workforce that are informed and interested in bioeconomy.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-12: EU agriculture within a safe and just operating space and planetary boundaries**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 10.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:  Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: Successful proposals will set out a credible pathway to contributing to innovative governance and sound decision making in policy for the transition of European agriculture required by the European Green Deal.

Project results are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- Boost EU and Associated Countries analytical and modelling capacity in agriculture in both bio-physical and socio-economic domains
- Develop an analytical and policy framework and timeframe for the European farming sector to operate within safe and just operating space and planetary boundaries and achieving EU climate change policy objectives

- Analyse policies and develop policy recommendations for the agricultural policies in Europe in 2030

Scope: In order to enable the transition to sustainable agriculture, it is crucial to establish the necessary policy framework and related monitoring and evaluation activities. This implies the development of appropriate tools for measurement and monitoring of socio-economic and biophysical data in order to model and project scenarios and derive the necessary targets, trajectories and relevant policy measures and the development of relevant analysis.

Projects should:

- operationalise the concept of safe and just operating space, including planetary boundaries, in the case of the EU agriculture and at different spatial scales;
- boost the analytical and modelling capacity of the EU and Associated Countries in the farming sector with a view to informing impact assessments and formulating policy recommendations, with a particular focus on conditions and policy measures for the EU farming sector to respect planetary boundaries, in particular regarding climate change and biodiversity, and safe and just operating space;
- work at various geographical scales, from local, national, EU to global levels, and simulations and projections should range from short / medium term (to capture the accelerating impact of climate change) to long term policy scenarios;
- Within a foresight exercise, develop post-2027 science-based targets for European farming allowing the sector to remain within the planetary boundaries and a safe and just operating space, and the conditions to achieve the targets, and develop a roadmap and the related policy framework to reach those objectives;
- mobilise running Horizon 2020 projects and build on their main results. It should aim to bridge gaps in modelling approaches relevant to the exercise, including those identified by the Horizon 2020 project Suprema. Projects should link in particular with the projects financed under RUR-03-2018 (CONSOLE<sup>393</sup>, Contract2.0<sup>394</sup> and EFFECT<sup>395</sup>) and RUR-04-2018-2019 (Mind Step<sup>396</sup>, BESTMAP<sup>397</sup> and AGRICORE<sup>398</sup>);
- include a task to collaborate with other projects financed under this topic and under topic HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-13 “Modelling land use and land management in the context of climate change”;

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<sup>393</sup> <https://console-project.eu/>

<sup>394</sup> <https://www.project-contracts20.eu/>

<sup>395</sup> <http://project-effect.eu/>

<sup>396</sup> <https://mind-step.eu/>

<sup>397</sup> <http://bestmap.eu/>

<sup>398</sup> <https://agricore-project.eu/>

- work in a multidisciplinary manner and involve a broad community of scientists including climate, land, biodiversity, health, human, economic and environment sciences;
- establish a regular dialogue with the European Commission regarding objectives, timeline and main deliverables with the goal to provide analyses, analytical tools, simulations and policy recommendations for the common agricultural policy (CAP) post 2027, as well as other relevant EU programmes (for instance EU climate and biodiversity policies). The possible participation of the JRC in the project will ensure that the approach proposed will be compatible with and improve the tools used at the European Commission. Project duration should not be shorter than four years;
- ensure that the proposed approach will be compatible with and improve the tools used at the European Commission.

As an option, necessary additional analysis and modelling may be supported through grants to third parties. In this case, the proposal must define the process of selecting entities for which financial support will be granted, of up to 60.000 EUR per third party. Grants to third parties may be utilised to ensure a comprehensive coverage of technical issues and the participation of pluralistic approaches to the analytical work on a series of key issues.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-13: Modelling land use and land management in the context of climate change**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).

Expected Outcome: Successful proposals will set out a credible pathway to contributing to innovative governance and sound decision making in policy for the transition required by the European Green Deal.

Project results are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- Boosting of economic and environmental modelling of land use and management and carbon sequestration in Europe and use of modelling for policy purposes (mainly climate policy, agricultural policy, land use policy).
- Contribution to the formulation, implementation and monitoring of land-related issues of agriculture and forestry policies, in particular linked to climate change.

Scope: To ensure the sustainable management of land resources in the long term there is a need for an integrated framework that addresses society's objectives appropriately by understanding the trade-offs between uses and by incentivising actions / behaviours / investments contributing to desirable targets. Land use and management has a key role to play in Europe in terms of boosting carbon storage, producing biomass for the bioeconomy, reducing urban sprawl and attaining the objective of climate neutrality by 2050 while ensuring food and nutrition security, biodiversity commitments and well-being in general. There are however substantial knowledge gaps regarding, in particular, the understanding of the impacts of farming / forestry practices at various scales, from local to global, and the capacity to model these impacts (economic and environmental). Work should include the analysis of land use dynamics and trends between arable land, permanent grassland, land abandonment / marginal lands, forest areas, for which quantifications and an identification of drivers and impacts should be done in an integrated manner.

Projects should:

- work on land use dynamics and explore the effects of policy measures that can influence such dynamics, in particular agricultural, land use and climate policies.
- focus activities mainly on agriculture and forest land use/cover and should extend to interactions of the former with other main land uses/covers and drivers. This should ensure usability of the results in larger contexts. While focusing on Europe, proposals are encouraged to draw on good examples from elsewhere.
- work at various spatial scales – farm level, regional to EU levels - and simulations and projections should range from medium-term to long-term policy scenarios and should cover the whole of the EU and its Member States and possibly Associated Countries.
- The possible participation of the JRC in the projects will ensure that the proposed approach will be compatible with and/or improve existing databases and tools used at the European Commission and ensure open access to data.
- include a task to collaborate with other projects financed under this topic and under topic HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-12 “EU agriculture within a safe and just

operating space and planetary boundaries”. They should also liaise with relevant Horizon 2020 modelling projects (including LandSupport<sup>399</sup>).

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

### **Deploying and adding value to Environmental Observations**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-14: User-oriented solutions building on environmental observation to monitor critical ecosystems and biodiversity loss and vulnerability in the European Union**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 20.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).

**Expected Outcome:** A successful proposal will support the delivery of services and solutions for the implementation of the European Green Deal and the biodiversity strategy, through the deployment and exploitation of environmental observations<sup>400</sup>, benefiting a broad range of end users and helping them restore biodiversity and ecosystems under threat, thus contributing to the global observation and monitoring of the living realm.

Proposals are expected to contribute to at least four of the following outcomes:

- Better informed policy formulation for biodiversity & ecosystem services on European/national and regional level, built on enhanced understanding of better quantified and characterised changes in biodiversity and ecosystem services and the prediction of their trajectories;

<sup>399</sup> <https://www.landsupport.eu/>

<sup>400</sup> The capacity to observe the environment, including space-based, in-situ-based (air, sea, land) observation, and citizen observations



- Enhanced understanding of the adverse cumulative impacts of climate change and anthropogenic activities on biodiversity and ecosystem functioning and in particular on habitats and key species at risk of extinction in sensitive ecosystems to define enhanced management, adaptation and mitigation actions;
- Enhanced planning and ecosystem-based management of land and sea with the objectives to minimise the adverse effects of climate change and anthropogenic activities on ecosystems and biodiversity;
- Dependable data, information and knowledge to support adaptation and mitigation of biodiversity loss resulting from climate change and anthropogenic activities, through maximised exploitation of information and data from European data infrastructures, European programmes (such as EMODnet<sup>401</sup> and European research infrastructures<sup>402</sup>) and GEO<sup>403</sup> initiatives;
- Support to the development of the European service sector regarding end-user climate services related to biodiversity and ecosystems and deliver usable results to the monitoring framework of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030;
- A contribution to the EC-ESA joint Earth system science initiative<sup>404</sup> (in particular to the flagship action on biodiversity and ocean health);
- Improved governance of biodiversity monitoring and reporting, in particular together with the ‘Rescuing biodiversity to safeguard life on Earth’ partnership<sup>405</sup>, the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity and GEOBON<sup>406</sup>.

Scope: The projects are expected to further the harmonisation, mobilisation, and uptake of monitoring and environmental data to better characterise and understand the natural and anthropogenic pressures on biodiversity, the extent of the destruction of natural biological resources and its connection with ecosystem conditions within safe planetary boundaries. There is a need for knowledge of both better quantified and more precisely characterised changes in biodiversity and related ecosystem services (in coastal, marine, terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems), and of ecosystem status and quantified impacts of the main direct drivers of changes (i.e. land and sea use changes, pollutions, climate change, invasive alien species and exploitation of natural resources) on European natural capital.

The projects should deliver new Earth observation (EO) data services building on the potential of EO capabilities in order to address end-user needs facing the deterioration and destruction of their living environment and ecosystems. The projects under this topic should tackle issues raised within the European Green Deal calls<sup>407</sup> and provide solutions to halt

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<sup>401</sup> <https://www.emodnet.eu/en>

<sup>402</sup> <https://www.esfri.eu/>

<sup>403</sup> <http://www.earthobservations.org/index.php>

<sup>404</sup> <https://eo4society.esa.int/communities/scientists/ec-esa-joint-initiative-on-earth-system-science/>

<sup>405</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/european-partnership-rescuing-biodiversity-safeguard-life-earth\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/european-partnership-rescuing-biodiversity-safeguard-life-earth_en)

<sup>406</sup> <https://geobon.org/>

<sup>407</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/news/european-green-deal-call>

biodiversity loss and protect vulnerable ecosystems, and ensuring ecosystem capacity to continue to provide services to society and the environment. The projects should make mapping tools and information solutions available, which are needed by a wide variety of end users in order to meet targets for conservation and restoration of diverse terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems. Hence, the development of tools to support decision-making and participatory management are crucial in this context. Solutions related to improving ecosystem health and resilience should be integrated into best practice monitoring activities within respective monitoring governance schemes. This should enable stakeholders and policy makers to take the right conservation and restoration measures, in particular with the use of a holistic ecosystem-based management in response to the urgent need for halting biodiversity loss and, consequently, alterations to ecosystem functions and sustain the delivery of precious ecosystem services.

Building on existing services and frameworks provided through GEO, EuroGEO<sup>408</sup>, European research infrastructures, European Ocean Observing Systems, EMODnet, Copernicus, ESA<sup>409</sup> Earth Observation programmes and EGNSS, this topic should address the downstream part of the value chain to support mitigation and adaptation to climate change impact on biodiversity and ecosystems. The consortia should engage with end users and stakeholders, contribute to customising of data and exploitation platforms, deliver scaling-up and replication of existing service models, and brokerage of knowledge and dissemination to the public. The successful proposals should build on outcomes of EU funded projects such as Horizon 2020 projects like ECO-POTENTIAL<sup>410</sup>, initiatives like EuropaBON<sup>411</sup> and programmes like LIFE<sup>412</sup>, and should feed into the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity, and deliver usable results to the monitoring framework of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-15: Preparing for pre-commercial procurement (PCP) for end-user services based on environmental observation in the area of climate change adaptation and mitigation**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 2.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

<sup>408</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/knowledge-publications-tools-and-data/knowledge-centres-and-data-portals/eurogeo\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/knowledge-publications-tools-and-data/knowledge-centres-and-data-portals/eurogeo_en)

<sup>409</sup> <https://www.esa.int/>

<sup>410</sup> <http://www.ecopotential-project.eu/ps://www.esa.int/>

<sup>411</sup> <https://europabon.org/>

<sup>412</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/life>

Expected Outcome: The successful proposal will support the preparation, facilitation and paving of the way for pre-commercial procurement in the area of climate change adaptation and mitigation to enable up-scaling and wide use of end-user services to respond to common needs in this area. The successful proposal will be contributing to the European Green Deal objectives by further deploying and exploiting the use of environmental observations<sup>413</sup>.

In order to do so the project is expected to contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- Creation of a critical mass of procurers of solutions and services in the area of climate change adaptation and mitigation, which will undertake joint, cross-border or coordinated procurements;
- Description of the common needs of the public procurers for end-user services in the area of climate change adaptation and mitigation;
- Reduced fragmentation of public sector demand via creation of a network(s) of public procurers capable of collectively implementing PCPs and/or public procurement of innovative solutions (PPIs);
- Increased awareness in the network of procurers of relevant standards, certification and GEO data sharing principles;
- Leverage of additional investment in research and innovation in the domain of environmental observation and the Copernicus Climate Change Service;
- Increased awareness and successful use of public procurement to boost innovation and increased exchange of experience in procurement practices and strategies (organising trainings and other information exchange tools) in the specific area of climate services.

Scope: The project is expected to prepare a pre-commercial procurement due to be part of the Cluster 6 work programme for 2023 in the domain of climate change services using the information and data from the Copernicus programme, GEO initiatives, other relevant initiatives such as EMODnet, European Commission Knowledge Centre on Earth Observation hosted at JRC, European research infrastructures and the broad range of environmental information.

The action should deliver all the necessary elements in preparation of the PCP as described in Annex H of the general annexes to this work programme.

Proposals should lead to the establishment of a critical mass of public and/or private procurers in the area of climate change adaptation and mitigation, to overcome the fragmentation of demand for solutions and services and to lead to a more rapid market uptake of such solutions and their early deployment. Demonstrated engagement from participants for a further Europe-wide take-up and rollout of results during and following the proposal are expected. Proposals

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<sup>413</sup> The capacity to observe the environment, including space-based, in-situ-based (air, sea, land) observation, and citizen observations

should implement an open market consultation to gain insights into state-of-the-art technologies and ongoing developments, including prototypes and demonstration services coming out of relevant Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, ESA and national projects. This could include new approaches for market consultations with suppliers, paying special attention to SME suppliers.

Proposals should engage public and/or private procurers from each country participating (at national, regional or local level) that have responsibilities and budget control in the relevant area(s).

The network(s) of public and/or private procurers created should investigate the feasibility of, test and prepare the launch of joint or coordinated procurements (PCP), which would ultimately develop innovative, fully tested, fit-for-purpose and cost-effective end-user services in the area of climate change adaptation and mitigation. These solutions should be based on a complete set of common needs and specifications. Finally, to facilitate future replication, a set of well-documented practices should be made available.

Preparation activities for the joint or coordinated PCP will be supported, but not the costs of the procurement resulting from any PCP procedures.

Project duration should be 24 months.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-16: Tools to support the uptake and accessibility/exploitability of environmental observation information at European and global level**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 13.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 13.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

**Expected Outcome:** A successful proposal will enhance access and usability of environmental observation<sup>414</sup> information and promote pre-operational European services through global infrastructures in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal, the European strategy for data and the European digital strategy, thus deploying and adding value to environmental observations and contributing to a strengthened Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS).

Proposals are expected to contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- Conversion of existing environmental platforms into fully interoperable digital ecosystems, taking advantage of the progresses made in artificial intelligence, machine learning and high performance computing;
- Enhance the FAIRness (findability, accessibility, interoperability and re-usability) of environmental observation data, for example, through annotations turning them into relevant, open and accessible knowledge and provide support to decision makers involved in implementing the objectives of the European Green Deal<sup>415</sup>, the new EU climate adaptation strategy<sup>416</sup> and European strategy of data<sup>417</sup>;
- Improve the environmental observation knowledge at regional and local level across all European regions, leveraging existing platforms to foster the usability and practicability of digital services in support to the Horizon Europe missions and partnerships;
- Better access for European stakeholders to global environmental observation data, actionable information and knowledge, especially to the data derived from European programmes such as Copernicus<sup>418</sup>, Galileo<sup>419</sup>/EGNOS<sup>420</sup> and INSPIRE<sup>421</sup> to establish a common European Green Deal data space, fully interlinked with the common European data space for research and innovation and the European Open Science Cloud;
- Contribution to the Destination Earth initiative<sup>422</sup>.

**Scope:** The project is expected to enhance access and usability to environmental observation information and promote pre-operational European services through global infrastructures, notably through the GEOSS (Global Earth Observation System of Systems) infrastructure. Proposals should turn existing platforms into consolidated digital systems which provide analytical tools, including machine learning for large-scale analysis, improve the value of environmental observations (including in-situ data) to enrich the knowledge base needed to

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<sup>414</sup> The capacity to observe the environment, including space-based, in-situ-based (air, sea, land) observation, and citizen observations

<sup>415</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en)

<sup>416</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/news/commission-launches-online-public-consultation-new-eu-strategy-adaptation-climate-change\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/news/commission-launches-online-public-consultation-new-eu-strategy-adaptation-climate-change_en)

<sup>417</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/european-data-strategy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/european-data-strategy_en)

<sup>418</sup> <https://www.copernicus.eu/en>

<sup>419</sup> <https://www.gsc-europa.eu/>

<sup>420</sup> [https://egnos-user-support.essp-sas.eu/new\\_egnos\\_ops/](https://egnos-user-support.essp-sas.eu/new_egnos_ops/)

<sup>421</sup> <https://inspire.ec.europa.eu/>

<sup>422</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/destination-earth-destine>

facilitate the reduction of anthropogenic impacts and to assure on optimal management of the transition to a climate neutral economy and a more resilient society.

Proposals should build on the relevant existing infrastructures<sup>423</sup> and facilitate access and exploitation of EO derived data. The tools and services developed under the proposal(s) should be made available for future integration in the common topical European open infrastructure, Destination Earth. Proposals should deliver a plan for the sustained uptake of services by the European commercial sector and leverage the tools developed for the benefit of users from a variety of different sectors (e.g. public, private, civil society, citizen science). Proposals should contribute to support the EC-ESA initiative on Earth system science<sup>424</sup>.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-17: Common European Green Deal data space to provide more accessible and exploitable environmental observation data in support of the European Green Deal priority actions**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

**Expected Outcome:** A successful proposal will contribute to unleashing the potential of environmental and climate data through dedicated European data spaces in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal and the European strategy for data, by further deploying digital and data technologies as key enablers and strengthening EU and international science-policy interfaces as well as contributing to the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS).

<sup>423</sup> Such as the Copernicus DIAS, the European Open Science Cloud, EMODNet, the European research infrastructures, the Euro Data Cube, the GEOSS Infrastructure, INSPIRE and GBIF (Global Biodiversity Information Facility).

<sup>424</sup> <https://eo4society.esa.int/communities/scientists/ec-esa-joint-initiative-on-earth-system-science/>

Proposals are expected to contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- Available FAIR<sup>425</sup> data, information and knowledge in support of the European Green Deal priority actions on climate change, circular economy, zero pollution, biodiversity, deforestation and compliance assurance;
- Consolidated arrangements for European Green Deal data access, sharing and interoperability, in line with the FAIR principles for data, to facilitate the combination of data for policy analysis fostering as such innovative data analytic solutions;
- Concrete solutions and tools using data analytics and machine learning techniques to support to the European Green Deal priority actions;
- Increased convergence of the use of high performance computing, cloud, edge, computing, data analytics and artificial intelligence resources for Earth system modelling.

Scope: Successful proposals are expected to contribute towards unleashing the potential of environmental, biodiversity and climate data through dedicated European data spaces. This should allow to exploit the major potential of environmental observation<sup>426</sup> data in support of one or more of the European Green Deal priority actions: climate change, circular economy, zero pollution, biodiversity, deforestation and compliance assurance. Successful proposals are expected to address these challenges and contribute across all environmental areas to help harness the power of big data and artificial intelligence for the benefits of the European Green Deal. The proposals should also help in the convergence of use of high performance computing, cloud, data and artificial intelligence resources for Earth system modelling.

Proposals should contribute to the implementation of the European strategy for data in the domain of environment/climate and could act as a digital enabler for the European Green Deal in those domains. To provide a sustainable perspective for the results achieved, the data and services developed under the proposals should firmly aim to be connected into the common topical European open infrastructure, Destination Earth. Proposals should leverage environmental, geospatial and climate-related data, which are a prerequisite to better understand issues and trends on how our planet and its climate are changing and to address the role humans play in these changes. Proposals should contribute to the release and use of those data to strengthen evidence-based analytical capabilities for policy-making and implementation, including through building on the planned efforts of the European Commission Knowledge Centres on Earth Observation, Biodiversity and Bio-economy hosted at JRC. Proposals should deliver open access to data useful for decision-making by public administrations, investors, insurers, businesses, cities, rural communities, citizen scientists, civil society and citizens, and for the development of new instruments to integrate climate change into risk management practices across the EU. Proposals should build on significant gains in our knowledge over the past decades on data management, to contribute to

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<sup>425</sup> Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable

<sup>426</sup> The capacity to observe the environment, including space-based, in-situ-based (air, sea, land) observation, and citizen observations

defragmenting data flows across topics, time and space, and develop best practices in the use of existing relevant platforms such as the Copernicus DIAS and the GEOSS infrastructure, or platforms in development under e.g. Destination Earth<sup>427</sup>, and communities in order to help prioritise and direct the efforts undertaken in the context of the European strategy for data.

### **Digital and data technologies as key enablers**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-18: Mapping and improving the data economy for food systems**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 10.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

Expected Outcome: This action will enhance the sustainability performance and competitiveness in the domains covered by Cluster 6 through further deployment of digital and data technologies as key enablers. It will help to achieve better informed decision-making processes, social engagement, governance and innovation. It will help deliver solutions to advance the European Green Deal priorities, the EU's Climate ambition for 2030 and 2050 and the farm to fork strategy for a fair healthy and environmentally friendly food system. In particular, it will contribute to improving the data economy for food systems.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the expected outcomes:

- address the lack of solid knowledge about the data economy in food systems, its development, its fairness and inclusiveness, and its impacts including on EU policy objectives such as those related to food and nutrition security (FNS), sustainable and

<sup>427</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/destination-earth-destine>



resilient food systems<sup>428</sup>, climate change, health, competitiveness, fair trading practices, privacy, and consumer protection

- increase insights in the state-of-play, the actual and potential impacts (positive and negative), the drivers, barriers and enablers of digital transformation, its fairness and inclusiveness
- accelerate the positive impacts of the digital transformation, and broaden the group of citizens, communities, companies and other food system stakeholders that benefit from it.

Scope: Data driven innovation is fast reshaping the way we produce and consume food. It enhances the potential to manage natural resources more efficiently and to care for the ecosystems that our food production relies on without exceeding finite boundaries. It improves the transparency of our food systems, processes and products from farm to fork, enables a more resilient, safe, circular and customised supply and more personalised diets. It motivates policy-makers, regulators and researchers to make better use of data for monitoring and for generating new insights.

Proposals should gather expertise from a broad range of disciplines and food system participants to obtain new insights and achieve a deepened and more comprehensive understanding of the data economy for food systems. New insights and understanding should relate to the data economy's structure, its functioning, its present and potential development and its performance versus relevant EU policy objectives, as a basis for future policy recommendations, improved governance and monitoring.

The research that is conducted should therefore go well beyond technology insights and include a holistic assessment of the state-of-play of the data economy, data driven innovation and data reuse<sup>429</sup> in EU food systems, of the drivers, barriers and enablers of digital transformation, and of ongoing and expected trends, including behavioural. Proposals should assess actual and expected impacts (positive and negative) of this transformation on the performance of EU food systems versus the 3 dimensions of sustainability and versus relevant EU policy objectives, including “the European Green Deal” (and therein “the EU Farm-to-Fork Strategy”), an “Economy that works for people” and “a Europe fit for the digital age”. In their assessment of impact, proposals should include a review of the inclusiveness of the ongoing digital transformation in EU food systems (e.g. participation of micro-companies and SMEs, role of gender), and study the fairness of the data economy (e.g. presence of power asymmetries based on data holdings, unfair competition and practices, fair distribution of added value among actors, empowerment of consumers, including the most vulnerable). Proposals will perform 5-10 detailed end-to-end case studies of data flows and reuse in specific parts of our food systems, from farm to fork.

Proposals will put in place a broad stakeholder dialogue to facilitate and discuss new insights, to boost mutual learning and cooperation, to increase awareness among policy makers and

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<sup>428</sup> Including the EU farm to fork strategy and the priorities of the FOOD 2030 initiative

<sup>429</sup> <https://content.iospress.com/articles/information-polity/ip419>

stakeholder representatives about the benefits and pitfalls of digital transformation, and to generate new ideas and approaches to improve governance of the data economy in food systems. The stakeholder dialogue should attract and involve players from all parts of the data value chain and representing different sectors and markets. Special care should be taken to involve SMEs, young entrepreneurs, young farmers, start-ups, cities and consumers, and to include relevant actors that are not directly linked to the food value chains (e.g. social media companies, knowledge brokers, educators).

Proposals should develop a framework for the data economy in food systems, as a basis for monitoring its future development, its performance and impacts.

Proposals should formulate recommendations (including technological, societal, economic, legal) for policy makers (EU, national, regional, local) and other stakeholders. They should do this with a view to accelerating the uptake of data driven innovation and data reuse in a socially acceptable way and to improving the development, functioning, governance, monitoring, impact and fairness of the data economy in food systems, within the context of overall EU policy objectives. These recommendations should also take into account trends and opportunities<sup>430</sup> that the research identified, that are expected to be important drivers of change in food systems, and for which improved governance, adapted legal frameworks, new policy initiatives and enhanced societal engagement (from citizen science to prosumer approaches) can significantly increase the positive and mitigate the negative impacts of future changes. This includes efforts to explain and map how the recommendations generate co-benefits for the four Food 2030 priorities: nutrition for sustainable healthy diets, climate and environment, circularity and resource efficiency, innovation and empowerment of communities.

These recommendations should also address the need for more (and more effective) exchange and reuse of data assets across parts of EU food systems, national boundaries and language barriers, public and private sectors, and for a wider adoption of data driven-innovations. They should also help to mitigate power asymmetries based on data holdings, ensure fairer competition in the data economy, maximise benefits for citizens and food system actors and enable more open access to data. More specifically, an EU data space for Food systems, in which data is shared for the common good (“data commons”), should be examined to support the objectives of the EU Farm-to-Fork Strategy. Integration of such a data space, with the European Open Science Cloud, the common European data space for research and innovation, should aim at allowing the research community to create new knowledge in this domain.

Proposals should set out a clear plan on how they plan to collaborate with other projects selected under this and any other relevant call, by participating in joint activities, workshops, as well as common communication and dissemination activities.

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<sup>430</sup> Trends and opportunities can be cross-cutting (example: demands for a better trade-off between the need for data-driven innovation and the need for personal data protection and data sovereignty) or specific to food systems (examples: demands for greater transparency about the food people eat with regards to health and sustainability; demands for more circular, resilient and customized food supply; a greater prevalence and uptake of personalized nutrition solutions)

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-19: Development of the markets and use of digital technologies and infrastructure in agriculture – state of play and foresight: digital and data technologies for the agricultural sector in a fast changing regulatory, trade and technical environment**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

Expected Outcome: In line with the farm to fork Strategy and the headline ambitions of a Digital Age – the European Strategy for data in particular - and the headline ambition an Economy that works for people, leaving no one behind, the successful proposal(s) will support the capacities to understand and develop the markets and use of digital technologies in agriculture. They will therefore contribute a) to the enhancement of the sustainability performance and competitiveness in agriculture through further deployment of digital and data technologies as key enablers, and b) to the development of innovative governance models enabling sustainability and resilience notably to achieve better informed decision-making processes, and innovation through research and innovation in the field of digital technologies and infrastructure in agriculture.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Increase transparency in the markets for digital and data technologies in the agricultural sector and in data sharing in the agricultural value chain, and support competition;
- Lower the risk of investments in digital and data technologies in the agricultural sector;
- Strengthen policy-making and-monitoring and foresight capacities in agriculture and digital and data technologies;
- Contribute to an increased uptake of digital and data technologies in the agricultural sector and indirectly contribute to an increase in environmental and economic

performance of the agricultural sector through increased and enhanced use of digital technologies and data.

Scope: The potential of digital technologies in the agricultural sector to enhance its sustainability and economic performance and to enhance working conditions has been acknowledged. The uptake of digital technologies in the agricultural sector and the development of supplementing data-technology-based solutions in the EU are increasing. However, there is hardly comprehensive, independently collected data about the actual uptake and use of digital technologies by farmers, the trade of sector-related digital technologies, and about the extent and structure of the provision of digital and data services in the agri-food supply chain, which is of global outreach.

To the same time, policies and the regulatory framework directly or indirectly influencing the deployment of digital and data technologies in the EU is evolving in a fast pace and will continue to do so.<sup>431</sup> Also trade regimes are continuously changing. For stakeholder in the agricultural and the digital sector to invest in digital and data technologies, it is important to be able to assess the possible implications of changing regulatory and market conditions on the development, purchase and use of digital and data technologies in the agricultural sector.

An increase in information on markets and on the actor networks, and of the storage and the flows of goods and data, increases transparency, strengthens the consumers`/ users` position and boost competition.

Capacities in modelling and in carrying out foresight analyses for the development of markets and of the situation in the agricultural sector is also one pre-requisite for tailored policy-making.

Proposals should cover all of the following aspects:

- Development of innovative approaches to assess the uptake of digital technologies and digital infrastructure (including platforms) in the agricultural sector globally with special attention to the situation in the EU and associated countries;
- Development of innovative approaches to forecast the markets and the uptake of digital technologies and digital infrastructure (including platforms) globally with special attention to the situation in the EU under consideration of fast-changing regulatory framing conditions in the fields of data-, digital and machinery technologies and of agricultural policies;
- Demonstration of the qualitative and quantitative implications for the use of digital and data technologies by farmers and other actors along the supply chain in a way that demonstration results can be steadily adapted to changing framing conditions. Demonstrations should allow for the reflection of scenarios.

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<sup>431</sup> See, e.g. the announcements in the Digital package published by the European Commission in February 2020, and the Data Strategy in the package, in particular. <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/policies/building-european-data-economy>.

Proposals are expected to consider innovation in digital technologies brought onto the market during the life-time of the project. They must implement the multi-actor approach involving targeted stakeholders, including farmers, agri-businesses, policymakers etc. to test demonstration and communication tools. They should also provide a basis for the development of business cases, e.g. for the integration and sharing of databases across entities and infrastructure.

For the assessment of the uptake of digital technologies by farmers, statistic approaches evolving in the EU are to be considered; assessment approaches may vary between continents and regions.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-20: Data economy in the field of agriculture – effects of data sharing and big data**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome: In line with the farm to fork strategy and the Headline ambitions of a Digital Age –the data Strategy in particular - and the headline ambition an Economy that works for people, leaving no one behind, the successful proposals will support capacities to understand, develop and demonstrate the data economy in agriculture and its effects. This topic aims to contribute a) to the enhancement of the sustainability performance and competitiveness in agriculture through further deployment of digital and data technologies as key enablers, and b) to the development of innovative governance models enabling sustainability and resilience notably to achieve better informed decision-making processes through research and innovation related to data economy in agriculture.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Awareness and informed decisions based on the demonstration of the costs, benefits, risks, and added value as well as the economic and societal potential of agricultural data sharing taking an EU perspective.<sup>432</sup>
- Increase in transparency in data sharing in the agricultural value chain.
- Increased sharing of agricultural data, and the effective and efficient use of private and public data for private and public purpose, particularly through the demonstration of the

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<sup>432</sup> The main focus is with the agricultural sector and public interests in the EU. However, as data flows and trade relations are global, analyses have to go beyond the EU context.

costs, benefits, risks, and added value as well as the economic and societal potential of agricultural data sharing taking an EU perspective.<sup>433</sup>

- Contribute to an increased uptake of digital and data technologies in the agricultural sector and indirectly contribute an increase in environmental and economic performance of the agricultural sector through increased and enhanced used of digital technologies and data.
- Strengthen policy-making and-monitoring capacities in agriculture and data technologies.

Scope: Used effectively, agricultural data has the potential to increase the performance of the sector and of businesses along the supply chain in a sustainable way as well to as to serve public good purposes. For instance, agricultural data forms a key input to precision farming applications and can form input to the analysis on environmental conditions as well as to other fields, e.g. bioinformatics. Thus, agricultural data has a value and presents an interesting element for the data economy.

A crucial parameter to the effectiveness and efficiency of the application of data technologies is the quantity and quality of agricultural data serving as basis for such analyses. However, agricultural data, which stems from multiple sources and includes business, personal and public data, is not straightforward accessible, not even for fees/ financial resources.

Next to technical issues related to e.g. data interoperability, questions on the ownership of agricultural data and the readiness to share the data present a burden to the use of agricultural data. Farmers, for instance, need to trust that their farm data is handled and share carefully, and have to see their and societal benefits to share the data, and have a stake in the economic benefits of agricultural data.

Currently, some companies in the agri-food value chain are collecting agricultural data, e.g. through farmers as customers. Not always is the use of that data, e.g. for product development or farm-tailored advertisement, fully transparent. Moreover, some companies with high numbers of customers, easily gain enormous market power and generate income through the use of the collected data and the application of data technologies.

Developments in the agricultural sector as well as in EU policies<sup>434</sup>, which are/ will be addressing those circumstance to increase the readiness to data sharing to increase the benefit for the economy and society and to overcome power imbalances and a lack of transparency in the use of data, occur rapidly. These changing framing conditions offer opportunities as well as challenges to the agricultural sector as well as to the data economy.

Proposals should cover all of the following aspects:

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<sup>433</sup> The main focus is with the agricultural sector and public interests in the EU. However, as data flows and trade relations are global, analyses have to go beyond the EU context.

<sup>434</sup> Key policy ambitions related to the data economy and the use of data for the society/ the public good are reflected in a “European Strategy for Data” published by the European Commission in February 2020 (see <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/policies/building-european-data-economy>).

- Quantitative and qualitative analyses of the effects of various data sharing and marketing and use options (considering among others private and public data, private and public actions, and big data opportunities) for the actors along the agri-food supply chain and the development of scenarios for the data economy.
- Implications of the ongoing policy-making process at EU level including the development of relevant legislation in the analyses.
- Effects of multi-level governance systems in the EU under consideration of the situation and conditions in various Member States as well as effects of international (trade) relations.
- Consideration of multiple data-sharing business- and governance approaches and technical solution in data sharing in the agricultural sector.
- Consideration of climate adaptation and reducing administrative burden in the assessment of the potential of agricultural data sharing for the sector and the society.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-21: Potential of drones as multi-purpose vehicle – risks and added values**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:  Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

**Expected Outcome:** In line with the farm to fork strategy and the Headline ambitions of a Digital Age and an Economy that works for people, that works for all, leaving no one behind, the biodiversity strategy, the successful proposals will support the effective and efficient deployment of drones, including in the field of environmental monitoring. They will therefore contribute a) to the enhancement of the sustainability performance and competitiveness in

agriculture, forestry and rural areas through further deployment of digital and data technologies as key enablers, and b) to the development of innovative governance models enabling sustainability and resilience, notably to achieve better informed decision-making processes through research and innovation in the field of drones.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Strengthened capacities for sustainable smart farming, forestry and rural communities through exploiting the potential of drones and other remotely piloted aircraft systems.
- Strengthened the capacities for plant, plant-health, livestock, livestock-health, and agri-environmental monitoring (including tree health) through the use of drones and other remotely piloted aircraft systems.
- Reduced risk of the use of drones and other remotely piloted aircraft systems.

Scope: The increased use of drones for sectoral and societal purposes can be observed in the EU. Also in the field of agricultural production, drones are used in the EU, whereby to different extents across Member States because of environmental, socio-economic and also regulatory framing conditions. While the use of drones can bring advantages to agricultural production, e.g. to collect data on crop conditions, it also goes along with risks emanating from the use of the unmanned vehicle itself, or the activity it is carrying out. For several reasons, e.g. a lack of cost-effectiveness, the potential of drones is not fully exploited by the agricultural sector in the EU. When exploring the opportunities to increase the use of drones, the consideration of aspects related to the safe use and the interests of the society at large, which might be negatively affected by the use of drones, is of outermost importance. To the same time, drones can also deliver services of common interests, which have the potential to be well linked to the agricultural use of drones, for instance, the collection of environmental information in agricultural landscapes, such as about landscape features, water quality or soil quality, and biodiversity in and around utilised agricultural areas. Exploring possibilities to use drones as multi-purpose vehicle in rural areas, e.g. for reasons of cost-effectiveness is of interest.

Proposals should cover all of the following aspects:

- Stock-taking of innovation in the use of drones as multi-purpose vehicle in agricultural production, forestry and the development of rural communities globally, the advantage and disadvantages of different approaches, and perform comparative analyses with the situation of the use of drones in the EU.
- Development of innovative approaches to use drones and other remotely piloted aircraft systems as multi-purpose vehicle in agriculture, e.g. for production assessment, cover-crop seeding, pest and disease detection, harvesting planning as well as innovative approaches to use drones as multi-purpose vehicle linking agricultural and wider environmental observation interests (including the assessment of landscape features, forests, water quality, and soil carbon) and for rural services.



- Assessment of the potential of the use of drones and other remotely piloted aircraft systems in the agricultural sector and socio-economic and environmental effects under consideration of different regulatory scenarios.
- Development of business models to the use of drones and other remotely piloted aircraft systems in agriculture, which may include agriculture / forestry / community development interlinkages.
- Development of innovative approaches to assess and reduce the risks related to the use of drones in the agricultural sector, especially in the context of spraying.

Projects are expected to take into consideration the results of other related Horizon 2020/ Europe projects, such as AW-Drones<sup>435</sup> and ROMI<sup>436</sup>, as well as of other relevant projects and initiatives.

Proposals may involve financial support to third parties e.g. to academic researchers, hi-tech startups, SMEs, rural communities and other multidisciplinary actors, to, for instance, develop, test or validate developed assessment approaches or collect or prepare data sets or provide other contributions to achieve the project objectives. A maximum of € 60 000 per third party might be granted. Conditions for third parties support are set out in Part B of the General Annexes. Consortia need to define the selection process of organisations, for which financial support may be granted. Maximum 20% of the EU funding can be allocated to this purpose. The financial support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-22: Assessing the impacts of digital technologies in agriculture – cost, benefits and potential for sustainability gains**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 7.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <p>The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the</p>

<sup>435</sup> Funded under Horizon2020 call MG-2-3-2018.

<sup>436</sup> Funded under Horizon2020 call SFS-05-2017.

	multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
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Expected Outcome: In line with the farm to fork strategy and the Headline ambitions of a Digital Age and an Economy that works for people, leaving no one behind, the biodiversity strategy, the successful proposals will support the development of capacities for assessing and demonstrating environmental and socio-economic effects of digital technologies in agriculture. They will therefore contribute to the enhancement of the sustainability performance and competitiveness in agriculture through further deployment of digital and data technologies as key enablers through research and innovation in the field of the assessment of impacts of digital technologies in agriculture.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Awareness and informed decisions based on the demonstration of the costs and benefits of the use of digital technologies for the agricultural sector.
- Facilitated uptake of digital technologies by farmers, including through decision-making support and the analysis of farmers' motivations.
- Strengthen the capacities of farmers' advisors in the field of digital technologies.
- Strengthening the capacities to design, implement, monitor and evaluate policy measures in the fields of agriculture, environment and climate, as basis for better tailored, more effective and efficient policy measures in the fields of digitalisation in agriculture, and sustainability.

Scope: Digital technologies in agriculture and their potential to increase farms' economic and sustainability performance, facilitate work and enhance working conditions has received huge attention in the political sphere in recent years. Agriculture has to play a key role in achieving environmental and climate ambitions in the EU, and digital technologies offer opportunities to increase the sustainability performance of the agricultural sector. However, there is still a huge "gap" between the portfolio of digital technologies offered at the market and the actual uptake and use by farmers in the EU. Moreover, while the potential of digital technologies to better tailor agricultural production is widely acknowledged, there is little knowledge about the actual reduction of negative environmental and climate effects due to their application.

Studies show that among key uptake barriers hindering the farmers to make use of digital technologies are a) a lack of knowledge about those tools in general, as well as their costs and benefits, b) a lack of overview of the strengths and weaknesses of certain tools in the huge portfolio offered on markets and the suitability to address farm-specific needs, and c) a lack of believe in the added value of digital technologies for the management of a farm. An additional barrier to the uptake of digital technologies by farmers presents the effort needed to become familiar with new tools. For many farmers the real demonstration of effects as well as "hard figures" of production effects are important to be convinced to apply a certain method/ technology. Also cultural aspects play a role in the perception of digital technologies.

The effectiveness of digital technologies as it regards sustainability gains between laboratory conditions and the environmental and socio-economic reality vary.

Independent assessments of the effects of the use of the range of digital technologies tools under ideal and real-life conditions are essential for policy development, monitoring and evaluation. For many environmental parameters, the final impacts of farming can only be assessed with a huge time lag/ delay or are hardly measurable at all. The more important it is, to have figures, which impacts certain farming practices may have.

In addition, policy-makers and administrations are challenged by estimating rates for supporting the use of digital technologies in agriculture as well as the effects of employment structures in rural areas.

Against this background, independent quantitative and qualitative assessments of the multiple costs and benefits and potential sustainability gains of digital technologies are essential. It is also important to make those assessment results of possible effects of digital technologies feasible, assessable and usable, particularly for farmers, their advisors, and policy-makers, as it may form a stepping stone to facilitate the uptake of digital technologies in the sector and may facilitate the design of tailored policy measures.

Proposals should cover all of the following aspects:

- Demonstration of the costs and benefits for farmers/farms of the use of digital technologies for individual production steps (e.g. in per ha calculations and livestock surveillance) as well as for following a “whole-farm approach” which is applied, e.g. in the use of some Farm Management Systems under real testing conditions and with quantitative and qualitative assessments.
- Analyses and developed assessment approaches representative for the EU under consideration of the various biogeographical conditions, and several types of farms and farmers under consideration of different business models, e.g. cooperative purchase of equipment, use of contractor services etc.
- Stock-taking of results of former or still ongoing Horizon 2020 projects falling directly or indirectly under the scope of this theme, e.g. Smart-AKIS<sup>437</sup>, to capitalise those findings and draw lessons learnt.
- Provision of innovative decision-making support on the selection and use of digital technologies.
- Generation of information and knowledge for the design of policy measures.
- Recommendations, under which conditions/ in which way digital technologies deliver best results for a farmer and on business models for financing/ for financing their use.

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<sup>437</sup> The Thematic network Smart-AKIS was funded under call Horizon2020 ISIB-02-2015, see <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/696294>.

- Generation of innovative tools making the results of the projects easily accessible and usable for the different target groups (at least farmers and advisors), e.g. cost calculators.
- Facilitated qualitative and quantitative assessment of the (positive and negative) environmental effects (e.g. reduction of inputs/ emissions) of the use of digital technologies in agriculture.

Projects are expected to foster the development of capacities for assessing the contribution of agriculture to sustainability ambitions through the development of assessment approaches, analyses, and knowledge generation on the impacts, especially the costs, benefits and potential sustainability gains and losses, through the application of digital technologies. Projects are expected to make a significant contribution to establish a basis for the development, implementation and evaluation of sustainability- and data-related policies at regional, national and EU level and reaching related objectives, including Green Deal ambitions, CAP, the White Paper on Artificial Intelligence, and Sustainable Finance.

Proposals should cover all of the following aspects:

- Testing of digital technologies in agriculture under real production conditions.
- Consideration of farmers' / producers' / contractors' behaviour.
- Representativeness of analyses and developed assessment approaches for the EU and associated countries for several types of farms and farmers.
- Links to relevant EU policy monitoring and evaluations and statistical systems.
- Exploration of the potential of digital technologies use in agriculture as means for independent monitoring.
- Recommendations under which conditions/ in which way digital technologies deliver best sustainability performance.

Tools developed within the project(s) are to be linkable to Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems in Member States.

The multi-actor approach must be implemented, involving at least scientists and representatives of the agricultural sector. They are encouraged to envisage collaboration with Digital Innovation Hubs<sup>438</sup> supported under the Digital Europe Programme is regarded as beneficial for the overall results of the projects.

If involving machinery companies, selected projects should build their work on digital technologies and machinery from at least three companies and brands.

The possible participation of the JRC in the project will ensure that the approach proposed will be compatible with and improve the tools used at the European Commission.

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<sup>438</sup> For more information on Digital Innovation Hubs, please see <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/digital-innovation-hubs>.

## **Strengthening agricultural knowledge and innovation systems**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

### **HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-23: Broaden EIP Operational Group outcomes across borders by means of thematic networks, compiling and sharing knowledge ready for practice**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

Expected Outcome: In support of the Green Deal, CAP and farm to fork objectives and targets, the successful proposal will focus on knowledge sharing in a language that is easy to understand and is targeted to farmers and foresters. Primary producers have a particular need for impartial and tailored knowledge on the management choices related to the needs, challenges or opportunities they experience. This speeds up innovation and the uptake of results, and is key to improve sustainability. It adds value to the knowledge and cost-effectiveness of innovative practices and techniques in and across primary production sectors, food systems, bioeconomy and biodiversity. This will lead to more informed and engaged stakeholders and users of project results including primary producers and consumers thanks to effective platforms such as Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS<sup>439</sup>).

Despite the continued funding of scientific projects, innovative ideas and methods from practice are not captured and spread, and often research findings are not integrated into agricultural and forestry practice. Proposals, acting at EU level to remedy this, are essential because national and sectoral AKISs are insufficiently connected and organised to fully meet the challenge of intensifying thematic cooperation between researchers, advisors and farmers/foresters. This exchange of knowledge will foster economically viable and

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<sup>439</sup> AKIS means the organisation and knowledge flows between persons, organisations and institutions who use and produce knowledge for agriculture and interrelated fields (Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation)

sustainable agriculture and forestry and build trust between the main AKIS actors. It will scale up local solutions up to the EU level and may even influence policy design wherever useful.

Project results are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

1. The collection and distribution of easily accessible practice-oriented knowledge on the thematic area chosen, in particular the existing best practices and research findings that are ready to be put into practice, but not sufficiently known or used by practitioners.
2. The conservation of practical knowledge for the long term - beyond the project period – in particular by using the main trusted dissemination channels that farmers/foresters consult most often, delivering as much audio-visual material and as many “practice abstracts” in the common European innovation partnership "Agricultural productivity and sustainability" (EIP-AGRI) format as possible, including also education and training materials.
3. Increasing the flow of practical information between farmers/foresters in the EU in a geographically balanced way, creating spill-overs and taking account of the differences between territories. In order to better reach and capture knowledge from the targeted farmers/foresters, the networks may organise 'cross-fertilisation' through sub-networks covering, for example, a region, a language or a production system.
4. Achieving greater user acceptance of collected solutions and a more intensive dissemination of existing knowledge, by connecting actors, policies, projects and instruments to speed up innovation and promote the faster and wider co-creation and transposition of innovative solutions into practice.
5. The cross-cutting objective of modernising the sector by fostering and sharing of knowledge, innovation and digitalisation in agriculture and rural areas, and encouraging their uptake<sup>440</sup>, as well as contributing to the European Green deal and Farm to Fork objectives. Examples are climate issues, pesticide use, water use and pollution, short supply chains linking to the consumer, farm viability, animal welfare, generational renewal, and much more.

Scope: Proposals should address the following activities:

- Tackling the most urgent needs of farmers and foresters by building on the experience and outcomes of at least 5 EIP-AGRI<sup>441</sup> Operational Groups of at least 3 Member States, scaling it up at European level choosing a related common theme on which to collect, summarise, share and translate the existing knowledge from science and practice in an easy-to-understand way for practitioners.
- Compiling a comprehensive description of the state of current farming and forestry practices on the chosen theme with a view to explain the added-value of the proposal and the relevance of the theme. Proposals must pay attention to the cost/benefit aspects of the

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<sup>440</sup> Art 5 CAP post 2020 proposal

<sup>441</sup> EIP-AGRI : European Innovation Partnership (EIP) 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability'

practices collected and summarised, and clarify how the project avoids duplication with ongoing or completed projects and networks.

- Delivering an extensive range of useful, applicable and appealing end-user material for farmers and foresters. This info should be easy to access and understand, and feed into the existing dissemination channels most consulted by farmers and foresters in the countries.
- All materials should also be provided in the common EIP-AGRI format to the EIP-AGRI as 'practice abstracts', as well as to the national/regional/local AKIS channels and to the EU-wide interactive knowledge reservoir (HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-24) in the requested formats.
- Besides giving the details about the EIP-AGRI Operational Groups which are involved<sup>442</sup>, wherever possible and relevant to the chosen theme, provide also details on how further synergies shall be built with running and future EIP-AGRI Operational Groups and interactive innovation groups operating in the context of the EIP-AGRI.
- Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach', with a consortium based on a balanced mix of actors with complementary knowledge in particular activating farmers/foresters, farmers' groups and advisors and run for minimum three years.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-24: Supporting knowledge exchange between all AKIS actors in the Member States by means of an EU-wide interactive knowledge reservoir**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 15.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

**Expected Outcome:** In support of the Green Deal, common agricultural policy and farm to fork objectives and targets, the successful proposal will focus on appropriate management of

<sup>442</sup> According to the requirements of the multi-actor approach

data and information derived from different sources that are readily available. The expected outcome of this topic is to multiply the use of practice-oriented knowledge, build capacities and to demonstrate innovative solutions to accelerate the transition to a sustainable management and use of natural resources in farming and forestry. This will lead to more informed and engaged stakeholders and users of project results including primary producers and consumers thanks to effective platforms such as Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS<sup>443</sup>).

Project results are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

1. Making information and knowledge readily available and easy accessible to farmers, foresters, advisors and other users<sup>444</sup> of practice-ready knowledge. This will support the policy objectives linked to Cluster 6, such as the European Green Deal, the farm to fork strategy and the CAP, the biodiversity strategy and the wider bioeconomy research and policies by supporting the transition process across the EU in new and coherent ways;

2. The CAP cross-cutting objective of modernising the sector by fostering and sharing of knowledge, innovation and digitalisation in agriculture and rural areas, and encouraging their uptake<sup>445</sup>. This project will provide overall support related to concrete practice-oriented knowledge co-creation, the (digital) organisation of it and the sharing of approaches to do so among Member States;

3. The outcomes will be connecting actors, policies, projects and instruments to speed up innovation and the sharing of knowledge, in particular by:

(a) creating added value by better linking research, education, advisors and farming practice to trusted information sources and encouraging the wider use of available knowledge and innovation;

(b) connecting innovation actors and projects; resulting in faster and wider co-creation and transposition of innovative solutions into practice and communicating to the scientific community about the research needs of practice.

Scope: Proposals should address the following activities:

- Collect and enable sharing – as a minimum – of the outcomes of all multi-actor projects from Horizon 2020 and those from Horizon Europe, and of all EIP-AGRI Operational Group innovative projects 2014-2020 and of those to come in the 2021-2027 period. This should be done by developing, operating and fine-tuning the use of an open access and open source digital EU-wide knowledge reservoir for practice interoperable with the European innovation partnership "Agricultural productivity and sustainability" (EIP-AGRI). The knowledge reservoir should be refined to make the tool as interactive and

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<sup>443</sup> AKIS means the organisation and knowledge flows between persons, organisations and institutions who use and produce knowledge for agriculture and interrelated fields (Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation).

<sup>444</sup> See definition of the 'multi-actor approach' in the introduction to this work programme part.

<sup>445</sup> Article 5 of the CAP post 2020 proposal



interoperable as possible with Member States' growing number of websites and knowledge reservoirs for agriculture and forestry practice, and integrate as much as possible practice-oriented project outcomes from any other funding source. Where needed, this may entail policy dialogues and small studies;

- Develop this tool, which is to be owned and exploited by the EU, enabling it to serve the knowledge interactions within the EIP-AGRI network, in particular with a view to explore how to encourage emergence of new EIP-AGRI innovation projects by connecting projects and actors. To this end, the project should collaborate with the EIP-AGRI networks at Member State and at EU level;
- Share the output of the EU knowledge reservoir as widely as possible, using existing dissemination channels for farmers and foresters and national/regional/local AKIS channels, with the support of AKIS coordination bodies and platforms in Member States. Explore the possibilities for translation of its content into EU languages;
- Develop interactive communication activities on the outcomes of clusters of projects in the reservoir, so that the knowledge comes to life through workshops and encounters between AKIS' actors, in particular those who have common interests across the EU. This will be the way to find out whether the knowledge reservoir meets end-users' expectations. Through peer-to-peer activities and mixed actor events on dedicated parts of the content of the knowledge reservoir, enable innovations to arise from existing work, using the inputs and suggestions received from key actors all over the EU;
- Use the collected material to develop educational material for students, farmers, foresters, advisors and others<sup>446</sup>, and for encouraging on-farm demonstrations. Give input for training of advisors and farmers (or other users). All this material is to be exploited across Europe through real life, one-to-one and virtual activities;
- The project should collaborate with all 27 EU Member States' AKIS' coordinating bodies<sup>447</sup> and related networks, and strongly connect to the EIP-AGRI at EU level. Make use of the AKIS coordination in each Member State to connect actors all over Europe working on specific subjects. This collaboration should serve to verify whether the reservoir indeed meets the expectations of Member States' AKIS' actors;
- Make use of local connections in all 27 EU Member States to interpret the national/regional contexts, including in particular the innovation strand of national CAP Networks. Use the knowledge and innovation experts in the SCAR-AKIS Strategic Working Group to discuss the project strategy and progress at the various stages of the project;

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<sup>446</sup> See the requirements for the 'multi-actor approach' in the introduction to this work programme part.

<sup>447</sup> "AKIS coordination bodies" in the CAP plans are responsible for the management of the Member States AKIS' strategies

- Projects should have a minimum duration of 7 years, and build on the developments of the projects EURAKNOS<sup>448</sup> and EUREKA<sup>449</sup>, and - if relevant - of similar international initiatives. They must implement the multi-actor approach, including as a minimum the EIP-AGRI and national CAP networks and AKIS actors from many Member States as well as IT-experts with experience in knowledge reservoirs. Proposals should include tasks to collaborate with these Horizon 2020 projects to take over the agreed IT standards and languages according to the outcomes of the feasibility discussions in EURAKNOS and EUREKA.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-25: Improving national AKIS organisation in a co-creative process across the EU**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 10.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

Expected Outcome: In support of the Green Deal, CAP and farm to fork objectives and targets, the successful proposal will focus on appropriate governance to interlink Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS<sup>450</sup>) actors and connect them with practice-oriented information derived from different sources that are readily available. The expected outcome of this topic is to develop sound AKIS governance in Member States. Member States' authorities and AKIS actors need insights and tools to advance knowledge exchange, build capacities. Innovative governance solutions should accelerate the transition to a more sustainable management and use of natural resources in farming and forestry. This will lead to better informed and engaged stakeholders and users of innovative project results thanks to effective AKIS and related platforms.

Project results are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

<sup>448</sup> <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/817863>

<sup>449</sup> <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/862790>

<sup>450</sup> AKIS means the organisation and knowledge flows between persons, organisations and institutions who use and produce knowledge for agriculture and interrelated fields (Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation).

Member States need to find new ways to govern the transition process and at the same time modernise governance. Special attention shall go into making information and knowledge more readily available and accessible and to improving knowledge flows between AKIS actors, as foreseen in the AKIS strategies of the post 2020 Common Agricultural Policy<sup>451</sup>. The task of the future AKIS coordination bodies and platforms is to find adequate governance to share knowledge and innovation supporting the European Green Deal and farm to fork objectives, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals while trying to solve institutional barriers and lock-ins, political inertia and power imbalances.

Project results are expected to contribute to the following outcomes

1. New know-how to be used by policy makers and other AKIS actors<sup>452</sup> to improve knowledge flows and develop a well-functioning AKIS in their country. This supports policy objectives linked to Cluster 6, such as the European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Common Agricultural Policy. Examples are farm viability and generational renewal, agro-ecology, climate mitigation and adaptation, pesticide reduction, reduction of water use and pollution, and much more.

2. The CAP post 2020 cross-cutting objective of modernising the sector by fostering and sharing knowledge, innovation and digitalisation in agriculture and rural areas, and encouraging their uptake<sup>453</sup>. Support related to knowledge creation, organisation and sharing will become available under the post 2020 CAP. This project must help Member States to benchmark among them in order to choose the most effective AKIS interventions adapted to their local/regional/national situations. It should improve learning on how to organise their AKIS to improve its functioning.

3. The outcomes should be approaches to better connect actors, policies and projects and instruments to speed up innovation and the uptake of knowledge, in particular to:

(a) create added value by better linking research, education, advisors and farming practice and encourage the wider use of available knowledge and innovation;

(b) connect innovation actors and projects at all levels; resulting in faster and wider co-creation and transposition of innovative solutions into practice and communicate to the scientific community the research needs of practice.

Scope: Proposals should address the following activities:

- Compare the various types of AKIS<sup>454</sup> within the EU at national, regional and local level to discover how they effectively and efficiently enhance interaction between AKIS actors through activities at various geographical levels. Special attention shall be paid to making practice-oriented information and knowledge better available, shared and accessible and on how to improve knowledge flows between AKIS actors, including

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<sup>451</sup> Art 102 of the post 2020 CAP on AKIS strategies

<sup>452</sup> See the requirements for the 'multi-actor approach' in the introduction to this Work Programme part

<sup>453</sup> Art 5 CAP post-2020 proposal

<sup>454</sup> Art 3 and 102 of the CAP post-2020 proposal

informing research on needs from practice and finding ways to reward scientists for results useable in practice in particular. Project activities should help learning processes for practitioners within the country and regions, as well as support them to benefit from well-functioning AKISs. Project proposals must also support development of various cross-border approaches between AKISs to enhance knowledge flows and initiatives to incentivise innovation projects among countries and regions within the EU, and to learn from each other.

- A specific part of the project should be dedicated to sharing the various ways and good examples of how advisors can be intensively integrated in AKIS<sup>455</sup>, including for innovation support<sup>456</sup>.
- Assess current AKIS, using practical tools and indicators capable of monitoring the functioning of Member States' AKIS. This should include institutional arrangements and ways to stimulate researchers to exchange information with practice and have an effective impact on the transition to a more sustainable agriculture by adjusting the focus of their research to more practical approaches and interaction with practice. Provide advice and support on how to measure improving the functioning of the AKIS, making use of a coherent and effective approach while taking into account the national/regional/local historical and cultural contexts.
- Provide all outcomes and materials to the European Innovation Partnership 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability' (EIP-AGRI), including in the common 'practice abstract' format for EU wide dissemination, as well as to national/regional/local AKIS channels and to the EU-wide interactive knowledge reservoir (HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-24) in the requested formats.
- Cover all 27 EU Member State in the project, and make use in all those countries of experts who understand and are able to make an accurate interpretation of the national/regional contexts of practitioners. Use the knowledge and innovation experts in the SCAR-AKIS Strategic Working Group to discuss the project's strategy and progress in the various stages of the project. Projects should have a minimum duration of 7 years and must implement the multi-actor approach. Since innovation support is an essential element in a well-functioning AKIS, cooperation with the project under HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-26 is expected.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-26: Deepening the functioning of innovation support**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00

<sup>455</sup> advisors' integration within AKIS is a newly introduced obligation in Art 13(2) as also measured by result indicator 2  
<sup>456</sup> Art 13(4) of the CAP post 2020 proposal

<i>contribution per project</i>	million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

Expected Outcome: In support of the Green Deal, common agricultural policy and farm to fork objectives and targets, the successful proposal will focus on how to discover innovative ideas and how to enable the relevant actors to work out these ideas in a co-creative way as from the very start of the making of the proposal. The expected outcome of this topic is to develop sound, coherent and well-prepared innovation generation and support methods, which enable individual grassroots innovative ideas to come to fruition. It should help project coordinators to find methods to use the complementary knowledge of partners to develop ready-to-use solutions. Member States' authorities and actors of the agricultural knowledge and innovation system (AKIS) need insights and tools to improve the interaction, connections and drafting skills for preparation of innovation project proposals. This will eventually lead to useable and practice-oriented innovative project results, better informed practitioners motivated to implement those results and, as a consequence, increased impact of funding for multi-actor research and innovation and European innovation partnership (EIP) Operational Groups.

Member States AKISs need to be equipped to advance knowledge, build capacities and co-create innovative solutions to accelerate the transition to a sustainable and circular management and use of natural resources. To this end, the CAP post-2020 introduced for all Member States an obligation to have innovation support services in place<sup>457</sup>, to speed up innovation by helping to develop individual innovative grassroots ideas into interactive innovation projects<sup>458</sup>. Such services can serve as one stop shops for innovation and should help future users of project results to prepare multi-actor innovative projects with a view to testing the potential innovation they have in mind. Member States need to find new ways to organise innovation support which fuels the generation of solutions for the transition process towards more sustainable farming and forestry. This can be done in particular in the form of a one-stop-shop for innovation, which can provide practical information on the subject of the potential project, existing scientific knowledge and project management as well as tips and tricks on how to develop such projects into a coherent project proposal. Being able to connect the most relevant actors with complementary knowledge is also an essential element, and will

<sup>457</sup> Art 13(4) of the post 2020 CAP proposal

<sup>458</sup> Such as Horizon Multi-actor projects or EIP-AGRI Operational Groups

help to attain the objectives of the potential project. Deepening innovation support will need to take into account institutional barriers and lock-ins, political inertia and tackle power imbalances between potential actors involved in co-creative innovation processes.

Project results are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

1. Helping innovation support services to tackle innovative ideas related to the policy objectives linked to Cluster 6, such as farm viability, agro-ecology, climate issues, pesticide reduction, reduction of water use and pollution, short supply chains, generational renewal, etc, as well as the European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the CAP, the Biodiversity Strategy and the wider bioeconomy research and policies.

2. Contribute to the CAP cross-cutting objective of modernising the sector by fostering and sharing knowledge, innovation and digitalisation in agriculture and rural areas, and encouraging their uptake<sup>459</sup>. Projects shall provide overall support to generate practical approaches ultimately leading to better capturing of emerging needs and/or innovative opportunities, knowledge co-creation, in relation to the new obligation for Member States under the CAP post-2020<sup>460</sup> to have innovation support services in place, taking into account national and regional contexts.

3. The outcomes shall connect actors, policies, projects and instruments to speed up creation of innovative solutions, in particular by:

(a) creating added value by better linking research, education, advisors and farming practice and encouraging the wider use of available knowledge which can serve the innovative idea;

(b) connecting innovation actors and projects; resulting in faster co-creation of ready-to-use innovative solutions, spreading them into practice and communicating the research needs of practice to the scientific community.

Scope: Proposals should address the following activities:

- Develop approaches to set up and improve the functioning of innovation brokers, which have the capacities to find individual innovative grassroots ideas at an early stage as well as practice needs or innovative opportunities. These innovative ideas should then be developed with the support of the owner of the idea and a number of relevant actors with complementary knowledge into an EIP-AGRI interactive innovation project<sup>510</sup>, using methods ensuring co-ownership of the initiators and partners in the project. Seed funding as used for EIP-AGRI Operational Group projects is often a good solution to accompany this process, but also other approaches such as “innovation advice” or “innovation coaching” are an option to investigate<sup>461</sup>.

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<sup>459</sup> Art 5 CAP post 2020 proposal

<sup>460</sup> Art 13(4) CAP post 2020 proposal

<sup>461</sup> See EIP-AGRI seminar on AKIS : <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/event/eip-agri-seminar-cap-strategic-plans-key-role-akis>

- Explore how such innovation support approaches could be embedded in the national/regional AKIS, in particular through useful connections with advisors, and how they can be linked to other broader innovation support mechanisms, including research, advisors and CAP networks at Member State or regional level<sup>462</sup>.
- Investigate and compare among Member States how the governance of such innovation support could be organised at the level of the managing authorities (single “one-stop-shop” service or mixed model with several smaller and/or bigger innovation support services, or...) taking into account the great variety of contexts in Member States and regions.
- Cover all 27 EU Member States in the project to ensure learning from diversity. Make use in all those countries of experts who understand and are able to make an accurate interpretation of the national/regional contexts and its impact to help develop the ideal solution for that Member State.
- Projects should have a minimum duration of 6 years, investing most in the very first years, and use the support from the knowledge and innovation experts of the SCAR-AKIS Strategic Working Group to discuss project strategy and progress in the various stages of the project. They must implement the multi-actor approach, including existing experienced innovation support services as partners which can share their methods and help develop solutions in other contexts.
- As foreseen in the Multi-Actor Approach requirements<sup>463</sup>, provide all outcomes and materials to the European Innovation Partnership 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability' (EIP-AGRI), including in the common 'practice abstract' format for EU wide dissemination, including as well as to national/regional/local AKIS channels and to the EU-wide interactive knowledge reservoir (HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-24) in the requested formats.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-27: Developing EU advisory networks on consumer-producer chains**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

<sup>462</sup> Art 102 of the CAP post 2020 proposal

<sup>463</sup> See introduction of the Work Programme

<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <p>The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p>
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Expected Outcome: In support of the Green Deal, CAP and farm to fork objectives and targets, the successful proposal will focus on advisor exchanges across the EU to increase the speed of knowledge creation and sharing, capacity building, of demonstration of innovative solutions, as well as helping to bring them into practice, which accelerates the needed transitions. Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) in which advisors are fully integrated<sup>464</sup> are key drivers to speed up innovation and the uptake of research results by farmers.

Primary producers have a particular need for impartial, ready-to-use and tailored knowledge on the management choices related to the needs, challenges or opportunities they experience. This speeds up innovation and the uptake of results, and is key to improve sustainability. It adds value to the knowledge and cost-effectiveness of innovative practices and techniques in and across primary production sectors, food systems, bioeconomy and biodiversity. This will lead to more informed and engaged stakeholders and users of project results including primary producers and consumers thanks to effective platforms such as Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation Systems.

Transformative changes such as those required within the European Green Deal are dynamic processes that require appropriate governance of AKIS actors. Advisors are key actors strongly guiding and with powerful influence over producers' decisions. A novelty in the post-2020 CAP plans<sup>465</sup> is that advisors now must be integrated within the Member States' AKIS, and that the scope of their actions has become much broader. They must now be able to cover economic, environmental and social domains, as well as be informed on up-to-date science and technology. They should be able to translate this knowledge into opportunities and use and adapt those to specific local circumstances. This specific topic focuses on the important role advisors can play to exploit the potential of connecting consumers with producers through short supply chains, an upcoming issue in the more sustainable and diversified agriculture of the future.

Project results are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

1. Production of supporting services and sharing of materials to facilitate the upscaling of short supply chains, such as knowledge networks and peer-to-peer counselling, master classes, inspiration tours, advice modelling, communication and education materials, sharing of effective business models and making use of possible accelerators serving both producers and consumers, SWOT analysis schemes, (new) business model analyses, etc

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<sup>464</sup> Article 13(2) of the CAP post 2020

<sup>465</sup> Art 13(2) of the post-2020 CAP regulation



2. Development of interaction with regional, national and EU policy makers, potentially leading to an EU network to discuss institutional barriers to producer-consumer chains, including bottlenecks, lock-ins, political inertia, ambiguous regulations, inequality between Member States and power imbalances;
3. The policy objectives linked to Cluster 6, as well as the European Green Deal, and in particular the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Common Agricultural Policy, with the objective to increase farmer viability and raise consumer awareness on connecting producers and consumers in short food supply chains;
4. The CAP cross-cutting objective of modernising the sector by fostering and sharing of knowledge, innovation and digitalisation in agriculture and rural areas, and encouraging their uptake<sup>466</sup>. This project shall provide overall support related to knowledge creation, organisation and sharing of novel information across borders. It shall help to fill gaps on emerging advisory topics which is useful in particular in relation with the new obligation for Member States to integrate advisors within their AKIS which shall cover a much broader scope than in the former period;
5. The outcomes should speed up the introduction, spread and bringing into practice of innovative solutions related to consumer-producer chains overall, in particular by:
  - (a) creating added value by better linking research, education, advisors and farming practice and encouraging the wider use of available knowledge across the EU;
  - (b) learning from innovation actors and projects, resulting in faster sharing and implementation of ready-to-use innovative solutions, spreading them into practice and communicating to the scientific community the bottom-up research needs of practice.

Scope: Proposals should address the following activities:

- Connect advisors with knowledge on short supply chains who have a broad and extensive network of farmers across all EU Member States into an EU advisory network on short food supply chains to better connect consumers with producers, securing producers' income, building on the outcomes of the EIP-AGRI Workshop "Cities and Food – Connecting Consumers and Producers" and the Focus Group on Short Food Supply Chains<sup>467</sup>.
- Share effective and novel short chain approaches and experiences among this EU advisory network. These approaches must be sustainable in terms of economic, environmental and social aspects.
- Focus on cost-benefit elements. Collect and document good examples in this regard, connecting with farmers, intermediates and consumers in Member States to be able to take into account financial aspects and local conditions. Select the best practices, learn

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<sup>466</sup> Art 5 CAP post-2020 proposal

<sup>467</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/event/eip-agri-workshop-cities-and-food-%E2%80%93-connecting>

about the key success factors, possible quick wins and make them available for (local) exploitation, to ensure financial win-wins for producers and consumers.

- Integrate the advisors of the EU short food supply chain network into the Member States' AKIS as much as possible. They can provide encouragement as innovation brokers in local short chain projects of European innovation partnership "Agricultural productivity and sustainability" (EIP-AGRI) Operational Groups. They should give hands-on training to farmers and local advisors, lead national thematic and learning networks on the subject, deliver and implement action plans with interested farmers, inspire new and incoming farmers or farms at the cross-roads of intergenerational renewal, connect with education and ensure broad communication, support peer-to-peer consulting, develop on-farm demonstrations and YouTube demo films, and provide specific back-office support for generalist advisors within the national/regional AKIS.
- Explore if the some or all activities of the EU advisory network on short supply chains can be upscaled at the level of a number of Member States under a cooperative format. Wherever possible, develop digital advisory and accelerator tools for common and open use across the EU. Determine whether common instruments can be created to incentivise the implementation of short food supply chains linking producers with consumers, for instance in the framework of smart villages, or to incentivise novel food strategies for cities, villages and rural areas, etc.
- Include all 27 EU Member States in the EU advisory network. Make use in all those countries of experts who understand and are able to make an accurate interpretation of the national / regional contexts to help develop the best solutions for that Member State or region. Use the support from the knowledge and innovation experts of the SCAR-AKIS Strategic Working Group to discuss project strategies, coordination and progress in the various stages of the 2 projects. Projects should run at least 5 years. They must implement the multi-actor approach.
- Provide all outcomes and materials to the EIP-AGRI, including in the common 'practice abstract' format for EU wide dissemination, as well as to national / regional / local AKIS channels and to the EU-wide interactive knowledge reservoir (HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-24) in the requested formats.

**HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-28: Thematic networks to compile and share knowledge ready for practice**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.50 million.

<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <p>The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p>

Expected Outcome: In support of the Green Deal, CAP and farm to fork objectives and targets, the successful proposal will focus on knowledge sharing in a language that is easy to understand and is targeted to farmers and foresters. Primary producers have a particular need for impartial and tailored knowledge on the management choices related to the needs, challenges or opportunities they experience. This speeds up innovation and the uptake of results, and is key to improve sustainability. It adds value to the knowledge and cost-effectiveness of innovative practices and techniques in and across primary production sectors, food systems, bioeconomy and biodiversity. This will lead to more informed and engaged stakeholders and users of project results including primary producers and consumers thanks to effective platforms such as Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS<sup>468</sup>).

Despite the continued funding of scientific projects, innovative ideas and methods from practice are not captured and spread, and often research findings are not integrated into agricultural and forestry practice. Proposals, acting at EU level to remedy this situation, are essential because national and sectoral AKISs are insufficiently connected and organised to fully meet the challenge of intensifying thematic cooperation between researchers, advisors and farmers/foresters. This exchange of knowledge will foster economically viable and sustainable agriculture and forestry and build trust between the main AKIS actors.

Project results are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

- The cross-cutting objective of modernising the sector by fostering and sharing of knowledge, innovation and digitalisation in agriculture and rural areas, and encouraging their uptake<sup>469</sup>, as well as European Green Deal and Farm to Fork objectives;
- The collection and distribution of easily accessible practice-oriented knowledge on the thematic area chosen, in particular the existing best practices and research findings that are ready to be put into practice, but not sufficiently known or used by practitioners.
- Conserve practical knowledge for the long term - beyond the project period – in particular by using the main trusted dissemination channels that farmers/foresters consult most often.

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<sup>468</sup> AKIS (Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System) means the organisation and knowledge flows between persons, organisations and institutions who use and produce knowledge for agriculture and interrelated fields

<sup>469</sup> Art 5 of the post 2020 CAP regulation

- Increase the flow of practical information between farmers/foresters in the EU in a geographically balanced way, creating spill-overs and taking account of the differences between territories. In order to better reach and capture knowledge from the targeted farmers/foresters, the networks may organise 'cross-fertilisation' through sub-networks covering, for example, a region, a language or a production system;

Achieve greater user acceptance of collected solutions and a more intensive dissemination of existing knowledge, by connecting actors, policies, projects and instruments to speed up innovation and promote the faster and wider co-creation and transposition of innovative solutions into practice.

Scope: Proposals should address the following activities:

- Summarise, share and present - in a language that is easy to understand and is targeted to farmers and foresters – the existing best practices and research findings that are ready to be put into practice, but not sufficiently known or used by practitioners. The specific themes of the networks can be chosen in a 'bottom-up' way on the condition that they tackle the most urgent farmers' or foresters' needs.
- Compile a comprehensive description of the state of current farming practices on the chosen theme to explain the added-value of the proposal and the relevance of the theme. Proposals shall focus on the cost/benefit aspects of the practices collected and summarised, and clarify how the project avoids duplication with ongoing or completed projects and networks.
- Deliver an extensive range of useful, applicable and appealing end-user material for farmers and foresters. This info should be easy to access and understand, making use of audio-visual material wherever possible, including also materials serving education and training;
- This range of material should feed into the existing dissemination channels most consulted by farmers and foresters in the countries.
- As many “practice abstracts” in the common European innovation partnership "Agricultural productivity and sustainability" (EIP-AGRI) format as possible, as well as other type of materials should be provided to the EIP-AGRI, as well as to national / regional / local AKIS channels and to the EU-wide interactive knowledge reservoir (HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-22), all in the requested formats;
- Besides giving the details on the EIP-AGRI Operational Groups which are strongly recommended to be involved<sup>470</sup>, wherever possible and relevant to the chosen theme, provide also details on how further synergies will be built with future EIP-AGRI Operational Groups and interactive innovation groups operating in the context of the EIP-AGRI.

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<sup>470</sup> According to the requirements of the multi-actor approach

- Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach', with a consortium based on a balanced mix of actors with complementary knowledge clearly activating farmers/foresters, farmers' groups and advisors; and run for minimum 3 years.

**Call - Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal**

***HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01***

**Conditions for the Call**

Indicative budget(s)<sup>471</sup>

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) <sup>472</sup>	Number of projects expected to be funded
		2022		
Opening: 28 Oct 2021 Deadline(s): 15 Feb 2022				
HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-01	CSA	8.00	Around 8.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-02	COFUND	23.00	23.00 to 150.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-03	RIA	6.00	Around 6.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-04	CSA	3.00	Around 3.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-05	CSA	4.00	Around 4.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-06	RIA	10.00	Around 3.00	3

<sup>471</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

<sup>472</sup> Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

**Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2021-2022**  
**Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment**

HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-07	IA	20.00	Around 3.00	6
HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-08	IA	14.00	3.00 to 5.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-09	RIA	10.00	Around 5.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-10	RIA	8.00	Around 4.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-11	RIA	15.00	5.00 to 7.50	3
HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-12	CSA	9.00	Around 3.00	3
HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-13	CSA	4.00	Around 2.00	2
HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-14	CSA	5.00	Around 5.00	1
HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-15	CSA	8.00	Around 4.00	2
Overall indicative budget		147.00		

<b>General conditions relating to this call</b>	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.

<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.
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### **Innovating with governance models and supporting policies**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-01: Mobilisation of society to transform food systems for co-benefits**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

Expected Outcome: In line with the European Green Deal priorities and the farm to fork strategy for a fair healthy and environmentally friendly food system, as well as with the EU's Climate ambition for 2030 and 2050, the successful proposal will involve the mobilisation of society to transform food systems for co-benefits. This will lead to innovative governance models enabling sustainability and resilience, which achieve better-informed decision-making processes, societal engagement, and innovative solutions.

With the overarching aim to help transform food systems for co-benefits to nutrition and health, climate, environment, biodiversity, circularity and communities, the project will:

- Build on the Fit4Food2030<sup>473</sup> initiative to further the mobilisation of all relevant Food System public and private sector stakeholders, researchers, non-governmental organisations, educators, knowledge brokers, media and society, to work together via an interlinked structure at the level of cities, regions, and countries across Europe, and that supports mutual learning and good practices.

<sup>473</sup> <https://fit4food2030.eu/>

- A new and improved structured network of evidence-based policy labs throughout Europe so as to raise awareness, foster joint action, good practices and knowledge sharing amongst stakeholders relevant to food system policy developments and implementation at various levels: local, regional, national, EU and international level. Key to this will be the inclusion of decision and policy makers, scientists, and public authorities to ensure the sustainability and legitimacy of the governance process.
- Increased pan-European citizen engagement, social innovation and co-creation through local or regional living labs; promote food systems science education for children and youth while respecting national competence in the area of education and health, and measure the food systems transition progress in society.

Scope: Successful proposals are expected to:

- Establish a pan-European Food 2030 multi-actor and public engagement mechanism to raise food system awareness and foster more citizen (including youth) involvement and interest in science, research and innovation, necessary to foster support for a food system transformation that delivers co-benefits.
- Engage a network of science museums to co-create and deploy a Food 2030 “food systems lab” inspired by the Oceans Plastic Lab<sup>474</sup> to be deployed across Europe linking in particular to EU presidencies, important global meetings (e.g.: COP), and other relevant place-based initiatives (like I-Capital, Green Capital, etc.).
- Support emerging relevant citizen science projects at local level (neighbourhoods, towns and cities), conduct hackathons, hold science cafés, and set up a dedicated video channel to display food systems success stories, all with the aim of raising awareness of the need to transform food systems and to co-create citizen-inspired solutions.
- Develop and deploy innovative interactive food systems education material in support of both the informal and formal education of children and youth (including gender-specific messaging) across Europe while respecting national competence in the area of education and health, in cooperation with relevant European school networks, associations and local media outlets.
- Facilitate the cooperation of relevant EU Horizon Europe projects to arrive at a common language and explore/set common goals, discuss potential farm to fork strategy and Green Deal interventions, all with a view to strengthen co-ownership and cooperation, share and communicate knowledge, boost innovation and increase take-up of improved policy schemes among the food system actors, and society.
- Measurement of food systems transition progress by, for example, conducting surveys or employing sentiment analyses that demonstrates society’s level of interest and willingness to transform food systems for co-benefits and the perceive trade-offs.

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<sup>474</sup> <https://oceanplasticlab.net/>



- Explain and map how co-benefits will be achieved relevant to the four Food 2030 priorities<sup>475</sup>: nutrition for sustainable healthy diets, climate and environment, circularity and resource efficiency, innovation and empowerment of communities.

Involving a wide diversity of food system actors and conducting inter-disciplinary research is expected to implement the required multi actor approach (cf eligibility conditions).

The project should set out a clear plan on how it will collaborate with other projects selected under this and any other relevant topic/call, by participating in joint activities, workshops, as well as common communication and dissemination activities.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-02: European Partnership for a climate neutral, sustainable and productive Blue Economy**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 23.00 and 150.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 23.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Programme Co-fund Action
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:  Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. As financial support provided by the participants to third parties is one of the primary activities of this action in order to be able to achieve its objectives, the 60 000 EUR threshold provided for in Article 204 (a) of the Financial Regulation No 2018/1046 does not apply.
<i>Total indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the duration of the partnership is EUR 150 million.

<sup>475</sup>

<https://ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy/index.cfm?pg=policy&lib=food2030>

Expected Outcome: The partnership is expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

In line with the objectives of the European Green Deal and Digital Europe priorities, the successful proposal will contribute to the sustainability and resilience of the blue economy by supporting the establishment of innovative governance models. It will also contribute to strengthening the EU and international science-policy interfaces in marine- and maritime-related domains as well as the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) by supporting the further deployment and exploitation of Environmental Observation data and products and of digital and data technologies.

- EU and national multi-level cooperation and alignment across and within regional seas of research and innovation programmes, priorities and investments are enhanced, based on established strategic research and innovation agendas and related cooperation activities, including international agreements and outreach; as well as cooperation with other Horizon Europe initiatives, European partnerships and missions.
- Europe's role in ocean science, research, social and technological developments, innovation and productivity in the marine domain is clearly strengthened by 2030 and transformative governance enables the advances of the role of Europe in business, finance and social developments in the marine/maritime domain.
- By 2030, Europe has contributed significantly and in a measurable way to the climate neutrality of the blue economy, the European Green Deal objectives and its different strategies.
- The science-based implementation of EU marine-related legislation, regulations and objectives is supported, as well as the advanced sustainability of activities, practices and existing and new products and services of the blue economy value chains throughout European regional seas and the Atlantic.
- Transformative change is promoted and enabled through actionable science and sustainable, fair and just solutions for the blue economy and for communities, involving a participatory and multi-stakeholder approach.
- The deployment of digital, nature-based and social innovations as well as community-led and purpose-driven technology for the blue economy is supported.
- Ocean literacy in the EU and beyond is increased.
- Sustained ocean and coastal observations and availability of FAIR data for environmental, climate and blue economy purposes are substantially increased.
- Global cooperation with key partners bordering the different EU sea basins is strengthened.

Scope: Europe's seas and ocean do not stop at national borders, nor do the challenges they face. Many of the issues are common throughout European seas and the Atlantic, even globally. A major effort is needed to increase the development of ocean science, research, technological developments and innovation, both to protect the ocean and to increase the resilience of its ecosystems and to ensure a strong sustainable blue economy and science-based design of marine spatial planning, involving all stakeholders. No nation can face this on its own and undertake the investments in research, technology and innovation that are needed to steer new business, governance and social developments<sup>476</sup>.

Many of the identified research priorities and activities of the EU and individual countries are similar and, therefore, require alignment over all European seas and ocean. Existing and new funding streams from national, public and private sources will need to be pooled, together with EU funding, in order to maximise efforts and achieve efficiency gains. To address these issues, sea basin-specific Research and Innovation Agendas (RIAs) have been developed for the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Baltic Sea and the North Sea, and the Black Sea<sup>477</sup>. An impact-driven and coherent approach needs to be designed to combine all of these research and innovation agendas, in order to structure the European landscape, so that common issues can be addressed jointly, and national marine strategies are developed in a consistent way.

The partnership should catalyse the transformation of Europe's blue economy towards climate neutral status by 2050. By aligning national, regional and EU R&I priorities and bringing together science, industry, governance and society, it should deliver knowledge and solutions to make the blue economy sustainable. Responding to national and EU policy goals (e.g. European Green Deal, Marine Strategy Framework Directive), the partnership should aim to achieve a healthy ocean, a sustainable and productive blue economy and the well-being of citizens.

The partnership should increase scientific contributions, applicable in a legal/regulatory context, related to biodiversity, ecosystem conservation and restoration, climate mitigation and adaptation, and pollution, including eutrophication, noise, marine litter and hazardous substances, and should facilitate the use of scientific knowledge by regulators and policy-makers, contributing to the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, the farm to fork strategy, the mission in the area "Ocean, seas and waters", the circular economy action plan and the zero pollution ambition.

The partnership should promote technological, nature-based, social, economic and cultural innovation and experiment with new planning, governance, business and finance models. It should also contribute to the future EU initiative on ocean observation, to the development of a common European ocean data space, to the Ocean Digital Twin and to the implementation of the European Ocean Observing System (EOOS).

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<sup>476</sup> The final evaluation of the BONUS programme, the mid-term review of the EU Atlantic Strategy, the OECD report on the Blue Economy, the IPCC report on the ocean and cryosphere, etc. support this.

<sup>477</sup> The Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda for the Black Sea is a milestone feature of the EU's Black Sea Synergy policy and a scientific pillar of the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea.

The partnership should put the emphasis on the development of basin- or Europe-wide holistic, integrated, systemic and cross-sectoral approaches and foster co-creation processes involving all relevant stakeholders and actors, while remaining operationally manageable. It should engage local, regional and national authorities, industry and businesses, including SMEs, knowledge institutions and citizens through Open Science and an inclusive governance, policy and decision-making. It should harness the full potential of social sciences and humanities (SSH), social innovation and citizen engagement to deliver portfolios of solutions, measures and tools and facilitate their replication, and upscaling. In particular, this topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

It should contribute to improve the quality of life and long-term socio-economic prospects of coastal communities, including women, youth and the most vulnerable groups like indigenous people, in the context of major transitions and rising threats to climate, resources and health, including by increasing their resilience to crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. In line with the European Commission's political vision of leaving no one behind, the wide diversity and heterogeneity in levels of socio-economic, technological, institutional, innovation and skills potential should be taken into account.

The European Partnership for a climate neutral, sustainable and productive blue economy should be implemented through a joint programme of activities for high impact, relevance and capacity building, ranging from research to coordination and networking activities, including training, demonstration, communication and dissemination activities in all research and innovation projects of the partnership. Emphasis should be given to demonstration, upscaling and experimentation calls. To ensure effective and smooth implementation, three dedicated pillars of activities within the partnership are needed:

- i. Implementation of joint activities in particular calls for proposals with co-funding from the Union.
- ii. Implementation of joint activities without co-funding from the Union.
- iii. A broad set of activities supporting coordination, international cooperation and outreach, uptake of results etc.

These activities should be structured along the following main building blocks of activities:

- Development of work programmes as implementation steps of the high-level Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA). This SRIA should be included in the proposal, outlining implementation modalities and building on existing SRIAs or equivalent in the EU sea basins. It should include the demonstration of the achievability of policy targets at sea-basin scale.
- Joint calls for challenge-driven R&I to address critical issues for a sustainable climate-neutral blue economy with integrated and multi-stakeholder approaches.

- Setting-up a multi-stakeholder community of practice to facilitate science-policy-business-society dialogues, share experiences and disseminate results and innovations on key issues for social transition and sustainable development.
- Undertaking communication and dissemination measures to make R&I results accessible for all stakeholder groups and users and prepare guidelines, references, tools and trainings for replication and mainstreaming; communicating to citizens and civil society at large, and involving them to achieve policy goals.
- Synthesising R&I results and achievements from clusters of projects.
- Setting-up (a) knowledge hub(s) to support capacity-building on integrated approaches.
- Setting-up rigorous monitoring to follow progress of projects and taking stock of diverse solutions, good practice cases and the contribution to the achievement of the objectives of the partnership and the related policy targets.
- Exploring interfaces with public procurement and investment programmes by developing links with other programmes, private funds, etc. to support take-up and larger-scale implementation of tested approaches and solutions.

Given the global dimension of ocean policy, membership and other modalities of participation from organisations and institutions in non-associated third countries is strongly encouraged, in particular key partners bordering the different EU sea basins. International cooperation should contribute to align strategies and research agendas, strengthen data collection, monitoring and sharing, as well as access to infrastructures, promote good practice for maritime policies, promote the exchange and export of key technologies and gradually open up cooperation with new countries outside of Europe. It should support the EU's strong commitment to the UN Decade of Ocean Science, the G7 Future of the Seas and Oceans Initiative, the All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance, the BLUEMED Initiative, the Black Sea Synergy and other international initiatives.

The partnership should cover the Atlantic, the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. It is expected to include and be open to all relevant public marine/maritime funding organisations and ministries from EU Member States and associated countries as core members, in close cooperation with the private sector, including SMEs and foundations. Appropriate links to other relevant ministries and organisations, including civil society, will be established.

Partners are expected to provide financial and/or in-kind contributions for the governance structure, the joint calls and other dedicated implementation actions and efforts for national coordination. The partnership is expected to mobilise EU, national and regional capacities to leverage investments, including from the private sector, increase up-scalability and market accessibility for the developed solutions and thus increase the return to investments.

To ensure the coherence and complementarity of activities, and to leverage knowledge investment possibilities, the partnership is expected to foster close cooperation and synergies

with other relevant proposed European Partnerships, notably “Rescuing biodiversity to safeguard life on Earth”, “Safe and Sustainable Food Systems”, “Water security for the planet (Water4All)”, “Zero-emission waterborne transport”, “Clean Energy Transition” and others where relevant, as well as the EIT Climate KIC and the EIT FOOD. The partnership will also be linked to the relevant objectives of the mission in the area of “Ocean, seas and waters”. Proposers are expected to describe in details the way to implement such collaborations.

Proposals should pool the necessary financial resources from the participating national (or regional) research programmes with a view to implementing joint calls for transnational proposals resulting in grants to third parties. Financial support provided by the participants to third parties is one of the primary activities of this action in order to be able to achieve its objectives. Therefore, the 60 000 EUR threshold provided for in Article 204 (a) of the Financial Regulation No 2018/1046 does not apply. It is expected that the partnership organises joint calls on an annual base and therefore it should consider ample time for the implementation of the co-funded projects. The EU contribution for this action will be implemented in annual instalments of around EUR 20-30 million.

Engaging with managing authorities of European Structural and Investment Funds, as well as others like LIFE, Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III) and Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), during partnership implementation would help increase the implementation of the project outcomes and support and facilitate further uptake.

The Commission envisages to include new actions in future work programme(s) to continue providing support to the partnership for the duration of Horizon Europe.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-03: Multi-layer governance performance of marine policies**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome: The successful proposal(s) will enhance new knowledge and design or improve tools to achieve better informed decision-making processes, social engagement and innovation, supporting the implementation of the European Green Deal. Proposals will contribute to the development or improvement of innovative multi-layer governance models enabling sustainability and resilience and of EU and international science-policy interfaces.

Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- Better understanding by the policy making community of the institutional barriers such as lock-ins, path dependency, bounded rationality, political inertia and power imbalances in the formulation and implementation of marine policies.
- The policy making community exploited analyses and better understanding of formal and informal policy governance work streams or processes, including public consultation and encompassing local, regional, national, European and global ocean governance aspects.
- Stronger e-government and easily achievable open government data facilitate greater access to public services.
- Appropriate communication, exchange, coordination and management is enabled at regional, national and European level.
- Improved collaborative governance performance allowing social and technical innovations to provide opportunities for the social contract between the State and the citizenry through increased transparency, enabling better spatial planning and natural resource management, ultimately leading to increased trust in policy making.

Scope: The management of the ocean, seas and coasts is largely carried out in a fragmented manner, at institutional as well as legal governance level and through several related sectors. Poor coordination between sectoral approaches, low institutional capacity, weak implementation of international conventions and lack of technical knowledge and of financial resources for regional, cross-regional and national processes are common issues in Member States and partner countries, affecting coastal communities severely in terms of food security and livelihoods (loss of jobs). Current policy governance models and work streams, including public consultation, at different governance levels, need to be analysed in relation to their performance and further challenged to intensify regional and local integration in the policy dialogue, as the (total, regional and local) transitions towards a sufficiently protected marine natural capital and health and wellbeing of citizens should also be just and inclusive. Proposals should address the need to meet increasing public demands and to address declining public trust.

Proposals should conceptualise and operationalise strategies to address identified barriers to collaborative governance related to the ocean and seas based on a long-term perspective using a participatory process of visioning and experimentation, accompanied by strong and justified recommendations on the required capacity building.

Proposals should improve or develop and leverage innovative digital tools, towards a stronger e-government and easily achievable open government data.

The proposals should cover comparisons within, across and between different spatial governance layers (local, regional, inter-regional, macro-regional, cross-border, international) to cover a representative set of governance structures across Europe varying according to size and geographical, environmental, socio-economic, institutional and administrative conditions.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

Interactive research approaches should be used to engage with local, regional, national and international authorities, as well as local communities, citizens and other relevant stakeholders, considering gender, age and socio-economic background, where relevant.

Projects should build on existing knowledge and integrate results from multiple origins, including other EU, international (for example UN) or national projects or studies. Some cooperation activities with projects financed under topic HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-06 on environmental and social cross-compliance of marine policies could be included. This topic should also be linked to the Horizon Europe Mission Ocean, seas and waters and the Partnership for a climate neutral, sustainable and productive Blue Economy or other partnerships where relevant.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-04: Consumer-focused labelling options for bio-based products**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions

Expected Outcome: The successful proposal will support the deployment of business-to-consumers communication by producers and traders of bio-based products to enable responsible production and consumption in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal, the EU bioeconomy strategy and the European Climate Pact. Project outcomes will contribute to improve the sustainability performance and competitiveness in the bio-based systems and to the establishment of the innovative governance models notably to achieve better-informed decision-making processes, social engagement and innovation. Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Transparency of bio-based products and information to consumers and public authorities are provided through effective and robust business-to-consumers labelling on product traceability, quality, carbon footprint, biodiversity impacts and other environmental footprints.
- Consumers, industry and public bodies are enabled to switch towards socially and environmentally responsible behaviour within their choices in a transparent and inclusive way.
- Improved understanding of metrics on value generated per unit of biological resources.



Scope: The project is expected to advance the role and impact of bio-based innovation to accelerate the transition from a linear fossil-based economy, which leads to overuse and depletion of natural resources, into resource-efficient and circular bio-based systems operating within safe planetary boundaries. Improved and informed governance and social innovation contribute to reducing resource consumption and result in an increased innovation capacity of all actors. Informed consumers may pursue the objectives of circular economy, asking for efficiency and inclusiveness of services provided through less resources and goods, changing consumption patterns (e.g. reducing meat consumption), preventing food waste and separating bio-waste from other waste streams so that it can be (partly) converted to bio-based materials.

Proposals will focus on consumer-oriented labelling options for industrial bio-based products with low environmental footprint, in terms of resources, processes and materials used. Industrial bio-based products do not include food/feed, biofuels, bioenergy and cultural/recreation sectors. However, relevant initiatives in the field of consumer-focussed labelling of sustainability of bio-based products, arising from EU policies in the bioeconomy sectors, should be taken into account.

Proposals should:

- a. Select a range of bio-based systems where value chains can be monitored in their environmental and social impacts (benefits and trade-offs) from the primary materials trade to the final products.
- b. Develop pre- and co-normative research to design or update standards and labels for business-to-consumers communication of climate-neutrality and environmental impacts/benefits/trade-offs and performances of materials and products. Environmental impacts should include carbon footprint, climate neutrality, biodiversity impacts and any other environmental footprint relevant for the specific bio-based value chain and final products. Metrics on value generated, in the final product, per unit of biological feedstock used, including bio-waste, will be assessed.
- c. Develop guidelines on the design of labels for bio- based products that include the perspectives of public authorities (national, regional, local) and consumers.
- d. Assess existing/develop new monitoring system and indicators of effectiveness and robustness of existing business-to-consumers labels and certification schemes.
- e. Demonstrate/test effectiveness of existing (voluntary) business-to-consumers labels and certification schemes and monitor robustness. This action includes the identification of labels and certification schemes and testing of the monitoring system and indicators assessed/developed.
- f. Assess costs and benefits from the adoption of business-to-consumers labels and certification schemes in selected bio-based systems.

- g. Assess and develop smart options for the consumers in the digital age (e.g. mobile applications) aiming at sound understanding and practical use in support of and complying with the current relevant legal framework.
- h. Analyse social measures to enable consumers to switch towards socially and environmentally responsible behaviour within their choices (e.g. regulatory measures, corporate responsibility initiatives, education), ensuring inclusiveness of all actors (NGOs, civil society etc) and taking into account differences between gender, age and socio-economic background.

The proposals should seek complementarities with related actions on bio-based innovation and market measures<sup>478</sup>, e.g. synergies with the food systems if appropriate<sup>479</sup> or any other sector, and ensure inclusiveness and engagement of all actors along bio-based value chains.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-05: Innovative tools and methods to evaluate the design and support, monitoring and implementation of effective CAP strategic plans**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.

Expected Outcome: The successful proposal will contribute to innovative governance and sound decision making in agricultural policies for the green transition. In particular, they will contribute to achieving better informed decision-making processes, to establishing and monitoring innovative governance models enabling sustainability and resilience through enhanced and shared use of new knowledge, tools, foresight, and environmental observations as well as digital, modelling and forecasting capabilities. They will also contribute to strengthened EU science-policy interfaces to support the European Green Deal and to achieve the sustainable development goals.

<sup>478</sup> E.g. topic “HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-07: International and European sustainability certification schemes for bio-based systems”

<sup>479</sup> E. g. topic “HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-17: Increasing the transparency of EU food systems to boost health, sustainability and safety of products, processes and diets”

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- policymakers are supported with cutting-edge tools and methods to design, monitor and implement tailored and results-based common agricultural policy (CAP) strategic plans that fully reflect the ambition of the Green Deal, in particular the farm to fork strategy and the biodiversity strategy;
- accountability of the CAP strategic plans is improved through SMART<sup>480</sup> targets for improved performance against clear baselines, which are coherent with EU objectives and international commitments; and
- good practices on the application of innovative tools and methods are widely shared and used across Member States.

Scope: Agri-food systems are key sectors for the delivery of the objectives of the European green deal while the CAP is the most important EU policy mechanism with the capacity to have a significant impact on the agricultural dimension of these systems at European level.

In the new results-based delivery model of the CAP, Member States are in charge of tailoring CAP interventions to maximise their contribution to EU objectives and to achieve agreed targets. In developing their CAP strategic plans, Member States need to analyse their specific situation and needs, set their targets and design the interventions that will allow them to reach these targets, while being adapted to the national and specific regional contexts.

They also have a say in designing the compliance and control framework applicable to beneficiaries while continuing to ensure effective monitoring and enforcement of the attainment of all policy objectives.

Proposals should:

- Review and benchmark existing tools and/or methods used in different Member States to support the development, implementation and monitoring of effective CAP strategic plans.
- Develop, test and demonstrate a set of innovative tools and/or methods, both qualitative and quantitative, to evaluate the design and support the implementation and monitoring of effective CAP strategic plans.
- The proposed tools and/or methods should:
  - o take into account all objectives and policy instruments post-2020 CAP;
  - o enable analysis of coherence between the multiple instruments of the CAP as well as with other EU policies and international commitments;

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<sup>480</sup> specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound

- o be compatible with and/or innovative in relation to the tools and methods used by the European Commission.
- Apply and evaluate potentials and limitations of the proposed tools to different case studies within Member States, with attention given to balanced geographical coverage and taking into account the diversity of farming systems across the EU, including the outermost regions, and different government structures, e.g. regional / federal administration approaches.
- Develop methodological protocols and guidelines for the users of the tools and methods.

The possible participation of the JRC in the project will ensure access to and improve the tools, methods and databases supporting the design and evaluation of CAP strategic plans based on scientific evidence. In particular it will contribute to the adjustment, further development, and application of existing modelling tools used by the Commission for the foresight analysis of CAP strategic plans, their coherence with the CAP, other EU policies and commitments, and their impact at EU, national, regional and farm level.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-06: Water governance, economic and financial sustainability of water systems**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: In support of the European Green Deal and EU water-related policies, successful proposals will contribute to innovative governance and sound decision making in water policy, in particular Destination ‘Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal’s impact “Innovative governance models enabling sustainability and resilience notably to achieve better informed decision-making processes, social engagement and innovation”.

Projects results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Improve policy implementation for securing sustainable water use across sectors, while insuring transparency and inclusiveness
- Promote a better integrated planning approach across water-using sectors

- Help to link water management to the economic and social development sectors.
- Support coordination between water policies and other relevant policies and coordination of planning measures across relevant EU and national instruments for sustainable water use
- Empower citizens by increasing their motivation and capacity to influence effective water governance decisions.
- Help society to implement through governance, the technological, economic, political, and social measures that will set a course toward the achievement of a desirable, more sustainable and secure water future.
- Support the implementation of the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals, notably SDG 6 “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”

Scope: Changing the way water is used, managed and shared with people, our environment and our economy, addressing trade-offs and ensuring policy coherence, and helping shape the appropriate institutional environment to deal with the complexity of multiple water challenges and the design of the water systems of the future, requires effective development and implementation of sound water management and governance strategies. The governance and institutional set up must be designed to respect the needs of the natural aquatic environment in terms of water quantity (water allocation) and quality, reconcile the competing demands of the economy over water resources and drive the transition in water using sectors towards operation within the sustainability limits.

Water problems are commonly the results of governance problems. Technical solutions often exist, but clarity is often lacking as to who does what, at which level and how. Implementing appropriate governance schemes or designing new multi-level governance and institutional settings for the implementation of sound water management, will help to achieve sustainable use of natural resources, as well as prevent pollution and protect biodiversity.

This topic aims to validate innovative multi-level water governance practices among various stakeholders to strengthen policy integration, coherence and coordination and assess their impacts on economy, social well-being and environment.

Actions should assess current governance approaches and organisational models in different river basins to optimise water governance and integrate it with other sectors, such as energy, agriculture, land use and urbanisation, and to overcome fragmentation in public policy formulation and decision-making. They should also aim to understand how different operational governance contexts at various levels, influence the effective realisation of sustainable water management in practice and explore the interaction among governance approaches at different spatial and temporal scales with a view to understanding potential conflicts and strengthening synergies.

Research should also address ways to value water and develop appropriate tariffs and pricing policies to ensure both access to water and sufficient funds for systematic renewal of water service infrastructure, as well as ecosystems restoration.

Innovative mechanisms should be developed to promote stakeholder engagement and involvement of public participation in defining and developing methods for collaborative approaches, as well as to promote social innovation, effective communication platforms, encourage exchange of know-how, expertise, eliminate frustration, minimize risks of distortion, and increase citizens' responsibility.

The role of appropriate economic policy instruments, financing and business models (investments, risk management, water pricing, cost-benefits...) in governance towards ensuring long term financial sustainability and increasing investments in the water sector, should be also assessed.

Actions to effectively implement appropriate governance approaches in practice, taking into consideration research insights, and to support the implementation of relevant governance indicators, such as, those developed by OECD, including the assessment of their performance, should be also supported.

In general, the participation of academia, research organisations, utilities, industry and regulators is strongly advised, as well as civil society engagement whenever necessary, also aiming to broaden the dissemination and exploitation routes and to better assess the innovation potential of developed solutions and strategies.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

### **Deploying and adding value to Environmental Observations**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-07: New technologies for acquiring in-situ observation datasets to address climate change effects**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 20.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: Through the development of new technologies a successful proposal will contribute to addressing the lack of ground observation (in-situ observation)<sup>481</sup> necessary to cope with climate change effects in hard-to-reach areas, areas facing extreme physical conditions and critical areas for human health and security. As such contributing to the European Green Deal objectives and a strengthened Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), by deploying and adding value to environmental observation<sup>482</sup>.

Proposals are expected to contribute to at least four of the following outcomes:

- Lower cost of in-situ observation in terms of capital cost, deployment/recovery, and maintain leading;
- Improved geographical coverage and long-time series of in situ environmental observations;
- Tested and validated new in-situ measurement technologies in hard-to-reach under-sampled areas;
- Dedicated technical protocols ensuring validation, interoperability, and synchronisation between in-situ and remote sensing systems in compliance with the GEOSS and Copernicus requirements;
- Established collaboration with environmental observation data providers to ensure proper gap filling and adequate responses in terms of acquisition protocols;
- Coherent business model(s) involving industrialists, research centres, and users ensuring the sustainability of systems developed;
- Contribute to reinforcing the in-situ component of the GEO initiative, the Copernicus programme and the EC-ESA initiative on Earth system science, and to strengthen in-situ observations to adequately complement the space-based observations planned through Copernicus Expansion Missions.

Scope: The geographical coverage and acquisition of long time series of in-situ observation of the various components of the Earth's systems should be improved in order to ensure a proper monitoring and modelling of the environmental processes. This is recognised in the context of the Copernicus programme, by the GOOS 2030 Strategy, and was reiterated at global level at the GEO Ministerial Summit<sup>483</sup> in November 2019 in the Canberra Ministerial Declaration<sup>484</sup>. This topic is intended to support innovative technological solutions building on cutting-edge technologies in the domain of measurement and testing, big data and ICT to acquire necessary

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<sup>481</sup> All non-space based observations which may include remote sensing from ground-based, marine or airborne platforms

<sup>482</sup> The capacity to observe the environment, including space-based, in-situ-based (air, sea, land) observation, and citizen observations

<sup>483</sup> <http://www.earthobservations.org/geoweek19.php>

<sup>484</sup> [https://earthobservations.org/documents/geo16/MS%204.2\\_Draft%20Canberra%20Declaration\\_final.pdf](https://earthobservations.org/documents/geo16/MS%204.2_Draft%20Canberra%20Declaration_final.pdf)

parameters from in-situ measurements required to ensure an integrated monitoring and model data assimilation necessary to respond to the climate transition and the European Green Deal challenges. This call covers marine and/or terrestrial measurements in hard-to-reach areas or areas with extreme physical conditions such as the polar regions, the tropical regions and desert regions, the deep-sea, and the high-altitude regions where the lack of in-situ data makes global assessment and mitigation of climate change effects very challenging. Proposals could also address geographical and high temporal resolution gaps in observations such as the real-time monitoring of aeroallergens or other atmospheric aerosols affecting health. The proposals should be conducted, inter alia, in collaboration with Copernicus and other, relevant activities<sup>485</sup> and communities in order to guaranty coherent approaches regarding the acquisition of new in-situ data and development of related monitoring systems – in particular in view of supporting the calibration of remote-sensing data. During the development of the systems, special attention should be given to data management, standardisation and dissemination issues.

The development of new in-situ observation systems should be conducted in close collaboration with the commercial sector. The sustainability of the systems beyond the duration of the project should be part of the work plan of the proposal and be the subject of concrete actions with the relevant partners in the proposal (users, industrialists, research organisations, including European research infrastructures).

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-08: Uptake and validation of citizen observations to complement authoritative measurement within the urban environment and boost related citizen engagement**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 14.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Innovation Actions
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 6-8 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: A successful proposal will contribute to the wide deployment of and adding value to environmental observations<sup>486</sup>, by improving the uptake and validation of data collected by citizens and by increasing citizen involvement and engagement, thus contributing

<sup>485</sup> European research infrastructure, EMODnet, INSPIRE, GEOSS, EGNSS, ESA etc.

<sup>486</sup> The capacity to observe the environment, including space-based, in-situ-based (air, sea, land) observation, and citizen observations



to the European Green Deal objectives and a strengthened Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS).

Proposals are expected to contribute to all of the following outcomes:

- A more widespread participation of citizens, (e.g. new and/or existing associations/groupings of citizens observers) in the monitoring, observation, and protection of the urban environment, complementary to governmental measures;
- Greater availability of qualitative and quantitative in-situ data for long time series and better geographical coverage, contributing to the in-situ component of existing observation systems (such as Copernicus<sup>487</sup>, European research infrastructures<sup>488</sup> and GEOSS);
- Broader use of data and information collected by citizens in policy and research, with crowdsourcing and citizen observations acknowledged as valuable information complementary to authoritative observations;
- Increased use of existing toolkits and development of new toolboxes (methodologies, methods, technologies) for broad use, which could include the development of efficient passive sampling systems;
- Leveraged use of wearables for citizens and other low-cost technologies in the domain of environmental observation.

Scope: Successful proposals are expected to support citizen engagement, specifically the active role of citizens in the collection and use of data and information within the urban environment to complement the data and information collected through other means of observation (space-based, airborne, etc.). The proposals selected under this topic should increase societal awareness about the urban environment and lead to an increase in actions necessary to protect it. The proposals should contribute to more comprehensive and available data and information of good quality to assess the state of the urban environment in support of the climate transition and the European Green Deal and to the GEO initiatives related to urban environment and urban resilience.

The information derived by the selected projects should help in shaping policies targeting the monitoring and greening of the urban environment, in addition to monitoring schemes already set out by public authorities at different levels (regional, national, European, even global).

Proposals should pay particular attention to encouraging the validation and uptake of citizen observations for policy and compliance use.

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<sup>487</sup> <https://www.copernicus.eu/en>

<sup>488</sup> <https://www.esfri.eu/>

The proposals should ensure that the observations/data produced will be available on relevant existing platforms such as GEOSS, European research infrastructures, INSPIRE<sup>489</sup> and EMODNet<sup>490</sup>.

The sustainability of the (existing) validation methods should be ensured for a broader use in the future, through the development of toolboxes, containing tested methodologies, methods and technologies.

The social and cultural dimensions of the citizen observation should be given due consideration within the proposals and therefore be looking into possibilities to engage citizens through e.g. social innovative<sup>491</sup>, cultural or art-related initiatives. This should be in the context of further engaging and raising the interest and awareness of all citizens in observing their environments, but also in looking into the possibilities for co-creation of solutions for the urban environment. Particular attention should be paid to engaging women and marginalised groups, such as ethnic minorities and disabled persons, in co-creation efforts.

Particular attention should be directed to cooperation between different groups of engaged citizen observers, strengthening mutual learning and the exchange of good practices (in particular with respect to data quality). This could include the build-up of skills, capacity and networking possibilities between citizen associations to help them get involved in citizen observations. Applicants should seek cooperation with local, regional, national and European environmental agencies.

Selected projects are expected to be developed in co-creation and to build upon the results of the WeObserve project<sup>492</sup>, as well as demonstrating measures to communicate and cooperate with other relevant citizen science projects<sup>493</sup> funded under Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe as far as possible.

The Commission Staff Working Document ‘Best Practices in Citizen Science for Environmental Monitoring’<sup>494</sup> published on 27 July 2020 is of interest in the context of this topic.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines.

Projects should seek to contribute to the New European Bauhaus initiative by supporting the green and digital transitions in communities’ living environments through merging sustainability, inclusiveness and quality of experience. Projects, by considering the social and

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<sup>489</sup> <https://inspire.ec.europa.eu/>

<sup>490</sup> <https://www.emodnet.eu/en>

<sup>491</sup> Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake

<sup>492</sup> <https://www.weobserve.eu/>

<sup>493</sup> e.g. <https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/421641-environmental-observations-informing-citizens-and-supporting-policymaking-through-innov>

<sup>494</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/reporting/pdf/best\\_practices\\_citizen\\_science\\_environmental\\_monitoring.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/reporting/pdf/best_practices_citizen_science_environmental_monitoring.pdf)

cultural dimensions of citizen observation of the urban environment, are well placed to contribute to the objectives of the initiative by bringing the European Green Deal into citizens' lives and living spaces.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-09: Environmental observations solutions contributing to meeting “One Health” challenges**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 10.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome: A successful proposal will contribute to the deployment of and adding value to environmental observations<sup>495</sup>, focussing on how the use of environmental observation can contribute to the ‘One Health’ domain, in line with the European Green Deal objectives.

Proposals are expected to contribute to at least three of the following outcomes:

- Better insights in how to foster the use of environmental observation in the large domain of One Health<sup>496</sup> and the areas within this domain that could benefit the most from environmental and Earth observation;
- An increase of the capacity to trace environmental parameter changes on how they impact on the emergence of diseases;
- Monitoring of the evolution of ecosystem barriers and reinforcement of their sustainability, specifically in densely populated or intensively used areas;
- Contributing to understanding the emergence and tackling the spread of new infectious diseases affecting human, animal or plant health, and the interlinkages that may exist between them and building up of more resilient ecosystems;
- Better insights into the concept of alert and early warning systems, including, where possible, the next steps taken (e.g. exploitation/scaling up) in working with the outcomes of the EIC Horizon Prize on Early Warning for Epidemics<sup>497</sup>.

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<sup>495</sup> The capacity to observe the environment, including space-based, in-situ-based (air, sea, land) observation, and citizen observations

<sup>496</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/one-health>

<sup>497</sup> Reference to prize winner when available (expected in Sept/Oct 2021)

Scope: The general scope of this topic is to explore areas of the One Health policy that would benefit from the use of environmental observation and how environmental observations can be used for further shaping policies in the context of e.g. human health, animal health (including zoonoses) and plant health.

The proposal should build on the holistic integrative concept of ‘One Health’ that includes not only the health of humans, but also of animals, soil and plants including ecosystems and environmental health. Information deriving from environmental observation combined with health data over the broad range of the One Health concept should be delivered through an integrated approach aggregating all the components of the One Health with the intention to support related policies within the health area in a comprehensive way.

A specific focus of the proposal should be on the monitoring of the evolution of ecosystem barriers in densely populated, industrialised or agricultural areas. The proposal should also investigate how environmental observations could provide information that can contribute to improving the effectiveness, sustainability and resilience of these ecosystem barriers in facing emerging diseases. The proposal should include the reanalysis of long time series of environmental observations and their correlation with the emergence or spread of diseases.

It should also work on the concept of alert or early warning systems based on observation that would contribute informing governments and authorities, and finally operators, on the health risks related to the destruction of ecosystems and biodiversity with a One Health approach, including a consideration of disease hazards, human (or animal) exposure and vulnerability. Research on the risk for human health and ecosystems of new contaminants could help early detection and reduce negative effects within the One Health domain. A particular area of interest in this context is the follow up to the EIC Horizon Prize on Early Warning for Epidemics<sup>498</sup> and how the insights gained from the outcomes of the prize could be further developed.

Links to the European Earth observation programme Copernicus, the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), and the EU satellite navigation programme (EGNSS) are relevant and expected.

### **Digital and data technologies as key enablers**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

#### **HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-10: Piloting approaches and tools to empower citizens to exercise their “data rights” in the area of food and nutrition**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and

<sup>498</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2018-2020/main/h2020-wp1820-eic\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2018-2020/main/h2020-wp1820-eic_en.pdf)

<i>project</i>	selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-6 (according to the activity) by the end of the project – see General Annex B.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:  Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 300 000 in order to cover the expenses related to the development and implementation of the pilots .

Expected Outcome: A successful proposal will support the deployment of digital and data technologies as key enablers for the European Green Deal priorities, the EU's Climate ambition for 2030 and 2050 and the farm to fork strategy for a fair healthy and environmentally friendly food system. It will help to bring about innovative and inclusive governance, better informed decision-making processes, social engagement, and innovation.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the expected outcomes:

- empower citizens to exercise their “data rights” and to contribute to a just transition of food systems
- pilot digital solutions in food systems and nutrition with enhanced personal data protection and data sovereignty and which achieve a fairer distribution of wealth and benefits
- advance alternative approaches to food system data sharing that promote innovation and increase competition

Scope: Proposals should support the implementation of the European Data Strategy<sup>499</sup> in food systems. The European Data Strategy has the ambition to make the EU the leading role model for a society empowered by data, for the benefit of all. It outlines a future in which the way that data is collected and used, places the individual first, in accordance with European values,

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<sup>499</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/european-data-strategy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/european-data-strategy_en)

fundamental rights and rules. It also emphasises that citizens will only trust and embrace much needed data-driven innovations – in food systems and beyond - if they are confident that any personal data sharing in the EU is compliant with strict data protection rules and respectful of their data sovereignty<sup>500</sup>. Current centralised platforms for big and social data management in food systems tend to consolidate the dominance of existing incumbent actors. They allow limited control over the data by citizens (e.g. food purchasing data, data from wearables on activity and health, online behaviour regarding diet and food, data from personalised nutrition solutions), and enable lock-ins by limiting data portability.

Proposals should build on recent research and innovation<sup>501</sup> about new architectures for managing online identity, personal and other data as an alternative to current dominant models. They should pilot new approaches to digital solutions in food systems and nutrition, which enhance personal data protection and data sovereignty, and which achieve a fairer distribution of wealth and benefits. The pilots should test and fine-tune new approaches that address the lack of sovereignty of European citizens on food and nutrition related data, and allow them to decide what is done with their data (purchasing data, data on dietary behaviour, nutritional health data, physical activity data). This data also includes the data that is generated by smart connected devices used by citizens. The tools and concepts of the pilots can include consent management tools, personal information management apps (including fully centralised solutions building on blockchain), as well as personal data cooperatives or trusts acting as novel neutral intermediaries in the personal data economy.

Proposals and their pilots should demonstrate the feasibility of achieving a more acceptable trade-off between the need for data-driven innovation in food and nutrition and the need for personal data protection and data sovereignty. They should be focused on 2 key areas of digital transformation and data driven innovation in food systems (such as online food retail, home delivery of food, personalised nutrition, digital tracking of food and nutrition related consumer behaviour, food advertising) whose future development is likely to have significant impact on reaching the objectives and targets of the EU's Farm-to-Fork Strategy, on meeting the EU's Climate ambition for 2030 and 2050 and on contributing to a just transition<sup>502</sup>. Proposals should explain and map how the pilots will achieve co-benefits relevant to the four Food 2030 priorities: nutrition for sustainable healthy diets, climate and environment, circularity and resource efficiency, innovation and empowerment of communities. Gender aspects should be considered, where relevant.

Proposals may provide support to third parties to develop and implement the pilots. This support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. As a reference, 50% of the EU funding can be allocated to financial support to the third parties, through grant amounts that are in the EUR 150 000 to 300 000 range. The amounts are deemed sufficient to pilot solutions that enough impact to be able to advance alternative approaches to food system data

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<sup>500</sup> Compliance with strict data protection rules and data sovereignty are referred to as “data rights” in the title

<sup>501</sup> For example: Horizon 2020 projects DECODE and LEDGER developed distributed and open platforms for citizen-friendly data governance (using technologies including blockchain, distributed ledger) and promoted open disruptive innovation

<sup>502</sup> See EU Green Deal

sharing. Proposals should focus their support for the pilots on third party projects from outstanding academic research groups, start-ups and SMEs, so that multiple third parties can be funded in parallel contributing to the same key area of digital transformation and data driven innovation, using short research cycles targeting the most promising ideas. Each of the selected third parties projects should pursue its own pilot and objectives, while the proposal should provide the programme logic and vision, the necessary technical support, as well as coaching and mentoring, in order that the collection of third party projects and pilots contributes towards a significant advancement and impact in the key area. The focus should be on advanced research that can be brought quickly to the market; apps and services that innovate without a research component are not covered by this model.

Proposals should make explicit their capacity to attract top talent, to bring about disruptive innovation in line with EU policy objectives, to engage with a broad range of with food system actors and stakeholders as well as with communities and citizens, to deliver a solid value-adding services package to the third party projects, as well as their expertise and capacity in managing the full life-cycle of the open calls transparently. They should explore synergies with other research and innovation actions, supported at regional, national or European level, to increase the overall impact.

Where possible they should make data available for broader communal use (as part of “data commons for food and nutrition”) and seek integration of the data and value-added services on those data through federated infrastructure such as the European Open Science Cloud.

This topic should involve the effective contribution of SSH disciplines

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-11: Upscaling (real-time) sensor data for EU-wide monitoring of production and agri-environmental conditions**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 5.00 and 7.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 15.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.  If projects use satellite-based Earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may

	additionally be used).
<i>Technology Readiness Level</i>	Activities are expected to achieve TRL 4-5 by the end of the project – see General Annex B.

Expected Outcome: In line with the farm to fork strategy and the headline ambitions of a ‘Digital Age’ and an ‘Economy that works for people’, leaving no one behind, and the biodiversity strategy, the successful proposals will support smart-farming and agri-environmental monitoring. They will therefore contribute a) to the enhancement of the sustainability performance and competitiveness in agriculture through further deployment of digital and data technologies as key enablers, and b) to make agriculture benefit from further deployment and exploitation of Environmental Observation data and products through research and innovation related to sensors and sensor data.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Strengthening capacities for smart farming, and thus to enhance the environmental and economic performance of the agricultural sector.
- Strengthening capacities for agri-environmental (climate) monitoring, particularly of soil and crop conditions.
- Provision of inputs to the work of the Horizon Europe candidate partnership “Agriculture of Data” and the potential R&I mission on soil health.

Scope: Sensors are increasingly used to enhance agricultural production e.g. through the assessment of environmental and crop conditions as well as through livestock monitoring. The information value of data collected through sensors can be increased through the analysis of the data in combination with other data sets. Reference data may, e.g. be formed by data sets generated by sensors at other places or by satellite and earth observation data or other data sets reflecting on environmental conditions. Data generated locally through sensors is often more precise, in comparison to global / EU-wide / national / or regional data sets.

The interpretation of local data sets benefits from such supra-regional data sets allowing e.g. for comparison of crop conditions, e.g. as basis for developing approaches to adapt agricultural production to climate change or for market analyses. In addition, there is the possibility to upscale the more detailed through sensors locally generated information through the application of data technologies, allowing to generate a data, information and knowledge base. Such bases can serve as input for analyses to serve the agricultural sector as well as environmental, climate, and wider policy monitoring purposes.

Of particular interest in agricultural production are approaches of real-time data generation and processing allowing for instance to better tailor certain production steps, combine different production steps or operate Internets of Things (IoT). Edge computing can play a key role to facilitate and enhance such sensor-based analyses and production approaches.

Proposals should cover all of the following aspects:



- Development of innovative approaches to use in-situ data collected through sensors used in agricultural production as input to the application of data technologies.
- Development of approaches to analyse the data in real time through processing at the source (edge computing) associated with analytics (including AI) in combination with e.g. earth observation data.
- Development of innovative approaches to benchmark and tailor agricultural production through sensor data sharing at regional level including the development of business models.
- Development of approaches to generate EU-wide data sets through the upscaling of data collected through sensor used in agricultural production (in combination with other data sets, such as satellite data).
- Demonstration of how sensor-generated data can be further capitalised for the development of the agricultural sector, other sectors and the public good (including policy-making and implementation).

Based on a stock-taking analysis, proposals should (also) focus on crops currently covered less by (private sector) sensor developments. Approaches towards livestock monitoring and/or approaches towards monitoring of agri-environmental conditions through livestock data should be considered. Proposals should reflect on different bio-geographic conditions in Europe.

Proposals are expected to demonstrate governance and management structures allowing for a steady adaptation of the work schedule of the projects (like a rolling plan); this is expected to allow to adapt the work to the most recent developments and innovations in the field of sensors and sensor data in the public and private domain.

Proposals are expected to reflect on possibilities to interlink (interim) project results or parts of them to the functioning of the forthcoming common European agriculture data space and/or the common European data space for research and innovation, the European Open Science Cloud in cooperation with the European Commission. The potential of internet of things (IoT) technologies should be considered.

The possible participation of the JRC in the project will ensure that the approach proposed will be compatible with and improve the tools used and or developed at the European Commission.

In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.

### **Strengthening agricultural knowledge and innovation systems**

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-12: Thematic networks to compile and share knowledge ready for practice**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

Expected Outcome: In support of the Green Deal, CAP and Farm to Fork objectives and targets, the successful proposal will focus on knowledge sharing in a language that is easy to understand and is targeted to farmers and foresters. Primary producers have a particular need for impartial and tailored knowledge on the management choices related to the needs, challenges or opportunities they experience. This speeds up innovation and the uptake of results, and is key to improve sustainability. It adds value to the knowledge and cost-effectiveness of innovative practices and techniques in and across primary production sectors, food systems, bioeconomy and biodiversity. This will lead to more informed and engaged stakeholders and users of project results including primary producers and consumers thanks to effective platforms such as Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS<sup>503</sup>).

Despite the continued funding of scientific projects, innovative ideas and methods from practice are not captured and spread, and often research findings are not integrated into agricultural and forestry practice. Proposals, acting at EU level to remedy this situation, are essential because national and sectoral AKISs are insufficiently connected and organised to fully meet the challenge of intensifying thematic cooperation between researchers, advisors and farmers/foresters. This exchange of knowledge will foster economically viable and sustainable agriculture and forestry and build trust between the main AKIS actors.

Project results are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

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<sup>503</sup> AKIS means the organisation and knowledge flows between persons, organisations and institutions who use and produce knowledge for agriculture and interrelated fields (Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation)

- The cross-cutting objective of modernising the sector by fostering and sharing of knowledge, innovation and digitalisation in agriculture and rural areas, and encouraging their uptake<sup>504</sup>, as well as European Green Deal and Farm to Fork objectives;
- The collection and distribution of easily accessible practice-oriented knowledge on the thematic area chosen, in particular the existing best practices and research findings that are ready to be put into practice, but not sufficiently known or used by practitioners.
- Conserve practical knowledge for the long term - beyond the project period – in particular by using the main trusted dissemination channels that farmers/foresters consult most often.
- Increase the flow of practical information between farmers/foresters in the EU in a geographically balanced way, creating spill-overs and taking account of the differences between territories. In order to better reach and capture knowledge from the targeted farmers/foresters, the networks may organise 'cross-fertilisation' through sub-networks covering, for example, a region, a language or a production system;
- Achieve greater user acceptance of collected solutions and a more intensive dissemination of existing knowledge, by connecting actors, policies, projects and instruments to speed up innovation and promote the faster and wider co-creation and transposition of innovative solutions into practice.

Scope: Proposals should address the following activities:

- Tackle the most urgent farmers' or foresters' needs by summarising, sharing and presenting - in a language that is easy to understand and is targeted to farmers and foresters – the existing best practices and research findings that are ready to be put into practice, but not sufficiently known or used by practitioners. The specific themes of the networks can be chosen in a 'bottom-up' way on the condition that they.
- Compile a comprehensive description of the state of current farming practices on the chosen theme to explain the added-value of the proposal and the relevance of the theme. Proposals must focus on the cost/benefit aspects of the practices collected and summarised, and clarify how the project avoids duplication with ongoing or completed projects and networks.
- Deliver an extensive range of useful, applicable and appealing end-user material for farmers and foresters. This info should be easy to access and understand, making use of audio-visual material wherever possible, including also materials serving education and training;
- This range of material should feed into the existing dissemination channels most consulted by farmers and foresters in the countries.

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<sup>504</sup> Art 5 of the post 2020 CAP regulation

- As many “practice abstracts” in the common European innovation partnership "Agricultural productivity and sustainability" (EIP-AGRI) format as possible, as well as other type of materials should be provided to the EIP-AGRI, as well as to national / regional / local AKIS channels and to the EU-wide interactive knowledge reservoir (HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-24);
- Besides giving the details on the European innovation partnership (EIP) Operational Groups which are strongly recommended to be involved<sup>505</sup>, wherever possible and relevant to the chosen theme, provide also details on how further synergies will be built with future EIP Operational Groups and interactive innovation groups operating in the context of the EIP-AGRI.
- Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach', with a consortium based on a balanced mix of actors with complementary knowledge clearly activating farmers/foresters, farmers' groups and advisors; and run for minimum 3 years.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-13: Broaden EIP Operational Group outcomes across borders by means of thematic networks, compiling and sharing knowledge ready for practice**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 2.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

**Expected Outcome:** In support of the Green Deal, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and farm to fork objectives and targets, the successful proposal will focus on knowledge sharing in a language that is easy to understand and is targeted to farmers and foresters. Primary producers have a particular need for impartial and tailored knowledge on the management choices related to the needs, challenges or opportunities they experience. This speeds up innovation and the uptake of results, and is key to improve sustainability. It adds value to the knowledge and cost-effectiveness of innovative practices and techniques in and

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<sup>505</sup> According to the requirements of the multi-actor approach

across primary production sectors, food systems, bioeconomy and biodiversity. This will lead to more informed and engaged stakeholders and users of project results including primary producers and consumers thanks to effective platforms such as Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS).

Despite the continued funding of scientific projects, innovative ideas and methods from practice are not captured and spread, and often research findings are not integrated into agricultural and forestry practice. The proposals, acting at EU level to remedy this, are essential because national and sectoral agricultural knowledge and innovation systems (AKISs) are insufficiently connected and organised to fully meet the challenge of intensifying thematic cooperation between researchers, advisors and farmers/foresters. This exchange of knowledge will foster economically viable and sustainable agriculture and forestry and build trust between the main AKIS actors. It will scale up local solutions up to the EU level and may even influence policy design wherever useful.

Project results are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

1. The cross-cutting objective of modernising the sector by fostering and sharing of knowledge, innovation and digitalisation in agriculture and rural areas, and encouraging their uptake<sup>506</sup>, as well as contributing to the European Green deal and farm to fork objectives. Examples are climate issues, pesticide use, water use and pollution, short supply chains linking to the consumer, farm viability, animal welfare, generational renewal, etc.
2. The collection and distribution of easily accessible practice-oriented knowledge on the thematic area chosen, in particular the existing best practices and research findings that are ready to be put into practice, but not sufficiently known or used by practitioners.
3. Conserve practical knowledge for the long term - beyond the project period – in particular by using the main trusted dissemination channels which farmers/foresters consult most often, delivering as much audio-visual material and as many “practice abstracts” in the European innovation partnership "Agricultural productivity and sustainability" (EIP-AGRI) common format as possible, including also education and training materials;
4. Increase the flow of practical information between farmers/foresters in the EU in a geographically balanced way, creating spill-overs and taking account of the differences between territories. In order to better reach and capture knowledge from the targeted farmers/foresters, the networks may organise 'cross-fertilisation' through sub-networks covering, for example, a region, a language or a production system;
5. Achieve greater user acceptance of collected solutions and a more intensive dissemination of existing knowledge, by connecting actors, policies, projects and instruments to speed up innovation and promote the faster and wider co-creation and transposition of innovative solutions into practice.

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<sup>506</sup> Art 5 CAP post 2020 proposal

Scope: Proposals should address the following activities:

- Build on the experience and outcomes of at least 5 EIP-AGRI Operational Groups of at least 3 Member States and choose a common theme related to the themes of the 5 Operational Group projects. Projects should tackle the most urgent needs of farmers and foresters. Collect, summarise, share and translate the existing knowledge from science and practice, resulting from the EIP-AGRI Operational Groups and beyond, in an easy-to-understand language for practitioners.
- Compile a comprehensive description of the state of current farming practices on the chosen theme to explain the added value of the proposal and the relevance of the theme. Proposals must focus on the cost/benefit aspects of the practices collected and summarised, and clarify how the project avoids duplication with ongoing or completed projects and networks.
- Deliver an extensive range of useful, applicable and appealing end-user material for farmers and foresters. This info should be easy to access and understand, and feed into the existing dissemination channels most consulted by farmers and foresters in the countries.
- All materials should also be provided to the EIP-AGRI in the common 'practice abstract' format, as well as to national/regional/local AKIS channels and to the EU wide interactive knowledge reservoir (HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-24) in the requested formats;
- Besides giving the details on the EIP-AGRI Operational Groups which are strongly recommended to involve<sup>507</sup>, wherever possible and relevant to the chosen theme, provide also details on how further synergies will be built with future EIP-AGRI Operational Groups and interactive innovation groups operating in the context of the EIP-AGRI.
- Proposals must implement the 'multi-actor approach', with a consortium based on a balanced mix of actors with complementary knowledge clearly activating farmers/foresters, farmers' groups and advisors and run for minimum 3 years.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-14: Improving preparation of multi-actor projects to enable the relevant actors to work in a co-creative way**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 5.00 million.

<sup>507</sup> According to the requirements of the multi-actor approach

<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <p>The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p>

Expected Outcome: In support of the Green Deal, Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and farm to fork objectives and targets, the successful proposal will focus on improving the preparation of multi-actor projects to enable the relevant actors to work in a more co-creative way. The expected outcome of this topic are approaches for developing sound, coherent and well-prepared multi-actor projects, enabling project coordinators to use the complementary knowledge of partners to prepare actions to find ready-to-use solutions. Member States' authorities and AKIS actors need insights and tools to improve the interaction, connections and drafting skills in particular in the stage before putting down the multi-actor project proposals for selection. This will lead to better informed and engaged stakeholders and users of innovative project results leading to more effective Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) and related platforms.

Project results are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

1. Improve the drafting of multi-actor project proposals<sup>508</sup> and in particular the involvement of relevant actors with complementary knowledge in a balanced way in the preparatory stage.
2. The policy objectives linked to Cluster 6, such as for instance agroecology, climate, pesticide reduction, reduction of water use etc, as well as the European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the CAP, the Biodiversity Strategy and the wider bioeconomy research and policies,.
3. The CAP cross-cutting objective of modernising the sector by fostering and sharing knowledge, innovation and digitalisation in agriculture and rural areas, and encouraging their uptake<sup>509</sup>. It will provide overall knowledge to the CAP supported projects related to knowledge creation, organisation and sharing.
4. The outcomes will be connecting actors, policies, projects and instruments to speed up innovation, in particular:
  - (a) create added value by better linking research, education, advisors and farming practice and encourage the wider use of available knowledge and innovation;
  - (b) connect innovation actors and projects at all levels; resulting in faster and wider co-creation and transposition of innovative solutions into practice and communicate to the scientific community the research needs of practice.

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<sup>508</sup> See definition of the 'multi-actor approach' in the introduction to this work programme part

<sup>509</sup> Art 5 CAP post 2020 proposal

Scope: Proposals should:

- Develop ways to improve in particular the preparation of Horizon Europe multi-actor projects to better include at an early stage the needed variety of relevant practice actors in a balanced way and to be able to find useful information for the topic, with the view of strengthening co-creation between all actors even before the start and selection of the project. Make use of potential capacities of national/regional AKIS and AKIS coordination bodies to this effect.
- In particular, test out the effect of providing seed funding to fund the preparation phase as happens successfully in European innovation partnership "Agricultural productivity and sustainability" (EIP-AGRI) Operational Groups<sup>510</sup> to improve the overall multi-actor quality of project proposals.
- Find ways to improve the connection and interaction between Horizon Europe Multi-actor projects and EIP-AGRI Operational Group innovation projects on specific topics before the very start of the multi-actor project, thus improving the interaction between the local/regional/ national level and the EU level and the quality of project proposals. Explore what are multi-actor consortia experiences and questions related to the preparation phase, to better understand which hurdles should be solved to ultimately result in more integration of EIP-AGRI Operational Groups in Horizon Europe Multi-actor projects and a better uptake of the results of EU multi-actor projects at national/regional/local level and vice versa. This should help sharing knowledge across the EU at all levels and between the projects from different funding sources and ultimately result in better prepared project proposals.
- Resulting from experience gained during the project, develop guidelines and pathways, maybe at institutional level, to improve the overall quality of the preparation phase of multi-actor projects. As soon as possible, find effective and efficient ways to profit from the initiatives of the EU-wide interactive knowledge reservoir (HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-24), boosting women-led innovation in farming and rural areas (HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01-01) and the project interlinking national AKISs (HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-23). Make use of Member States' knowledge and innovation experts in the SCAR-AKIS Strategic Working Group to discuss the project strategy and progress in the various stages of the project.
- Cover all 27 EU Member States in the project. Make use in all those countries of experts who understand and are able to make an accurate interpretation of the national/regional contexts of practitioners and its impact on improving preparation of multi-actor projects.
- Provide all outcomes and materials to the EIP-AGRI, including in the common 'practice abstract' format for EU wide dissemination, as well as to national/regional/local AKIS channels and to the EU-wide interactive knowledge reservoir (HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-24) in the requested formats.

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<sup>510</sup> Art 114 and 71 (1)(a) of the CAP post 2020 proposal



The project should run for 5 years and result in guidance on how to improve preparation of multi-actor projects to enable the relevant actors to work in a more co-creative way. The project must implement the multi-actor approach, including partners of multi-actor consortia, of EIP-AGRI Operational Groups, policy makers and AKIS coordination bodies and AKIS actors in Member States. Outcomes should be presented to policy makers at all levels, with a view to adapt policies and governance to improve multi-actor project proposals. The results of the projects should also be disseminated to all those who may start up multi-actor projects or EIP-AGRI Operational Groups.

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-15: Developing EU advisory networks on water use**

<b>Specific conditions</b>	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:  The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must use the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.

Expected Outcome: In support of the Green Deal, Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and farm to fork objectives and targets, the successful proposal will focus on advisor exchanges across the EU to increase the speed of knowledge creation and sharing, capacity building, of demonstration of innovative solutions, as well as helping to bring them into practice, which accelerates the needed transitions. Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) in which advisors are fully integrated are key drivers to speed up innovation and the uptake of research results by farmers.

Transformative changes such as the ones required within the Green Deal are dynamic processes that require appropriate governance of AKIS actors. Advisors are key actors strongly guiding and with a big influence over producers' decisions. A novelty in the post-2020 CAP plans<sup>511</sup> is that advisors now must be integrated within the Member States' AKIS, and that the scope of their actions has become much broader. They must now be able to cover economic, environmental and social domains, as well as be informed on up-to-date science and technology. They should be able to translate this knowledge into opportunities, and use

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<sup>511</sup> Art 13(2) of the post 2020 CAP regulation

and adapt those to specific local circumstances. This specific topic focuses on the important role advisors can play related to climate change effects on water shortage, water pollution and avoiding salty soils, a quickly upcoming issue in the more sustainable agriculture of the future.

Project results are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

1. The most urgent policy objectives linked to Cluster 6, as well as the European Green Deal, and in particular the Farm to Fork Strategy and the CAP, with a view to increase farmer viability, help raise awareness and tackle societal challenges in helping the reduction of water pollution and use;
2. The CAP cross-cutting objective of modernising the sector by fostering and sharing of knowledge, innovation and digitalisation in agriculture and rural areas, and encouraging their uptake<sup>512</sup>. This topic will help to fill gaps on emerging advisory topics beyond the classical sectorial advice, which is useful in particular in relation with the new obligation for Member States to integrate advisors within their AKIS which must cover a much broader scope than in the former period. It will provide overall support related to knowledge creation, organisation and sharing.
3. Development of interaction with regional policy makers and of a potential EU network to discuss institutional barriers to practical water-related issues, such as bottlenecks, lock-ins, political inertia, ambiguous regulations, inequality between Member States and power imbalances;
4. Production of supporting services and materials to facilitate the upscaling of prevention of water shortage and pollution, such as water audit schemes, novel water retention practices, water knowledge networks and peer-to-peer counselling, master classes, advice modules, communication and education materials, effective business models for farm management on dry soils, etc
5. The outcomes should speed up introduction, spreading and bringing into practice of innovative solutions related to avoiding water shortage and pollution overall, in particular by:
  - a. creating added value by better linking research, education, advisors and farming practice and encouraging the wider use of available knowledge across the EU;
  - b. learning from innovation actors and projects, resulting in faster sharing and implementation of ready-to-use innovative solutions, spreading them into practice and communicating to the scientific community the bottom-up research needs of practice.

Scope: Proposals should address the following activities:

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<sup>512</sup> Art 5 CAP post 2020 proposal

- Connect advisors having a broad and extensive network of farmers across all EU Member States in an EU advisory network dedicated to water use, including avoiding water shortage and pollution, with a view to sharing experiences on how to best tackle the issues, building on the outcomes of the EIP-AGRI “Focus Group on Water and Agriculture”<sup>513</sup>, the EIP-AGRI Workshop: “Connecting innovative projects: Water & Agriculture”<sup>514</sup>, and the H2020 “Thematic network to improve water management”<sup>515</sup>
- Share effective and novel approaches among the EU advisory network on water use, which are sustainable in terms of economic, environmental and social aspects.
- Take strong account of cost-benefit elements. Collect and document good examples in this regard, connecting with farmers, intermediates and consumers in Member States to be able to take into account financial aspects and local conditions. Select the best practices, learn about the key success factors, possible quick wins and make them available for (local) exploitation, to ensure financial win-wins for producers, citizens and water companies.
- Integrate the advisors of the EU water use network into their Member State AKIS as much as possible. They should encourage as innovation brokers innovative projects on water use solutions in European innovation partnership "Agricultural productivity and sustainability" (EIP-AGRI) Operational Groups. They should give hands-on training to farmers and local advisors, lead national thematic and learning networks on the subject, deliver and implement action plans to make water use more efficient, reduce farmers' water use and pollution, inspire new and incoming farmers or farms at the cross-roads of intergenerational renewal, connect with education and ensure broad communication, support peer-to-peer consulting, develop on-farm demonstrations and YouTube demo films, and provide specific back-office support for generalist advisors within the national / regional AKIS.
- Explore if the activities of the EU advisory network on water use can be up scaled at the level of a number of Member States under a cooperative format. Wherever possible, develop digital advisory tools for common use across the EU. Seek if common tools can be created to incentivise the implementation of the learnings from this project.
- Include all 27 EU Member States in the EU advisory network, using local AKIS connections which can more accurately interpret the national/regional contexts to help develop the best solutions for that Member State or region. Use the support of the Member States' knowledge and innovation experts of the SCAR-AKIS Strategic Working Group to discuss project strategy and progress in the various stages of the 2 projects. Projects should run at least 5 years. They must implement the multi-actor approach.

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<sup>513</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/publications/eip-agri-focus-group-water-and-agriculture-final>  
<sup>514</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/event/eip-agri-workshop-connecting-innovative-projects>  
<sup>515</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/news/thematic-network-improve-water-management-fertigated-crops>

- Provide all outcomes and materials to the EIP-AGRI, including in the common 'practice abstract' format for EU wide dissemination, as well as to national / regional / local AKIS channels and to the EU-wide interactive knowledge reservoir (HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-24) in the requested formats.

## **Other actions not subject to calls for proposals**

### **Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e)**

#### **1. Dedicated support for the IPBES secretariat**

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is a science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services that aims to build capacity for and strengthen the use of science in policymaking. The Commission will pay a contribution on behalf of the EU to the IPBES secretariat with the aim of supporting the IPBES mechanism to further develop work on capacity and knowledge foundations, to communicate and evaluate the Platform's activities, deliverables and findings, including policy tools, and to synthesise, review, assess and critically evaluate relevant information and knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services, generated by governments, academia, scientific organizations, nongovernmental organizations and indigenous and local communities from the EU and worldwide. This action must start in 2022 to guarantee the EU's continuous support to the IPBES secretariat.

#### Legal entities:

IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) secretariat, UN Campus, Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1, D-53113 Bonn, Germany

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: First Quarter 2022

Indicative budget: EUR 5.00 million from the 2022 budget (Dedicated support for the IPBES secretariat)

#### **2. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s 'Programme on the Circular Economy in Cities and Regions'**

The Programme will cooperate closely with and contribute to the implementation of the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI)<sup>516</sup> by providing cities and regions with circular economy diagnostic and solutions, in particular on the governance of the circular economy, which includes regulatory, capacity, information aspects, amongst others. The Programme

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<sup>516</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm?pg=circular>

will contribute to the identification of policy recommendations and targeted actions to implement circular economy initiatives at territorial level, promote multi-stakeholder dialogues and disseminate results and best practice. In particular, the cooperation with the CCRI will be based *inter alia* on the exchange of information, knowledge and experiences on the implementation of the Programme and CCRI activities, including the participation of the Programme's representatives in CCRI events, and vice-versa.

The OECD Programme on the Circular Economy in Cities and Regions<sup>517</sup> supports cities and regions in their transition towards a circular economy, through:

- Learning: engaging in multi-stakeholder policy dialogues with cities and regions to identify challenges and opportunities, providing socio-economic and environmental analysis and tailored policy recommendations. To date, a number of policy dialogues have been carried out, such as in Glasgow (United Kingdom), Granada (Spain), Groningen (Netherlands), Umeå (Sweden), Valladolid (Spain) and Ireland, including more than 300 stakeholders.
- Sharing: favouring peer-to-peer learning, best practice and lessons from circular economy experiences within and outside Europe. A global coalition of more than 100 cities and regions are engaged in the overall dynamics of the Programme, including by contributing to the OECD Roundtable on the Circular Economy in Cities and Regions, a networking platform to favour experience exchanges across stakeholders, and to Webinars on the Circular Economy in Cities and Regions. Moreover, a new Report on the Circular Economy in Cities and regions collects practices, challenges and solutions across 51 cities and regions from OECD countries.
- Measuring: providing a self-assessment measurement framework for decision making and evaluation of circular economy strategies.<sup>518</sup> The Programme developed a Checklist for Action to support the implementation of the policy recommendations, with more specific guidance and milestones and a Scoreboard on the Governance of the Circular Economy for governments to self-assess existing enabling conditions for a circular economy, identify challenges and set priorities towards a more effective, efficient and just circular-economy transition.

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposals according to Article 195(e) of the Financial Regulation to enable the OECD to support through fundamental services for circular economy policies at the local and regional scale EU policy priorities such as the European Green Deal<sup>519</sup>, the new EU circular economy action plan<sup>520</sup> and the EU bioeconomy strategy<sup>521</sup>. The evaluation committee will be composed fully by representatives of EU institutions.

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<sup>517</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/regional/>

<sup>518</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/regional/cities/circular-economy-cities.htm>

<sup>519</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en)

<sup>520</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/>

<sup>521</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy/index.cfm?pg=policy&lib=strategy>

Legal entities:

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2, rue André Pascal, 75016 Paris, France

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: Fourth quarter 2021

Indicative budget: EUR 1.00 million from the 2021 budget (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s 'Programme on the Circular Economy in Cities and Regions')

## **Indirect Management**

### **1. Circular city centre (C3)**

Cities have great potential to be cradles and catalysts for circular developments, which can address many of the linear problems in EU cities today, and make cities more regenerative, resilient, clean and liveable. However, many cities are finding substantial barriers to advance in their transition to a circular economy. A recently published OECD report on the circular economy in cities and regions<sup>522</sup> noted amongst other that (i) the lack of a holistic vision is a major obstacle for 67% of surveyed cities and regions, often due to poor leadership and co-ordination, and/or the lack of political will, (ii) cultural barriers represent a challenge for 67% of surveyed cities and regions along with lack of awareness (63%) and inadequate information (55%) for policymakers to take decisions, businesses to innovate and residents to embrace sustainable consumption patterns, (iii) the lack of human resources is a challenge for 61% of surveyed cities and regions.

The Urban Agenda Partnership on the Circular Economy came to similar findings. In its Circular Economy Final Action Plan<sup>523</sup>, in the section on Better Knowledge, it noted that “a vast amount of cities in the EU currently lacks a holistic and comprehensive strategy, plan or roadmap for the circular economy that goes beyond the utility and waste management sector. Only a very small number of European cities have fully embarked on the transition to a circular economy and developed such detailed visions, strategies and roadmaps. When it comes to implementation however, even front-runner cities find themselves in the initial phase of learning, experimenting and discovery”.

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<sup>522</sup> <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/10ac6ae4-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/10ac6ae4-en>  
<sup>523</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/ua\\_ce\\_final\\_action\\_plan\\_part\\_i.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/ua_ce_final_action_plan_part_i.pdf) (section 2.3.1)

Finally, the InnovFin Advisory study on Access-to-finance conditions for projects supporting Circular Economy<sup>524</sup> highlighted the need for circular economy investment advisory service destined to support circular economy projects with respect to access to finance and technical, circular economy focused project preparation. In particular, it pointed to the need to develop a systemic approach for the transition to circular economy, including building-up of knowledge, intelligence and creating awareness among relevant stakeholders on the importance and value added of circular properties.

The objective of this action is to support the launch and deployment of a new European Circular City Centre (C3) implemented by the EIB advisory services under the InvestEU Advisory Hub. The C3 will collect and disseminate existing and develop new circular city awareness raising, capacity building and knowledge sharing material, provide light advisory services to cities and arrange circular city webinars and other knowledge sharing and awareness building events.

The C3 light advisory services will have a particular focus on supporting cities in: i) preparation of circular strategies and roadmaps; ii) identification, screening and preparation of circular investment programmes and projects; and iii) improving the bankability of their circular projects and identifying suitable funding sources. The C3 will focus on innovative activities and projects in key sectors at local and regional scale that use the most resources and/or generate most waste, and where the potential for circularity is high, as outlined in the new circular economy action plan<sup>525</sup>. Eligible activities and projects should include the piloting, scale up and commercialization of innovative circular technologies, products, materials and business models. Conversely, activities and projects in sectors with no or only minor impact on the circular economy transition in cities and regions as well as activities and projects focussing exclusively or mainly on energy efficiency, renewable energy generation (fuels, heat or power) or energy recovery from waste are not in the scope of the action.

The C3 and related services are expected to mobilise cities, circular stakeholders and project promoters and enable them to take their first steps in their circular transition. The C3 will also support cities in the first stages of circular project identification and preparation and thereby contribute to the transition from talking about the circular economy to implementing this crucially important change.

The C3 will cooperate closely with and act in complementarity to the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI)<sup>526</sup> and the related projects<sup>527</sup> and to the parallel action proposed for the Circular Economy Technical Assistance Facility (CETAF), also implemented by the EIB advisory services. It will contribute to the CCRI and CETAF implementation by building awareness, sharing knowledge and providing advice to cities and regions on how to promote the circular economy transition in their territories. In particular, the cooperation with the

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<sup>524</sup> [https://www.eib.org/attachments/pj/access\\_to\\_finance\\_study\\_on\\_circular\\_economy\\_en.pdf](https://www.eib.org/attachments/pj/access_to_finance_study_on_circular_economy_en.pdf)

<sup>525</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/>

<sup>526</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm?pg=circular>

<sup>527</sup> Including the HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-02: Circular Cities and Regions Initiative's Project Development Assistance (CCRI-PDA) and the HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01-01 – Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI)'s circular systemic solutions.



CCRI will be based inter alia on the exchange of information, knowledge and experiences on the implementation of the C3 and CCRI activities, including the participation of C3 representatives in CCRI events, and vice-versa.

The EIB is already engaged in awareness building, advisory and lending to circular cities, and has accumulated considerable experience in this area. As one example, the EIB under the European Investment Advisory Hub<sup>528</sup> have recently developed and implemented the [Circular City Funding Guide](#) website<sup>529</sup>, intended to support the access to financing for the circular transition in cities.

Given the increased policy focus on supporting and facilitating the circular transition in the EU, and the important role cities will have in such a transition, there is a need and rationale to expand its support activities in this field. This action would enable the EIB to increase its reach and impact of fundamental services that support EU policy priorities such as the European Green Deal<sup>530</sup>, the new EU circular economy action plan<sup>531</sup> and the EU bioeconomy strategy<sup>532</sup>.

The indicative start of the action is Q2 2021, following the conclusion of an advisory agreement with the EIB Group for the implementation of the Invest EU Advisory Hub. The envisaged horizon for use of the funds under this action is 2027.

Legal entities:

European Investment Bank, 98-100, Boulevard K. Adenauer, L-2950 Luxembourg, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Form of Funding: Indirectly managed actions

Type of Action: Indirectly managed action

Indicative timetable: Second quarter 2021

Indicative budget: EUR 5.00 million from the 2021 budget (from the 2021 budget )

## **2. Circular economy technical assistance facility (CETAF) for local and regional circular economy investments**

Cities have great potential to be cradles and catalysts for circular developments which can address many of the linear problems in EU cities today, and make cities more regenerative, resilient, clean and liveable. However, many cities are finding substantial barriers to advance in their transition to a circular economy. A recently published OECD report on the circular economy in cities and regions<sup>533</sup> noted amongst other that “a vast majority of the 51 surveyed

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<sup>528</sup> <https://eiah.eib.org/>

<sup>529</sup> <https://www.circularcityfundingguide.eu/>

<sup>530</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en)

<sup>531</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/>

<sup>532</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy/index.cfm?pg=policy&lib=strategy>

<sup>533</sup> <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/10ac6ae4-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/10ac6ae4-en>

cities and regions reported challenges related to insufficient funding (73%), as well as financial risks (69%), lack of critical scale for business and investments (59%), and lack of private sector engagement (43%)”.

The Urban Agenda Partnership on the Circular Economy came to similar findings. In its Circular Economy Final Action Plan<sup>534</sup>, in the section on Better Funding, it noted that “the lack of available funding, including for project preparation and investment, as an important barrier for the circular economy transition in cities”.

The InnovFin Advisory study on Access-to-finance conditions for projects supporting Circular Economy<sup>535</sup> highlighted the need for circular economy investment advisory service destined to support circular economy projects with respect to access to finance and technical, circular economy focused project preparation.

The objective of this action is to fund the Circular Economy Technical Assistance Facility (CETAF) to be deployed through the European Investment Bank (EIB) advisory services under the InvestEU Advisory Hub, aimed at supporting investment projects and programmes substantially contributing to the circular economy transition in cities and regions across Europe. The CETAF, which shall follow the example of the ELENA (European Local ENergy Assistance) facility in the energy efficiency and renewable energy sectors, will provide technical assistance (TA) grants for the preparation and development of projects in key sectors for the circular economy at local and regional level. More specifically, CETAF will focus on innovative activities and projects in key sectors that use the most resources and/or generate most waste and where the potential for circularity is high, as outlined in the new circular economy action plan<sup>536</sup>. Eligible activities and projects shall include the piloting, scale up and commercialization of innovative circular technologies, products, materials and business models. Conversely, activities and projects in sectors with no or only minor impact on the circular economy transition in cities and regions as well as activities and projects focussing exclusively or mainly on energy efficiency, renewable energy generation (fuels, heat or power) or energy recovery from waste are not in the scope of the action.

The CETAF is expected to catalyse investment in circular economy projects and programmes in cities and regions. The expected outcome of this action is technically and economically viable as well as bankable investment projects and programmes with a minimum total investment volume of EUR 20 million.<sup>537</sup> A minimum ratio/leverage factor between the total investment amount and the amount of the TA grant shall be defined as well as a minimum own contribution from project promoters to the overall cost of project preparation and development. Eligible recipients of TA grants are both public and private entities.

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<sup>534</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/ua\\_ce\\_final\\_action\\_plan\\_part\\_i.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/ua_ce_final_action_plan_part_i.pdf) (section 2.3.1)

<sup>535</sup> [https://www.eib.org/attachments/pj/access\\_to\\_finance\\_study\\_on\\_circular\\_economy\\_en.pdf](https://www.eib.org/attachments/pj/access_to_finance_study_on_circular_economy_en.pdf)

<sup>536</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/>

<sup>537</sup> The Circular Cities and Regions Initiative Project Development Assistance (CCRI-PDA) will focus on small and medium-sized circular economy investments of up to 20 million.

The facility will cooperate closely with and act in complementarity to the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI)<sup>538</sup> and the related projects<sup>539</sup> and to the parallel action proposed for the Circular City Centre (C3), also implemented by the EIB advisory services, by supporting project promoters to bridge the gap between their circular economy strategies/plans and concrete investment programmes and projects. In particular, the cooperation with the CCRI will be based *inter alia* on the exchange of information, knowledge and experiences on the implementation of the CETAF and CCRI activities and on the participation of CETAF representatives in CCRI events, and vice-versa.

The EIB has long-time experience in providing financing and technical assistance for sustainable urban and regional investment projects and programmes with both climate and circular economy relevance. Related TA mandates successfully implemented by the EIB include the EU funded URBIS<sup>540</sup>, ELENA and JASPERS<sup>541</sup> facilities. The EIB has also been a driving force in different platforms dedicated to the promotion of the CE, with particular focus on cities. As an example, the EIB, with support from the European Investment Advisory Hub, took a lead role in the design, preparation and implementation of the Circular City Funding Guide<sup>542</sup>.

Given the increased policy focus on scaling and speeding up the circular transition in the EU, and the important role of cities and regions will have in such a transition, the EIB is in a good position to provide a significant contribution through technical assistance in this field. The CETAF would enable the EIB to further support EU policy priorities such as the European Green Deal<sup>543</sup>, the new EU circular economy action plan<sup>544</sup> and the EU bioeconomy strategy<sup>545</sup> by supporting concrete investments in circular economy solutions at local and regional scale.

The indicative start of the action is Q2 2021 following the conclusion of an advisory agreement with the EIB Group for the implementation of the Invest EU Advisory Hub. The envisaged horizon for use of the funds under this action is 2027.

Legal entities:

European Investment Bank, 98-100, Boulevard K. Adenauer, L-2950 Luxembourg, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Form of Funding: Indirectly managed actions

Type of Action: Indirectly managed action

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<sup>538</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm?pg=circular>

<sup>539</sup> Including the HORIZON-CL6-CIR-2021-00-00: Circular Cities and Regions Initiative's Project Development Assistance (CCRI-PDA) and the HORIZON-CL6-CIR-2021-00-00 – Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI)'s circular systemic solutions.

<sup>540</sup> <https://eiah.eib.org/about/initiative-urbis.htm>

<sup>541</sup> <https://jaspers.eib.org/>

<sup>542</sup> <https://www.circularcityfundingguide.eu/>

<sup>543</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en)

<sup>544</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/>

<sup>545</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy/index.cfm?pg=policy&lib=strategy>

Indicative timetable: Second quarter 2021

Indicative budget: EUR 10.00 million from the 2021 budget

## **Public Procurements**

### **1. Indicators and methods for measuring the transition to climate-neutral circularity, its benefits, challenges and trade-offs**

#### **Objective**

A commonly accepted and sufficiently inclusive definition of circularity and measurement methods can support the transition to a more circular economy in multiple ways. Among other things, it can facilitate the development and access to finance, credit risk assessment, and the transferability and replicability of projects and investments across regions and jurisdictions. The introduction of robust indicator frameworks that quantify progress towards circularity is however challenging, with countries and businesses showing widely different approaches and degrees of advancement. The practice of measuring, assessing and taking informed decisions based on the climate, environmental and social impacts of business activities, products and services is not yet widespread and well-established. Methods are gradually emerging. The Commission developed the Product and Organisation Environmental Footprint method, allowing to calculate environmental impacts, including greenhouse gas emissions, throughout the value chain. Harmonised European standards for life cycle assessments can provide the basis for environmental product declarations (EPD), and national LCA-databases (e.g. Ökobaudat) and evaluation systems (e.g. BNB) exist in some Member States. A common method can visualise the advantages and trade-offs of a circular economy and provide knowledge needed to understand the opportunities a circular economy gives compared to a linear economy. It can provide the tools to manage response actions and mitigating measures.

Projects shall enhance the knowledge base for policy makers to design, implement and monitor policies and instruments for transition to a circular economy. This enhancement should focus on the following elements:

- Definitions, scope and taxonomy of circular economy, criteria and benchmarks for defining the level and progression towards circularity reflecting current and future technology developments, taking into account the work on sustainable finance and taxonomy;
- Assessment of the potential and impacts of circular economy transition on climate mitigation (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions reduction), zero pollution and ecosystem protection as well as competitiveness, job creation and raw material security objectives. This includes analysis of material and consumption flows broken down to sector level for sectors with the highest material flows and impacts. Modelling of different scenarios of transition should be done. The assessments should in first instance focus on the key product value chains mentioned in the circular economy action plan 2020, i.e. electronics including ICT, batteries and vehicles, packaging, plastics, textiles, construction and

buildings, and food, water and nutrients. This work should take into account existing<sup>546</sup> and ongoing work within the European Commission and the EEA;

- Further development of indicators and methods at product, service and organisation level for measuring resource use, including consumption and material footprints and risks (including a weighting by their life-cycle environmental footprint) to account for optimisation of material consumption and environmental impacts associated with production and consumption patterns;
- Assessment of capital flows and investment needs in the circular economy and analysis of barriers and risks that prevent circular economy financing;
- Assessment of regulatory barriers at regional, national and EU level, and of policy measures to overcome them;
- Policy tools including incentives and their applicability at different governance levels to trigger and foster effective transition processes.

All elements will be analysed at EU, national and regional level. Ongoing work within the European Commission, and ESTAT on updating the circular economy monitoring framework, including consumption and material footprints (including a weighting by their life-cycle environmental footprint), as well as relevant existing international and European standards, should be taken into account. The ultimate outcome is knowledge and a toolbox that will subsequently enable decision-makers in public institutions and businesses to formulate targets and measure progress, set up institutions and policies necessary for transition processes at different scales. The contractor may consider links with related activities including the EU Bioeconomy Monitoring System and/or contribute to the European Commission's Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy hosted by JRC. The contractor is also strongly encouraged to organise joint activities, ensure synergies and undertake clustering activities with projects under C5-D1-CSR-04-2021, "Modelling the role of the circular economy for climate change mitigation" and relevant H2020 projects, in particular under CE-SC5-25-2020, "Understanding the transition to circular economy and its implications on the environment, economy and society".

### **Expected results**

- Robust indicators and methods for measuring transition to climate-neutral circularity, its benefits, challenges and trade-offs, including definitions, criteria and benchmarks for assessing the progress towards circularity, consistent with existing or currently developed standards in this field
- An enhanced knowledge base and toolbox for policy makers, enabling them to design and compare, implement and monitor policies and instruments for a circular transition

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<sup>546</sup> Cf. Monitoring Framework of indicators for the circular economy; <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/circular-economy/indicators/monitoring-framework>.

- Systemic insight into the opportunities, challenges and risks, and instruments of circularity
  
- Facilitated implementation of the EU taxonomy for sustainable finance

This action is expected to be implemented via the launch of a new Framework Contract for a maximum duration of 4 years and an estimated ceiling of EUR 1.00 million.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Third quarter of 2021

Indicative budget: EUR 1.00 million from the 2021 budget

## **2. Circular value chain analysis focusing on intra- and inter-value chain collaboration**

### **Objective**

Businesses are often reluctant to engage in collaborative partnerships and to share business-related information with others, which would be necessary in order to develop circular economy business models and projects. This is due to real and perceived risks of exposing sensitive business information as well as inadequate knowledge about circular economy opportunities, and the lack of capacity to identify and implement specific actions, and to limited incentives for cooperation within existing linear value chains. Understanding the risks of information sharing and complexity of international value chains is important when developing policies for a resource efficient and circular economy. In addition to the positive impacts on knowledge creation, setting up collaborative partnerships and networks to prepare innovative circular economy initiatives can align business interests and improve the definition of roles and responsibilities between the various partners.

Digital technologies can track the journeys of products, components and materials and make the resulting data securely accessible to authorised actors. The European data space for smart circular applications will provide the architecture and governance system to drive applications and services such as product passports, resource mapping and consumer information. As part of the governance of the sectoral actions, the Commission will cooperate closely with stakeholders in key value chains to identify barriers to the expansion of markets for circular products, and ways to address those barriers. In synergy with the objectives laid out in the industrial strategy, the Commission will enable greater circularity in industry by promoting the use of digital technologies for tracking, tracing and mapping of resources; promoting the uptake of green technologies through a system of solid verification by registering the EU Environmental Technology Verification scheme as an EU certification mark. The new SME Strategy will foster circular industrial collaboration among SMEs, building on training, advice under the Enterprise Europe Network on cluster collaboration, and on knowledge transfer via the European Resource Efficiency Knowledge Centre.

The contractor should analyse existing and potential circular value chains to identify patterns in intra-value chain and inter-value chains interactions and collaboration between all relevant actors and mapping material flows. The contractor is expected to describe and categorise these interactions and collaborations, and provide insight into the opportunities and challenges as well as conditions of success. The role of trust between different actors, the importance of a sufficient level of knowledge and data sharing, the role of digital technologies and the importance of incentives on regional, national, European and/or global level are key topics that should be addressed. Results need to be included in existing Commission knowledge bases such as the EC JRC RMIS. Circular economy requires transparency about associated materials and financial flows of the product and its components during their entire life cycles. The contractor should also help improve the methodology for the analysis of circular value chains, and develop advanced instruments for this purpose, focusing on intra- and inter-value chain collaboration and including the mapping of material flows. Recommendations for policy makers to design, implement and monitor policies and instruments for a circular transition should be presented in the form of a toolbox.

Social innovation is recommended when the solution is at the socio-technical interface and requires social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

### **Expected results**

- Setup of collaborative partnerships and networks to develop innovative circular economy solutions
- An enhanced knowledge base for policy makers to design, implement and monitor policies and instruments for a circular transition, with a particular focus on trust-building and the role of advanced digital technologies in responsible data management
- Systemic insight into the opportunities, challenges and instruments of circularity regarding all elements of intra and inter-business value chains
- Identification and analysis of instruments to trigger changes in the behaviour of economic operators
- Development of advanced instruments for the analysis of circular value chains, focusing on intra- and inter-value chain collaboration and including the mapping of material flows

This action is expected to be implemented via the launch of a new Framework Contract for a maximum duration of 3 years and an estimated ceiling of EUR 1.00 million.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Second quarter of 2022

Indicative budget: EUR 1.00 million from the 2022 budget

### **3. Development of life-cycle information**

#### **Objective**

Life-cycle assessment is a key element of the evaluation of the environmental performance of products and production processes. If properly applied it is a powerful decision-making tool for economic operators and policy makers. Wide application of this tool is prevented by the lack of scientifically robust life-cycle data, especially in the sectors where technologies, materials, production processes, value chains and business models evolve fast, often driven by EU policies. Several recent EU policy initiatives emphasise the need for a life-cycle approach in managing the environmental performance of products, technologies and companies.

The objective of this public procurement is to develop scientifically robust life-cycle data for the rapidly innovating sectors of bioeconomy, renewable energy and construction. These data will be publicly available for application by economic actors and policy makers, and underpin relevant policies at EU, national and regional level.

#### **Expected results**

The contractor is expected to develop aggregated and disaggregated life cycle datasets and to provide additional support to the users in the form of a helpdesk and dedicated online training activities. The development of the datasets shall include methodological adaptations of existing datasets and creation of new datasets for sectors and value chains currently not available in existing LCA databases. The resulting datasets shall be fully compliant with the latest version of the guide for Environmental Footprint compliant datasets<sup>547</sup>. The possibility of developing different versions of some datasets in order to comply with sector-specific needs shall also be taken into account. The level of granularity of datasets is set at national and sectoral level as a default with the possibility to deviate if justified on the basis of the analysis of variance of life cycle impacts. The contractor shall keep data updated for the duration of contract. Data shall be made publicly available through the European Platform for LCA<sup>548</sup>.

The expected impact of this public procurement action is that LCA will become easier to apply and affordable for all potential users. Consequently, it will be applied more frequently in industrial and policy setup. Life-cycle information on materials, products and technologies will spread along value chains in business-to-business and business-to-consumer interactions. New policy initiatives will use LCA, and specifically the PEF and OEF, to set environmental performance benchmarks and standards. The broad application of PEF/OEF in policies and decision-making will lead to improved environmental management and reduced environmental impacts, and a new competitive edge to EU companies and industries on the global market.

#### **Form of Funding: Procurement**

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<sup>547</sup> Available at : <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/guide-ef-compliant-data-sets>  
<sup>548</sup> <https://eplca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>



Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Fourth quarter of 2021

Indicative budget: EUR 5.00 million from the 2021 budget

#### **4. Support the transition towards circular economy at local and regional scale**

The circular economy concept should be a central component in local and regional economies, which have a suitable scale for closing resources loops, creating sustainable circular ecosystems and designing participatory community-based innovation schemes. An increasing number of cities, regions, industries and businesses are engaged in testing and improving circularity in their territories, economic sectors, value chains and services. Nevertheless, the concrete implementation of systemic solutions for the territorial deployment of the circular economy still needs to be demonstrated and replicated in other areas. In particular, a major challenge is to apply effectively the circular economy concept in urban and regional policy areas beyond traditional resource recovery in waste and water sectors.

The Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI) is part of the European circular economy action plan and aims to support circular solutions for the transition towards a sustainable, regenerative, inclusive and just circular economy at local and regional scale. The CCRI's activities aim to contribute to the implementation of the European Green Deal<sup>549</sup>, the circular economy action plan<sup>550</sup> and the bioeconomy strategy.<sup>551</sup>

The objective of this other action is to strengthen the coordination and support service for the implementation of the CCRI. It will also ensure the cooperation among the CCRI's projects covered under the Green Deal Call and Horizon Europe and relevant initiatives and stakeholders. This other action will complement the Horizon 2020 SC2 WP 2020 Other Action 2 and the 2020 Green Deal Call Other Action 7, being all used to implement the activities of the coordination and support service for the implementation of the CCRI via the framework contract established under Horizon 2020 SC2 WP 2020 Other Action 2.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: Fourth quarter 2021

Indicative budget: EUR 1.00 million from the 2021 budget

#### **5. Studies, conferences, events and outreach activities**

A number of specific contracts will be signed under existing framework contracts in order:

(i) to support the dissemination and exploitation of project results;

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<sup>549</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en)

<sup>550</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/pdf/new\\_circular\\_economy\\_action\\_plan.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/pdf/new_circular_economy_action_plan.pdf)

<sup>551</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index.cfm?pg=circular>

- (ii) to contribute to the definition of future challenge priorities;
- (iii) to carry out specific evaluations of programme parts
- (iv) to organise conferences, events and outreach activities.

Should existing framework contracts prove unsuitable or insufficient to support the abovementioned activities, one or more calls for tender may be launched as appropriate. Subject matter of the contracts envisaged: studies, technical assistance, conferences, events and outreach activities.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative budget: EUR 0.50 million from the 2021 budget and EUR 0.24 million from the 2022 budget

## **Subscription Actions**

### **1. GEO subscription 2021-2022**

An annual contribution to the 2021 and 2022 activities of the GEO Secretariat, as a subscription to a body of which the Union is a member, according to Article 239 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (2018).

As a full member of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) the Commission will pay a contribution on behalf of the EU to the GEO Trust Fund, which is the budgetary structure agreed by the GEO members to fund the GEO secretariat (hosted by the World Meteorological Organisation in Geneva, Switzerland), to ensure the implementation of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) according to its annual work plan and the continuity of the leadership and participation of the EU in GEO.

Type of Action: Subscription action

Indicative budget: EUR 1.20 million from the 2021 budget and EUR 1.20 million from the 2022 budget

## **Scientific and technical services by the Joint Research Centre**

### **1. Leveraging European data-sharing and exploitation practices within GEOSS (Global Earth Observation System of Systems)**

The European Strategy for Data (COM(2020)66 final) and the upcoming ePrivacy Regulation and Data Act outline an ambitious agenda for the establishment of a single market for data in Europe. In compliance with this legal framework, it is proposed that the JRC, building on its experience on data handling, supports DG R&I in its contribution to the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) helping to export the European good practices and ethical guidelines on data exchange and exploitation to the international Earth observation community within GEO

for a better leadership of Europe in the domain of EO data sharing and uptake. It will contribute as well to increase the European contribution to GEOSS via Destination Earth and the European Green Deal data space.

Building on a multitude of emerging technologies, data sources, standards, licenses and actors, multiple data ecosystems are already emerging in Europe. These new developments would benefit from coordination between those initiatives and in depth adaptations of GEOSS with a view to the delivery of Earth observation (EO) services and products in the different GEO Engagement priorities and in particular, the ones related to the Paris Agreement. The provision of such services should be coordinated between regional GEOs and in particular EuroGEO, the European contribution to GEO, and AOGEO, the Asia-Oceania regional GEO initiative.

The developments will take advantage of the European Open Science Cloud facility and other infrastructures, and of the most recent technological evolutions such as IoT, edge computing, data interoperability, data-sharing tools and enablers, architectures and governance mechanisms to sustain GEOSS in the long term, and coordination between the European Horizon 2020 projects such as e-shape, the various initiatives and flagships of the 2020-2022 GEO work programme and the European Space Agency (ESA) GEO portal enhancements.

This activity is directly aimed at supporting the development and implementation of an evidence base for R&I policies and supporting various groups of stakeholders, including via the European Commission Knowledge Centre on Earth Observation and the Destination Earth initiative. The improvement brought to the GEOSS infrastructure will contribute to leverage into GEOSS services, data of the Copernicus programme, and applications developed through Horizon 2020 EO projects such as e-shape, including through promoting the use of existing applications and in developing new ones in the area of climate services.

The administrative arrangement for technical and scientific services with the JRC will cover the cost of the technical coordination and support of the uptake of European data-sharing and exploitation solution within the GEOSS infrastructure. It will also cover the provision of expertise to the GEO governance for activities relevant to the evolution of GEOSS, including participation in the work of the different GEO governance bodies. The development and testing of Earth observation information systems developed through Horizon 2020, such as the GEOSS infrastructure, falls under the mandate of the JRC, which is to deliver Commission's in-house science services.

Indicative duration: 36 months

Form of Funding: Direct action grants

Type of Action: Provision of technical/scientific services by the Joint Research Centre

Indicative timetable: Third quarter 2021

Indicative budget: EUR 2.60 million from the 2021 budget

## **Expert contract actions**

### **1. External Expertise**

This action will support the use of appointed independent experts for the monitoring of actions (grant agreement, grant decision, public procurement actions, financial instruments) and where appropriate include ethics checks.

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

Indicative budget: EUR 2.00 million from the 2021 budget and EUR 1.70 million from the 2022 budget

## Budget<sup>552</sup>

	Budget line(s)	2021 Budget (EUR million)	2022 Budget (EUR million)
<b>Calls</b>			
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-01		194.50	
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>	<i>194.50</i>	
HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02		20.00	20.00
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>	<i>20.00</i>	<i>20.00</i>
HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01			95.00
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>		<i>95.00</i>
HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-02-two-stage			46.00
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>		<i>46.00</i>
HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01		186.00	
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>	<i>186.00</i>	
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-01			164.00
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>		<i>164.00</i>
HORIZON-CL6-2022-FARM2FORK-02-two-stage			66.50
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>		<i>66.50</i>
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CIRCBIO-01		126.50	
	<i>from</i>	<i>126.50</i>	

<sup>552</sup> The budget figures given in this table are rounded to two decimal places. The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2021 and 2022.

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	01.020260		
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01			66.00
	from 01.020260		66.00
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-02-two-stage			76.00
	from 01.020260		76.00
HORIZON-CL6-2021-ZEROPOLLUTION-01		65.00	
	from 01.020260	65.00	
HORIZON-CL6-2022-ZEROPOLLUTION-01			51.00
	from 01.020260		51.00
HORIZON-CL6-2021-CLIMATE-01		108.00	10.00
	from 01.020260	108.00	10.00
HORIZON-CL6-2022-CLIMATE-01			75.00
	from 01.020260		75.00
HORIZON-CL6-2021-COMMUNITIES-01		53.00	
	from 01.020260	53.00	
HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-01			42.00
	from 01.020260		42.00
HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-02-two-stage			33.00
	from 01.020260		33.00
HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01		223.00	
	from 01.020260	223.00	

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HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01			147.00
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>		<i>147.00</i>
Contribution from this part to call HORIZON-MISS-2021-SOIL-01 under Part 12 of the work programme		5.00	
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>	<i>5.00</i>	
Contribution from this part to call HORIZON-MISS-2021-OCEAN-01 under Part 12 of the work programme		2.50	
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>	<i>2.50</i>	
Contribution from this part to call HORIZON-MISS-2021-COOR-01 under Part 12 of the work programme		0.38	
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>	<i>0.38</i>	
Contribution from this part to call HORIZON-MISS-2021-NEB-01 under Part 12 of the work programme		4.77	
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>	<i>4.77</i>	
Contribution from this part to call HORIZON-MISS-2021-CLIMA-01 under Part 12 of the work programme		1.50	
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>	<i>1.50</i>	
<b>Other actions</b>			
Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e)		1.00	5.00
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>5.00</i>
Indirectly managed action		15.00	
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>	<i>15.00</i>	
Public procurement		7.50	1.24
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>	<i>7.50</i>	<i>1.24</i>
Subscription action		1.20	1.20
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>	<i>1.20</i>	<i>1.20</i>

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Provision of technical/scientific services by the Joint Research Centre		2.60	
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>	2.60	
Expert contract action		2.00	1.70
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>	2.00	1.70
Contribution from this part to Indirectly managed action under Part 12 of the work programme		0.38	
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>	0.38	
Contribution from this part to Public procurement under Part 12 of the work programme		0.38	
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>	0.38	
Contribution from this part to Expert contract action under Part 12 of the work programme		0.29	
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>	0.29	
Contribution from this part to Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 195(e) under Part 12 of the work programme		0.03	
	<i>from</i> <i>01.020260</i>	0.03	
<b>Estimated total budget</b>		1020.53	900.64