10. Action 10: Make EU R&I missions and partnerships key contributors to the ERA

1.1. Purpose of the Action and expected outcomes

Action 10 focuses on the EU Missions and European Partnerships connected with Horizon Europe. It aims to implement these initiatives in a way that maximises their impact, establishes them as key contributors to the ERA, and ensures that they support the twin green and digital transition.[1]

EU Missions have been introduced to the Horizon Europe research and innovation programme for the 2021-2027 programming period. They support Commission priorities, such as the **European Green Deal**, **Beating Cancer** and **Europe fit for the Digital Age** by setting targets with clear timelines and deliverables to achieve concrete solutions to these challenges.[2] The Missions incorporate governance, collaboration, and citizen engagement into R&I.[3] The main outcome for EU Missions outlined in Action 10 is to share information, raise awareness and develop ownership of EU R&I Missions at national, regional and community levels.

European Partnerships are a key implementation tool of Horizon Europe that brings public and/or private partners together with the European Commission to address societal challenges through R&I initiatives. The Partnerships primarily aim to deliver on the **European Green Deal** and **Europe's Digital Decade** by supporting partnerships in finding creative solutions to tackling emissions in energy-intensive industries and developing innovative data technologies. They allow for the pooling of resources, the creation of a critical mass and the alignment of R&I agendas to avoid duplication of investments and reduce the fragmentation of the R&I sector.[4] Within Action 10, the Partnership Knowledge Hub contributes to monitoring Partnerships' performance and how they contribute to the values and principles of the new ERA.

1.2. Implementation of the Action

Five **EU Missions** were launched in September 2021 on cancer, climate resilience, oceans and waters, smart cities, and soil. The Mission Climate is incorporated in the **EU's Climate Adaptation Strategy** as a means to 'accelerate the rollout of adaptation solutions'.[5] Mission Cancer is cited as a key component of **Europe's Beating Cancer Plan** as part of the EU's investment in R&I to drive change.[6] Mission Soil is an initiative of the Commission's **long-term vision for rural areas**, supporting research and innovation to tackle soil challenges in both rural and urban areas.[7] The Mission Restore Our Ocean and Waters supports key EU legislation and policies in **marine, maritime and freshwater domains** as well as related fields.[8] Lastly, the Cities Mission significantly contributes to reaching the **carbon neutrality target** set in the European Green Deal by addressing the CO_2 emissions of cities, which account for more than 70% of global emissions.[9]

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[1] European Commission (2021), European Research Area Policy Agenda – Overview of actions for the period 2022-2024, p.13

[2] European Commission (2021), EU missions: Concrete solutions for our greatest challenges, available at: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a48e0115-2658-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1.

[3] European Commission (accessed 8 June 2023), EU Missions in Horizon Europe, available at: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe_en.

[4] European Commission (accessed 8 June 2023), European Partnerships in Horizon Europe, available at: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/european-partnerships-horizon-europe_en.

[5] European Commission (2021), Forging a climate-resilient Europe - the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change, COM(2021) 82 final, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2021:82:FIN.

[6] European Commission (2022), Europe's Beating Cancer Plan Communication from the commission to the European Parliament and the Council, available at: https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-02/eu_cancer-plan_en_0.pdf.

[7] European Commission (2021), A long-term Vision for the EU's Rural Areas: Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040, COM/2021/345 final, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0345.

[8] These include the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the EU Zero Pollution Action Plan, the Sustainable Blue Economy Strategy, the Nature Restoration Law proposal, the Outermost Regions Strategy, the Arctic strategy, the Algae Strategy, the EU Action Plan to protect and restore marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries.

[9] European Commission (accessed 5 September 2023), EU Mission: Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities, available at: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/climate-neutral-and-smart-cities_en.

In April 2022 the **Transnational cooperation on the Missions approach (TRAMI)** project was launched to support the EU Missions by creating communities of practice, exchanging knowledge and offering mutual learning.[10] The EU-funded TRAMI project hosts the **European Mission Network (EMiN)**, which has 102 registered members working on the EU Missions, and serves as a platform for exchange of information and best practice.

The assessment of the implementation of EU Missions of July 2023 highlighted the potential of EU Missions and the many achievements they have made in their respective fields thus far. The assessment considered Missions to be '**timely and inspirational initiatives**' that stimulate efforts in key EU priority areas and help align local, regional and national efforts towards these shared goals.[11].

Horizon Europe has built upon the public-private and public-public partnerships that existed under Horizon 2020 to establish an overarching umbrella of **European Partnerships**. Under Horizon Europe, three types of partnerships have been established: Co-programmed European Partnerships, Co-funded European Partnerships and Institutionalised European Partnerships.[12] In June 2021, the Commission approved the memoranda of understanding for 11 Co-programmed Partnerships between the Commission and industry, aligned with priorities of the green and digital transitions.[13]

Co-funded partnerships involve Member States, research funders and public authorities. Institutionalised partnerships involve the EU, Member States, and/or industry and are implemented where objectives cannot be met through other areas of Horizon Europe. The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) Knowledge and Innovation Communities are examples of Institutionalised Partnerships.[14]

European Partnerships play a central role in delivering the ERA, pooling research and innovation investments from the EU, Member States, third countries, regions and other public and/or private sources. The **Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership** (SBEP) is a particularly successful example, bringing together 60 partners from 25 countries, aligning national programmes at pan-European scale, and mobilising EUR 450 million planned investments over seven years.

The **Partnership Knowledge Hub** (PKH) was established in 2021 to aid the Commission in the implementation and coordination of European Partnerships.[15] The PKH is in charge of conducting biennial monitoring of European Partnerships. The first monitoring report has been completed in April 2022.[16] Further, an annual **European Partnership Stakeholder Forum** is held to provide a platform for the entire partnership community with the aim to connect and share knowledge as well as experience.[17]

Data from the 2023 OECD STIP Survey indicates the estimated **level of funding** attributed to each policy action. As shown in the figure below, there is a relatively similar distribution of policies across funding levels, with the largest number falling into the bracket of 5M-20M (46). On the lower end of budget ranges, 32 policies fall into the budget range of < EUR 1M and 30 policies have a budget between EUR 1M-5M. Less policies fall in the upper mid-range, as 24 policies have a budget between 20M-50M and 22 have a budget between EUR 50M-100M. On the higher end of budget ranges, 32 policies have a budget of EUR 100M-500M and 30 have a budget larger than EUR 500M. The majority of direct financial support instruments were attributed a budget of 20M or less, whereas there was a more even distribution of budget attributed to governance and collaborative infrastructure policy instruments.

[10] https://www.trami5missions.eu
[11] European Commission (2023), EU Missions two years on: assessment of progress and way forward, COM(2023) 457 final, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52023DC0457&qid=1690022676423.
[12] European Commission (2019), Orientations towards the first Strategic Plan for Horizon Europe, available at: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2019-12/ec_rtd_orientations-he-strategic-plan_122019.pdf.
[13] European Commission (2021), Commission and industry invest €22 billion in new European Partnerships to deliver solutions to major societal challenges, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_21_2943.
[14] https://eit.europa.eu/our-communities/eit-innovation-communities
[15] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/expert-groups/consult?lang=en&do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=3738&news=1
[16] European Commission (2022), Performance of European Partnerships: Biennial Monitoring Report (BMR) 2022 on partnerships in Horizon Europe, available at: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a6cbe152-d19e-11ec-a95f-01aa75ed71a1.
[17] ERA-LEARN (2022), European Partnership Stakeholder Forum: 'One-year review of European Partnership Initiatives in Horizon Europe', available at: era-learn.eu/documents/era-learn_european-partnership-stakeholder-forum_summary-results.pdf.
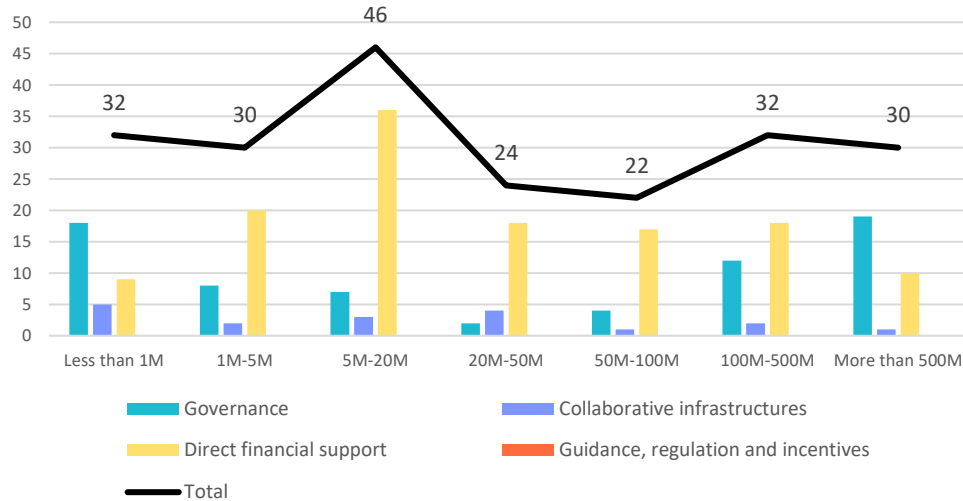
Figure 1: Action 10: Distribution of budget per policy instrument

An example of a policy that has a budget of over EUR 500M includes the European Union's Horizon Europe Missions and European Partnerships initiatives themselves, as well as the **European Green Deal Investment Plan**.

National policy examples (reported via the OECD STIP Survey)

An example is **Austria's** RTI Pact for 2021-2023,[18] which operationalised the goals of the country's RTI Strategy 2030, linking the strategy with funding and implementing institutions. One of the main objectives of the RTI Pact is to particularly increase Austria's participation in EU Missions and European Partnerships.

Other countries have established policies especially dedicated to Action 10. For example, **Slovenia** established a dedicated policy for the national coordination of European Partnerships, providing structures for discussion and operational modalities for specific partnerships.[19]

Greece created a national initiative dedicated to Action 10 that coordinates and facilitates cooperation on EU Missions and European Partnerships.[20]

The 2023 OECD STIP Survey also collects information on the **type of policy instruments**. The majority of policy instruments related to Action 10 across the EU Member States are **governance measures** (52%), which includes the creation of strategies or standards, changes to governance structures or regulation, policy intelligence and consultation activities, and public awareness campaigns or other outreach activities. This is then followed by **direct financial support initiatives** (34%), which include institutional funding, grants, procurement programmes and other forms of financial support. 10% of the policy instruments are related to **collaborative infrastructures** (10%), or networking platforms, technical infrastructure, or access to data and information.

The main three **types of policy instruments** follow the needs of Action 10 for Member States to align their R&I strategies with the ERA, provide financial support to relevant projects, and to establish infrastructure to support the work of partnerships.

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[18] Bundeskanzleramt, FTI-Strategie 2030 – Strategie der Bundesregierung für Forschung, Technologie und Innovation, available at: https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/themen/forschungskoordination_fti.html (accessed 8 June 2023).
[19] https://www.gov.si/en/state-authorities/ministries/ministry-of-higher-education-science-and-innovation
[20] https://gsri.gov.gr