

DECISION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

Approving the call ranked list of the innovation action selected for funding under the Europe's Rail call for proposals HORIZON-ER-JU-2025-01

N° 07/2025

THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE EUROPE'S RAIL JOINT UNDERTAKING, (hereafter referred as "EU-RAIL")

Having regard to Council Regulation (EU) No 2021/2085 of 19 November 2021¹ establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe and repealing Regulations (EC) No 219/2007, (EU) No 557/2014, (EU) No 558/2014, (EU) No 559/2014, (EU) No 560/2014, (EU) No 561/2014 and (EU) No 642/2014, and in particular point of Article 17(2)(u).

Whereas:

- (1) On 21 November 2025, the EU-RAIL Governing Board adopted the Europe's Rail Work Programme 2025-2026² hereafter "WP 2025-26"). This WP 2025-26 was the basis for the launch of the call for proposals HORIZON-ER-JU-2025-01, which was published on the Horizon Europe Funding and Tenders Portal on 26 February 2025 with a deadline of 7th May 2025 at 17:00 (Brussels time).
- (2) The call for proposals HORIZON-ER-JU-2025-01 comprised one topic "*HORIZON-ER-JU-2025-FA7-01: Further Technological development of Maglev-derived Systems*" (Innovation Action), open to entities eligible under the general rules of the Horizon Europe Work Programme. This topic had its own dedicated budget line with an expected EU contribution ("indicative budget") of EUR 3 000 000,00.
- (3) In return to its 2025-01 call for proposals, EU-RAIL received one proposal for a total estimated value of EUR 4 667 392,46 and a requested EU contribution of EUR 2 999 443,41.
- (4) The proposal was verified for its compliance with the admissibility requirements and eligibility conditions of the call. During the verification, it was found that the proposal received was both admissible and eligible and therefore declared as such by EU-RAIL.
- (5) The proposal submitted was evaluated by an evaluation committee composed of independent experts, as set-up in the rules of the European Union's Horizon Europe framework programme and in particular the Horizon Europe rules for participation³ as well as the General Annexes to the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025 and in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the EU-RAIL WP 2025-26 (Annex VIII). On the basis of this evaluation, the experts established a ranking list for the topic

¹ OJ L 427, 30.11.2021, p. 17, as amended by Council Regulation (EU) 2023/1782 of 25 July 2023 amending Regulation (EU) 2021/2085 establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe, as regards the Chips Joint Undertaking.

² Governing Board Decision n°17/2024 available at: <https://rail-research.europa.eu/about-europes-rail/europes-rail-structure-of-governance/europes-rail-governing-board/>

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/695/oj>

(Annex 1 of the Decision). As there was only one proposal submitted, there was no priority order. The proposal submitted passed the award criteria thresholds (i.e.: “excellence”, “impact” and “quality and efficiency of the implementation”).

- (6) In accordance with the procedures laid down in the Guide on the procedures from proposal submission to managing grants under Horizon Europe⁴ (Online Manual), one independent observer was appointed by the EU-RAIL to observe and to offer independent advice on the conduct and fairness of all phases of the evaluation process, on how evaluators apply award criteria and on how to improve processes. The report of the independent observer concluded that *“the evaluation was performed in full transparency, fairness and impartiality, in compliance with all applicable general Horizon Europe rules as well as with other relevant specific rules for the call (for example specific award sub criteria, and lump sum aspects)”*. A summary of the independent observer report is provided in Annex 2 to this Decision and will be published in the Funding and Tender Portal (under Call Topic Update).
- (7) The Governing Board took note and acknowledged the report of the Executive Director to the Governing Board of EU-RAIL on the outcome of the call for proposals HORIZON-ER-JU-2025-01, which includes the Call Evaluation Report with its annexes, as well as the individual evaluation summary report which will be attached to the individual notification letters to be sent to the applicants. Nevertheless, Annexes 8, 10, 11 and 12 of the report were not disclosed to the members other than the Union of the Governing Board due to the risk of conflict of interest.
- (8) Having examined the results of the evaluation process as reported in the Call Evaluation Report, the Executive Director recommends to finance one activity for the only topic in the ranking order stemming from the independent experts’ evaluation (Main list” flagged proposals in Annex 1 “EU ranked list(s)”) of the Call Evaluation Report) for an indicative total EU contribution of EUR 2 999 443,41 and to consider the unused budget of EUR 556,59 - which is the difference between the total budget appropriation (i.e.: “Call indicative budget co-funding” of EUR 3 000 000,00) and the Requested EU contribution of EUR 2 999 443,41 indicated in Annex 1 - for other operational activities of the JU in 2025 or the following years.
- (9) As proposed by the Executive Director in his report, the Grant Preparation Phase will be essential to ensure the alignment and consistency of the proposed research and innovation activities and coordination and support actions. To this effect, the Executive Director in his capacity as authorising officer should make use of the possibilities offered by Article 203(5) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast)⁵.

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/om_en.pdf

⁵ The authorising officer responsible may invite an applicant to adjust its proposal in the light of the recommendations of the evaluation committee. The authorising officer responsible shall keep appropriate records of contacts with applicants during the procedure.

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The call (ranked) list(s) pertaining to the call for proposals HORIZON-ER-JU-2025-01 including the lists of action selected for funding (Annex 1) are approved.

Article 2

The Executive Director shall inform the applicant of the result of the evaluation by means of a notification letter to which the relevant individual evaluation summary report shall be attached. For the action selected for funding, the notification letter sent by the Executive Director shall invite the applicant to start the grant preparation.

Article 3

With a view to promoting the alignment and consistency of the proposed research and innovation activities, the Executive Director is invited to consider the application of Article 203(5) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509, and report to the Governing Board as he deems appropriate.

Article 4

This Decision shall enter into force on the day of its adoption.

Done at Brussels, on 24 June 2025.

For the Governing Board



Magda KOPCZYNSKA
The Chairperson

- Annex 1: Call (ranked) list(s) pertaining to the call for proposals HORIZON-ER-JU-2025-01 including the list of action selected for funding
- Annex 2: Summary for publication of the Observer's Report

