

Questions & Answers

Call for proposals 2025
HORIZON-ER-JU-2025-02

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Document history		
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1	20/10/2025	First publication: 1-19
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Q 1	For the call for proposals 2025-02, who decides which projects get funded? Who actually leads or champions the implementation where you can monetize the results?	The project proposals submitted to EU-Rail call for proposals, if admissible and eligible, will be evaluated and ranked against the established award criteria, depending on the type of action. The evaluation is carried out by independent experts, who will be obliged to declare any potentially conflicting interests. Based on the results of the evaluation and the budget availability, EU-Rail Executive Director will submit the list of actions to be selected for funding to the Governing Board for approval; the Governing Board will then take the final decision on the number of actions to be funded. See in particular Articles 19.4(j) and 17.2 (u) of the Council Regulation (EU) 2021/2085 of 19 November 2021 establishing EU-Rail Joint Undertaking (also called "Single Basic Act"). Please note that the award criteria included in part D of the General Annexes of Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025 are complemented with additional elements as specified in Annex VIII of EU-Rail's Work Programme 2025-2026. Also, the evaluation procedure and ranking are described in detail in part F of the General Annexes to the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025. The monitoring of EU-Rail funded projects is ensured by EU-Rail according to the applicable Horizon Europe rules and its own Horizon Europe Control Strategy for grants, with the involvement of external experts where relevant.
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Q 2	What are the rules for participation for non-members of Europe's Rail?	The EU-Rail's call for proposals 2025-02 follows the rules of the Horizon Europe framework programme and in particular the Horizon Europe rules for participation, as well as the General Annexes of Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025, which apply, unless specified otherwise, to all EU-Rail calls for proposals. Please note that as indicated on the EU-Rail Work Programme 2025-2026, in the call topic conditions, applicant Private Members of the EU-Rail should provide in-kind contributions to additional activities to be declared via the template model available on the F&T portal. The amount of total in-kind contributions (i.e. in-kind contributions for operational activities and in-kind contributions for additional activities) should be no less than 1.26364 times the funding request, in aggregate, of these applicant Private Members, when and if part of a consortium proposal. This obligation does not concern non-Europe's Rail members.
Q 3	How shall the interaction between Flagship Projects be enforced in wave 2?	As mentioned in the EU-Rail Governance and Process Handbook, EU-Rail will implement maturity checkpoints to ensure the interaction between Flagship Projects. The maturity checkpoints have been introduced for the first time in the first wave of Flagship Projects and will continue in the second wave of Flagship Projects with an improved process based on the initial experience. The maturity checkpoints enable the JU to ensure a close monitoring of the needed interactions between Flagship Projects. Note that all the interactions are mentioned in the call for proposals 2025-02 topics, potential consortia should take this into account in the design of their project proposals.
Q 4	It seems that the objectives are for rail in general, but I wonder if it is in fact more oriented to passenger movement (some sentences seem to hint at this). Is rail freight movement a topic being targeted itself in the program?	Europe's Rail confirms that rail freight is also part of the Europe's Rail Multi Annual Work Programme and call for proposals 2025-02. It can be also underlined that the EU-Rail Flagship Area 5 or call for proposals 2025-02 Destination 5 is specifically addressing freight.
Q 5	For the call for proposals 2025-02 Destination 2, we understand that operational transition from non-automated operation to automated addresses the challenges to overcome and how. Correct?	Regarding operational transition from non-automated operation to automated, the call for proposals 2025-02 Destination 2 addresses these challenges when referring to the topics of deployment, migration, training and human factors. It is up to the applicants to design their project proposal to take them into account.
Q 6	We are now part of the new Europe's Rail associated member.	EU-Rail Members have to meet the ratio of 1.263 in aggregate, as indicated in the topic conditions. Any

	If we apply for an exploratory project, may we continue to be funded at 100% or we need to comply with the 1.263 ratio even in exploratory projects?	discrepancy (for example if a member contributes less to one project and more to another project) shall be well and duly justified in the table provided for this scope at project proposal submission.
Q 7	For call for proposals 2025-02 Destination 8 how many projects will be funded per topic?	There is no fixed number of proposals to be funded for call for proposals 2025-02 EXPLR-01, EXPLR-02 and EXPLR-03 as indicated with the mention N/A. Following the advice of the Europe's Rail Scientific Steering Group to the Governing Board, the proposals submitted for these 3 topics will compete between themselves. Depending on the budget availability, more than one proposal for a call topic could be selected and vice versa no proposal might be selected for a call topic. The best project proposals will be selected depending on the budget availability.
Q 8	Is HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-FA3-01 a call intended for only one dedicated consortium as a continuation of FP3-IAM4RAIL. Is it not open for other consortia?	Call for proposals 2025-02 is an open call for proposals. It is open for all stakeholders having interest in the call topics and who are willing to prepare project proposals and according to Horizon Europe rules. Public outputs of FP3-IAM4RAIL project are available here and the topic call indicates the ones that should be taken into account in the design of a project proposal. One proposal will be funded for the topic HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-FA3-01.
Q 9	Where can we find the proposal template?	All needed templates can be found in each topic under the section "topic conditions and document" on the call in the EU funding & Tender Portal: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/calls-for-proposals
Q 10	Some fascinating detail on great project potential. Will we be able to join all contacts for all destinations if we feel we can contribute to all or at least more than 1 destination?	We confirm that a stakeholder can be part of different consortia preparing proposals for several topics under the EU-Rail's call for proposals 2025-02. You can use the B2match platform or Partner search in the EU Funding & Tender Portal (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/partner-search?isExactMatch=true&frameworkProgramme=43108390&type=ORGANISATION,PERSON&order=DESC&pageNumber=1&pageSize=50&sortBy=lastModified) to find and contact stakeholders that could have similar interest in the call for proposals 2025-02.
Q 11	Are multinationals with a registered company in the EU considered as EU intern?	Yes, any legal entity registered in the EU counts as an eligible entity for Horizon Europe calls for proposals.

Q 1 2	Can an affiliated entity in lump sum projects have a higher funding rate at the expense of the beneficiary's funding? If the main beneficiary reports a higher IKOP, can its affiliated entity have a lower IKOP and thereby a higher funding rate?	It is possible within the limit of the rules of Horizon Europe and in accordance with EU-Rail Work Programme 2025-2026 . For example, for innovation actions for profit entities the maximum funding rate is capped at 70% of the eligible costs.
Q 1 3	For Monthly Rates, we have different grades within each staff category. As a result, an average rate for each staff category would not work to accurately calculate the exact operating costs. Could you make it possible for us to add more monthly rates within each staff category in the Excel spreadsheet?	Under Lump Sum MGA, detailed cost reporting by individual grades is not possible or required. For personnel categories with different staff grades, you should calculate and use an average monthly rate per category (average for senior scientists, average for junior scientists, average for technical staff, etc.).
Q 1 4	Are there any specific rules for beneficiaries who aren't members of Europe's Rail?	There are no specific rules for stakeholders who are not members of Europe's Rail, as per EU-Rail Work Programme 2025-2026 and in accordance with the rules for participation of Horizon Europe.
Q 1 5	Can you have a subcontractor outside of the EU or AC?	Unless provided otherwise in the specific call text or work programme, subcontractors in a Horizon Europe project can be based outside the EU or Associated Countries. However, there are currently some restrictions for certain countries which means that legal entities established in those countries cannot participate in Horizon Europe projects in any capacity, including as subcontractors. You may refer to the General Annexes of Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025 for details. Please also note that the participation of subcontractors in a Horizon Europe project should not be used to circumvent the participants' eligibility rules.
Q 1 6	Are there guidelines for the kind of subcontracting activities?	Subcontracting refers to the action tasks specified in Annex 1 to the Grant Agreement which cannot be carried out by the beneficiaries themselves and therefore are outsourced to external third parties. In the Annotated Grant Agreement , you can find an explanation of the rules applying to subcontracting under article 9.4 of the Model Grant Agreement.
Q 1 7	Can a company of a Group be direct partner in a consortium when another company of the Group is member of Europe's Rail?	Yes. A company belonging to a group may participate as a beneficiary or affiliated entity in a given project even if another company from the same group is a EU-Rail member. However, in such cases, in principle the contribution (IKOP/IKAA) of the group's companies are

		consolidated and calculated at the member level.
Q 1 8	Is there any limit for the number of consortia that one company can get involved in? If we are working on multiple projects within different areas of the program, are we allowed to apply under more than one call?	There is no specific limit. Any stakeholder having interest in call for proposals 2025-02 topics can apply for more than one topic.
Q 1 9	Following the publication of the new Europe's Rail Call for proposals 2025-02, we have reviewed the call details and would appreciate a short alignment call to better understand the expected focus areas and compliance priorities before preparing our submission. Could we briefly discuss the main technical and procedural expectations for applicants — in particular regarding scope alignment, eligibility, and evaluation criteria — to ensure our proposal is fully in line with the programme's objectives?	The specific information to prepare your proposal can be found in EU-Rail's Work Programme 2025-2026 and the call text. The applicable general rules are included in the General Annexes to Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025. More information is available in the video and presentation of the Info Day session. Should any stakeholder or potential applicant have specific queries regarding EU-Rail's call for proposals 2025-02 (including those mentioned on "scope alignment, eligibility, and evaluation criteria") those can only be addressed through the functional mailbox info-call@rail-research.europa.eu. The question will be anonymised and the answer published ensuring transparency, no discrimination and equal treatment.
Q 2 0	In the AWP 2025-2026 version from June 2025, there are formulations like "Shall", "Should", "are expected", "must be", "need to" and "objective", are they all requirements that the proposed project MUST fulfil, or is there a hierarchy with meaning related to the different terms used?	EU-Rail confirms there is no hierarchy between the formulations and in particular the verbs and adverbs related to the different terms used. They are indeed all requirements.