

Questions & Answers

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

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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
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		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.
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. 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?	EU-Rail Members have to meet the ratio of 1.263 in aggregate, as indicated in the topic conditions. Any 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-propo...
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 1 1	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.

Q 2 1	We are considering submitting a proposal to the "HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-EXPLR-03 - EXTENDING THE RAIL NETWORK OF PHDS" call and we have a few questions regarding the call text as presented in the EU Funding & Tenders Portal: 1. Under budget overview it says <i>Budget (EUR) Year 2025 - 1 000 000</i>, and <i>Indicative number of grants-2</i>. It also says earlier in the call text that <i>The expected outcome is also the realisation of 3-5 PhD positions, teaming up with the industry</i>. Is it intended to be interpreted as a total amount of 1 M€ covering 2 grants of 3-5 PhDs each, so 6 - 10 PhDs in total? 2. Is the specification "Budget (EUR) Year: 2025" to be interpreted as that there is only one year covered, or is it to be interpreted as 1 M€ per year? 3. How many years can the PhD-programme in that case be expected to run? 4. Concerning the consortium, does it have to contain at least three EU member states (or another minimum number)? 5. Is there any other requirement related to the consortium, e.g. in terms of number of partners? 6. Is it expected or otherwise an advantage to cover both the proposed topics (low-height barriers and smart grids) or do we have the same chances if we cover just one of the suggested topics, or if we propose different topics (as long as they are in relation to the Europe's Rail programme)? 7. For the PhD topic Low height barriers, it is written: "The expected outcomes for this research topic shall include the investigation of relevant noise	1.- Following the advice of the Europe's Rail Scientific Steering Group to the Governing Board, the proposals submitted for the 3 topics HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-EXPLR-01, HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-EXPLR-02 and HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-EXPLR-03 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. The indicated number of grants reflects the potential maximum number of grants considering the call requirements (e.g. for HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-EXPLR-03 – indicative budget of 1M€ for 3-5 PhD positions, teaming up with the industry) and the competition between the three calls for proposals HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-EXPLR-01, HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-EXPLR-02 and HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-EXPLR-03. These are only indicative figures like the budget ones. 2.- The indicative budget covers the entire duration of the action that the applicant would like to propose to deliver the scope and expected outcomes of the topic HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-EXPLR-03. It means it is from the JU budget of 2025 but has no relation with the project duration. 3.- As highlighted in the conditions of the topic HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-EXPLR-03, there is no indication given for the action duration. Applicants should indicate the most appropriate period for the action, in particular in relation to the PhD works. 4.- According to the General Annexes of Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025 – part D, to form a consortium there must be minimum 3 legal entities independent from each other and established each of them in a different country (at least one legal entity in an EU Member State, and the two other legal entities either in a different Member State or in an Associated Country to Horizon Europe). 5.- There are no other requirements related to the consortium, in terms of number of partners or other, than those included in the General Annexes of Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025 above indicated or as indicated in the Europe's Rail Work Programme 2025-2026 in particular those indicated under the specific call topic condition like the "special skills and /or capabilities expected from the Applicants": "EU-Rail expects proposals to be submitted by consortia that consider PhD

	reduction techniques, design, construction and validation requirements for low-height noise barriers solutions in the rail sector as follows:...” Then follows a list of six quite different subtopics. Does this mean that we would need to cover all these six subtopics (in one PhD project)?	researchers/doctorships in the area of works of the topics presented in the Call text or in other scientifically relevant areas. Applicants shall ensure that their proposals and consortium reflect the aggregated expertise to perform the activities and achieve the objectives set by the topic. The applicants are expected to gather expertise leveraging from the knowledge of Academia and of the rail supply industry, SMEs and start-ups. In addition, applicants should leverage from the expectations of the clients, in the horizon 2030, considering the R&I contribution and vision from the EU-Rail Master Plan and Multi-Annual Work Plan.”. 6.- The Europe’s Rail Joint Undertaking expects to finance successful proposals in the following proposed areas “Low-Height Noise Reduction Barriers in Rail Transport” and “Smart grids and micro smart grids in the railway system”, or additional or different scientific areas to be proposed, always in relation to the EU-Rail Programme. As indicated in the topic description, other and different PhD subjects can be proposed by the applicants. No advantage is expected for proposals covering the proposed PhD subjects indicated in the topic. Please also 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. 7.- The PhD Topic – “Low-Height Noise Reduction Barriers in Rail Transport” is indicated in the topic description. Other and different PhD subjects, always in relation to the EU-Rail Programme, can be proposed by the applicants.
Q 2 2	Regarding the HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-FA2-01 call, according to the EURail’s Work Programme 2025-2026, the earliest starting date of a project may be as of the submission date of the application. In that case, any project or related activity that might have been started before the date of submission would be ineligible, wouldn’t it?	According to part G of the General Annexes of Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025, the project starting date and duration will be fixed in the grant agreement (see Data Sheet, point 1). As stated in its Work Programme 2025-2026, EU-Rail allows a retroactive starting date of a project, so before the date of the grant signature and as from the date of submission of the application, provided that the reasons for this early start of the project R&I activities are duly justified, in line with Article 196.2 of the EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509. All activity and costs incurred before the date submission of an application are ineligible.

Q 2 3	We are currently preparing a proposal concept for the upcoming Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking Call 2025-02, specifically under Topic FA3-01 – "Intelligent & Integrated Asset Management." Our intended focus is on predictive maintenance solutions for rolling stock, leveraging AI-based data analytics and sensor-based condition monitoring. To better understand the programme's expectations and to explore potential alignment with Europe's Rail strategic objectives, we would like to request a short introductory meeting (30 minutes via teams) with a programme manager from your team. We would be grateful for your guidance regarding: - The scope and key expectations for FA3-01 projects (e.g., TRL levels, demonstrator scale, infrastructure involvement) - Partnering opportunities - General eligibility for the program of HHLA Next as a venture building unit Please let us know your availability within the days. Thank you very much for your time and support.	All information about the EU-Rail call for proposals HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-FA3-01 - INTELLIGENT & INTEGRATED ASSET MANAGEMENT is available and accessible simultaneously to all potential applicants on the EU Funding & Tenders Portal. EU-Rail cannot provide further ad-hoc information or hold bilateral meetings with any applicant, as this would imply a breach of the principles enshrined in the EU Financial Regulation (EU) 2024/2509 on the implementation of the EU budget, such as the principles of transparency, objectivity, equal treatment, and non-discrimination. With regard to the partnering opportunities, please note that 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 EU-Rail call for proposals 2025-02.
Q 2 4	In this scope, we noticed that the call mentions the following: <i>"Indicative budget</i> <i>The total indicative budget for the topic will be 1 million EUR</i> <i>Applicant Private Members of the EU-Rail part of consortia responding to this topic 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</i>	The obligation to provide and report in-kind contributions applies exclusively to private Members of the Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking, as defined in Article 7 of the Single Basic Act, and to their affiliated entities formally linked to those private Members. If you are not a private Member of Europe's Rail, you are not required to submit or declare in-kind contributions in the context of this call unless you are acting as an affiliated entity of an existing private Member and the proposed activity is formally included in that private Member's additional activities plan.

	<i>activities) should be no less than 1.26352 times the funding request, in aggregate, of these applicant Private Members. Any discrepancy shall be well and duly justified.</i> <i>In this respect, the grant agreements will set, in principle, annual deliverable on in-kind contributions for the projects selected under this topic, as well as mandatory reporting requirements, for those applicants who are Private Members of EU-Rail."</i> We also noticed that our institution is not listed as a "Private Member" of the EU-Rail, as shown on the official EU-Rail website (Europe's Rail JU Members - Europe's Rail). However, we are part of a Members' grouping. In this situation, under this specific application/project, could you please clarify whether we will be required to provide in-kind contribution to additional activities to be declared via the template model available on the F&T portal?	In other words, for project proposals where no Europe's Rail private Member (Founding or Associated) is involved, applicants are not expected to declare in-kind contributions. The in-kind contribution mechanism applies only to private Members and their affiliated entities, in line with their membership obligations and contribution commitments under the Europe's Rail framework. In your particular case, being part of as a private Member in a grouping, you should declare in-kind contribution. The EU-Rail website is indicating the name of the entity representing the private Member grouping in accordance with the respective Letter of Commitment.
Q 2 5	We are highly interested in participating in the upcoming call for proposals under the Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking (Europe's Rail) titled "Portal Digital & Automated up to Autonomous Train Operations". To proceed effectively, we kindly request access to the full Request for Proposal (RFP) / tender documents for this specific call. These documents are essential for us to prepare a detailed and compliant proposal. Could you please send us: • The full tender dossier, including functional and technical specifications • The submission guidelines and evaluation criteria • The deadline and submission modality • Any templates or annexes required for our proposal We would appreciate receiving these documents at your earliest convenience	All information, relevant guidance and needed submission templates for the call for proposals HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-FA2-01 - DIGITAL & AUTOMATIC UP TO AUTOMATED TRAIN OPERATIONS can be found in the EU Funding & Tender Portal: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-FA2-01?keywords=HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-02&isExactMatch=true&status=31094501,31094502,31094503&frameworkProgramme=43108390&order=DESC&pageNumber=1&pageSize=50&sortBy=startDate

	to enable our timely preparation. If there are further steps or registration requirements we must fulfil, please kindly advise.	
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