

Questions & Answers

Call for proposals 2026
HORIZON-JU-ER-2026-01

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Document history		
Revision	Date	Description
1	20/02/2026	First publication: 1-7
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Q 1	Regarding the dissemination and exploitation plan, is that a separate template that applicants have to complete and attach to in addition to Part A, Part B and the Budget tables?	The dissemination and exploitation plan is not filled in in separate template. A first version of your 'plan for the dissemination and exploitation including communication activities' should be included in your proposal as highlighted in the Application form template: Application form - Part B (HE EU-RAIL, RIA) .
Q 2	About the self-assessments, if there are none, could we just write that there are none identified?	<p>The ethics and security self-assessments must be completed, i.e. all questions must be replied.</p> <p>You can find more information on how to complete your ethics self-assessment in the following document: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/how-to-complete-your-ethics-self-assessment_en.pdf</p> <p>You can find more information on how to complete your security self-assessment in the following document: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-</p>

		2027/common/guidance/how-to-handle-security-sensitive-projects_en.pdf
Q 3	<p>Could you explain why there are no more financial ex-post audits by the EC? Is it thanks to the use of lump sum?</p>	<p>As announced in the EU-RAIL work programme 2026 and in accordance with the European Commission decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme, EU-Rail intends to apply solely the lump sum form of funding. The main difference resulting thereof, in comparison to grants based on actual costs, is that the payments will not depend on claiming the costs actually incurred, that beneficiaries will not be obliged to provide EU-RAIL with audit certificates and keep/provide financial records, and such records may not be requested by the JU during or after the implementation of the action. In addition, for the lump sum actions intended by EU-Rail to be applied as a sole form of grants under Horizon Europe, in the absence of any obligations of beneficiaries to report on costs actually incurred, there will not be any financial ex-post audits conducted by the European Commission Common Audit Service (CAS) for EU-Rail grants, as well as there will not be any error rate calculation. EU-RAIL will be implementing an alternative form of ex-post assurance activities, such as reviews, focused on qualitative/technical assessments of agreed work packages and beneficiaries.</p> <p>Although financial audits are no longer carried out by the Granting Authority (EU-Rail), checks, reviews, audits and investigations - during the action or afterwards- could be carried out any time (ex-ante and ex-post) by the European Commission Audit service (IAS), the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the European Court of Auditors (ECA) or the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) in accordance with their respective missions and mandates and based on their own methodology as applicable to the lump sum form of financing. To this end, the beneficiary concerned must keep all relevant information relating to the action.</p> <p>Concerning record-keeping obligations, beneficiaries are required to retain technical evidence (e.g. deliverables, publications, prototypes, and other technical documents proving that the work was carried out as described in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement. Financial supporting documents (e.g. timesheets, payslips, contracts, travel invoices, actual cost records) are however no longer requested by EU-Rail under the lump-sum approach. Nevertheless, beneficiaries still need to comply with any financial record keeping obligations outside the grant agreement (e.g., under national law or internal procedures). Such financial documents should also be retained in case of OLAF, EPPO</p>

		<p>and ECA audits and investigations.</p> <p>Further details can be found in Articles 20 and 25 of the Lump sum Model Grant Agreement.</p>
Q 4	<p>When is the pre-financing discounted in case of lump-sum model? At the final payment after the end of project, or continuously when particular WP is finished?</p>	<p>The pre-financing is in principle cleared at the final payment; however, it may also be partially cleared during the action if the applicable payment thresholds are reached through interim payments.</p> <p>For each reporting submission, the JU calculates the payment amount on the basis of the lump sums corresponding to the work packages that have been accepted following the assessment of the technical report, taking into account the cumulative amount of previous payments and the payment thresholds set out in the Grant Agreement.</p> <p>The clearing of the pre-financing results from this calculation and may therefore start already during the course of the action.</p>
Q 5	<p>Some of the macros in the templates expire quickly and cannot be used. Also there are problems with security, meaning macros are blocked by local institutions' IT security departments. This creates a lot of tensions. Could we possibly have an online form instead of Excel spread sheets with macros?</p>	<p>At this stage, there is no online form available that could replace the Excel template with macros.</p> <p>Applicants are required to complete the detailed budget table using the provided Excel file with macros enabled. Once the budget table has been completed, it must be uploaded to the online submission system as an annex to Part B of the proposal.</p> <p>The Excel template is provided in .xlsm format as it uses macros and should be saved in this format while being completed. For security reasons, the submission system does not accept macro-enabled files, so the document must be uploaded in .xlsx or .xls format.</p> <p>Applicants are strongly advised to always keep a copy of the original .xlsm file for their records.</p>
Q 6	<p>Is it possible to split transversal WPs...such as Communication and Management WPs?</p>	<p>It is up to the applicant to decide on the number and duration of work packages needed to address the scope and expected outcome of the call text. As a general guidance as many as needed but no more than what is manageable.</p> <p>Please note that a work package (WP) is a major sub-division of the work plan of your project. Although, a single activity is not a WP. A single task is not a WP. A % of progress is not a WP (e.g. 50 % of the tests). A lapse of time is generally not a WP (e.g. activities of year 1).</p>

		Work packages with a long duration may be split along the reporting periods (e.g., Management, Dissemination and Exploitation, etc.). In this way, the relevant activities can be paid at the end of the reporting period.
Q 7	Would participation from companies with automotive lighting experience be considered relevant for railway calls, particularly for projects focusing on passenger safety, visual communication, and human-centered lighting systems?	<p>Participation is open to all eligible entities in accordance with the rules for participation of Horizon Europe, the EU-Rail Work-Programme and the call conditions.</p> <p>Please look also in the call conditions the section “Special skills and/or capabilities expected from the Applicant(s)”. Any application should also the scope and expected outcomes of the call topic text.</p>
Q 8	Are the instructions in the excel file being updated for the filling in of the lump sum detailed budget template?	<p>Yes, the instructions have been updated concerning the instructions that the applicants receive to provide justifications for: purchase costs exceeding 15% of personnel costs, the use of in-kind contributions, and other direct costs (e.g. internally invoiced goods and services). This information was previously requested in tables 3.1h, i, and j in Part B of the proposal template, but in the current proposal template (for WP 2026-2027) this is not needed anymore at the same level of detail.</p> <p>These are the updated instructions:</p> <p><i>If your lump sum budget contains any cost items in cost category C and/or D, please make sure to justify these items in the ‘Any comments’ sheet of the Excel detailed lump sum budget table.</i></p> <p><i>The reason is that the proposal template has been simplified, removing this information from Part B and bringing it closer to the relevant budget items. Specifically, you must include justification in the ‘Any comments’ sheet if you are in any of the following situations:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>If the sum of the costs for ‘travel and subsistence’, ‘equipment’, and ‘other goods, works and services’ (i.e. the purchase costs) exceeds 15% of the personnel costs for a participant. If this is the case, justify the most expensive cost item(s) up to the level that the remaining costs are below 15% of personnel costs.</i> • <i>If other cost categories (e.g. internally invoiced goods and services) are used.</i> • <i>If in-kind contributions are used (non-financial resources made available free of charge by third parties, which must be included as direct costs in the</i>

		<p><i>corresponding cost category, e.g. personnel costs or purchase costs for equipment).</i></p> <p>The above instructions are available on the Funding and Tenders Portal under the following link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/HORIZON-JU-ER-2026-FA6FA7-01?order=DESC&pageNumber=1&pageSize=50&sortBy=relevance&keywords=HORIZON-JU-ER-2026-01&isExactMatch=true&status=31094501,31094502,31094503</p>
Q 9	<p>I have registered and followed the WEBINAR of HORIZON-ER-JU-2026-01 coded call on 09 February 2026. I have been sent the link of WEBINAR recording with in a couple of days. I regret to inform you that I can not reach that link. Would you be kind enough to re-send that link?</p>	<p>The registration of the session and additional information on the Info Day on call for proposals HORIZON-ER-JU-2026-01 is available on EU-Rail website: https://rail-research.europa.eu/latest-news/europes-rail-info-day-2026-01-attracted-over-210-stakeholders-from-across-the-european-rail-ecosystem/</p>
Q 10	<p>Our company is looking for a couple of clarifications:</p> <p>a) eligibility requirements and number of participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least one independent legal entity established in a Member State; and • at least two other independent legal entities, each established in different Member States or Associated Countries. <p>Would it be possible to have a consortium made of at least 3 independent legal entities (i.e. not subsidiaries or affiliates that control/are controlled by one another) where the first legal entity belongs to one member state, the second one to a different member state and the third legal entity belongs to the same member state of either legal entity number 1 or legal entity number 2?</p>	<p>a) According to the eligibility conditions of part B of the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2026-2027 General Annexes, a consortium shall include, as beneficiaries, three legal entities independent from each other and established each of them in a different country as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - at least one independent legal entity established in a Member State; and - at least two other independent legal entities, each established in different Member States or Associated Countries. <p>This means that <u>three different countries</u> need to be represented: at least one of the legal entities must be an EU Member State and the two others can be each of them either in a different EU Member State or country associated to the Horizon Europe programme.</p> <p>As affiliated entities do not sign the grant agreement, they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition. Only legal entities participating as beneficiaries count for consortium composition.</p> <p>b) According to call for proposals HORIZON-JU-ER-2026-FA7-01, the functional validation of key technologies, components, and subsystems critical for passenger safety in laboratory environment is expected to reach TRL4 and shall at least include the following validations: a. Validation of</p>

<p>b) work-stream 2: Functional Validation of Safety Components for Hyperloop:</p> <p>Is the validation at TRL4 level required for all the three topics (a. Control, Command & Signalling (CCS) — Communication in Low-Frequency, High-Density Conditions, b) At Least 2 Key Vehicle Components in a Low-Pressure Environment, and c) Passenger Exchange Interface — Onboard Door / Platform Screen Door) or can the consortium focus on one or two of the topics only?</p> <p>It is deemed that pushing the validation of all the three subsystems identified above at laboratory level would require an effort that is well beyond the proposed available funding, considering:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the NRC for an industrial vacuum or reduced-pressure chamber (CAPEX and OPEX, or just OPEX only - instrumentation, DAS, safety systems, etc) 2) the need for building or get access to a representative RF test environment that accurately simulates tube waveguide propagation conditions (anechoic chamber or similar?) 3) the need to design and procure a test rig for the braking solution (even if scaled, it still should be representative of the final product concept), its special instrumentation, and the testing campaign in different vacuum / Tamb conditions 4) the need to have a door functional mock-up that validates pressure boundary integrity and actuation reliability <p>Can you comment on this?</p>	<p>control command and signaling system with special focus on the communication aspects in low frequency but high density environment; b) Validation of at least 2 key components of the vehicle (e.g. braking systems or traction bogies) in a low pressure environment; c) Validation of the functional interface for passenger exchange door on board the vehicle / platform screen door for passengers exit station. This mean that TRL4 level should be met for the validations listed in the call text.</p> <p>Proposals are expected to address all the requirements of the Work-streams 1 & 2 in a credible and comprehensive manner considering the available budget. The Work Programme 2026 sets the indicative budget available for each call topic that the JU considers sufficient to address each topic.</p> <p>For more information please refer to part B of Horizon Europe Work Programme 2026-2027 General Annexes for a guide to the TRL definitions and criteria to be used.</p>
<p>Q 1 1</p> <p>I have a question regarding the call: Safety and certification guidelines and demonstration of safety components for hyperloop</p>	<p>Proposals are expected to address all the requirements of the Work-streams 1 & 2 in a credible and comprehensive manner considering the available budget. The Work Programme 2026 sets the indicative budget available for</p>

	<p>HORIZON-JU-ER-2026-FA7-01</p> <p>In the work-stream 2 in total 4 validations in three different areas are requested. This is a huge effort compared to the available budget.</p> <p>If in the proposal e.g. only 2 of them are mentioned to be delivered, would this lead to a decrease of the evaluation score or even a formal rejection of the proposal?</p>	<p>each call topic that the JU considers sufficient to address each topic.</p> <p>These requirements are therefore a technical expectation within the evaluation criteria that will be applied by a panel of independent experts to each proposal.</p> <p>Your proposal, if admissible and eligible, would be evaluated but probably lead indeed to a relative decrease of the evaluation score for not covering entirely the four areas requested in the call for proposals, not to a formal rejection.</p>										
<p>Q 1 2</p>	<p>We are currently preparing a proposal in answer to HORIZON-JU-ER-2026-01 call and there are a couple of questions we cannot find answer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we correct in assuming three (3) reporting periods for this project - 12, 12 and 18 months? If this is not correct, can you please advise on the number and length of the reporting periods intended for this project? • The call itself mentions an indicative budget of €3,1 Mio. for this action. But the “Annex to GB decision n°09/2025” contains the following information regarding the budget: <table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <p>DESTINATION 6 AND DESTINATION 7 – REGIONAL RAIL SERVICES / INNOVATIVE RAIL SERVICES TO REVITALISE CAPILLARY LINES & INNOVATION ON NEW APPROACHES FOR GUIDED TRANSPORT MODES</p> <p>HORIZON-JU-ER-2026-FA6/FA7-01: Innovation for regional rail services and new guided transport systems</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <p>Specific Conditions</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Expected EU contribution per project</td> <td>EU-Rail estimates that an EU contribution of EUR 3.1 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Indicative budget</td> <td>The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.1 million.</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <p>Applicant Private²³ Members of the EU-Rail part of consortia responding to this topic must 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</p> </td> </tr> </table> <p>So the question is which document takes precedence? Would we be okay to submit a different overall budget with our proposal or not?</p>	<p>DESTINATION 6 AND DESTINATION 7 – REGIONAL RAIL SERVICES / INNOVATIVE RAIL SERVICES TO REVITALISE CAPILLARY LINES & INNOVATION ON NEW APPROACHES FOR GUIDED TRANSPORT MODES</p> <p>HORIZON-JU-ER-2026-FA6/FA7-01: Innovation for regional rail services and new guided transport systems</p>		<p>Specific Conditions</p>		Expected EU contribution per project	EU-Rail estimates that an EU contribution of EUR 3.1 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.	Indicative budget	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 3.1 million.	<p>Applicant Private²³ Members of the EU-Rail part of consortia responding to this topic must 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</p>		<p>1) For clarification, please note that the Annex of GB Decision n°9/2025 is the EU-Rail Work Programme 2026 which includes the call text and the table you are referring to.</p> <p>In accordance with the EU-Rail Governance and Process Handbook of Europe’s Rail section 2.4.2 (https://rail-research.europa.eu/about-europes-rail/europes-rail-reference-documents/functioning-of-the-europes-rail-ju/) and in compliance with Article 21.2 ‘Periodic reporting: Technical reports and financial statements’ of the Annotated Grant Agreement, in principle for other projects – that is other than Flagship Projects - the cycle is in line with the usual practice applied within HE projects. Consequently, the end of the reporting period for interim payment is not necessarily aligned with the annual cycle but may be set every 12 months after the start of the project, for projects between 18 to 24 months, and every 18 months for projects with longer lifetime. Based on the rules of HE, the Project Coordinator has 60 days as from that date to submit both their periodic financial and technical reports, through the HE Portal.</p> <p>2) EU-Rail estimates that an EU contribution of EUR 3.1 million would allow the requested outcomes to be addressed appropriately, but this does not prevent applicants to propose a different overall budget. The budgets set out in the call for proposals and topics are indicative.</p> <p>Please note although that as per section 2.3.8 of the EU-Rail Work Programme 2026 the maximum EU co-funding for the call 2026 is set to EUR 6.1 million. Therefore EU-Rail will be limited to the sum of the amount requested by successful proposals on the two topics of the call 2026-01.</p>
<p>DESTINATION 6 AND DESTINATION 7 – REGIONAL RAIL SERVICES / INNOVATIVE RAIL SERVICES TO REVITALISE CAPILLARY LINES & INNOVATION ON NEW APPROACHES FOR GUIDED TRANSPORT MODES</p> <p>HORIZON-JU-ER-2026-FA6/FA7-01: Innovation for regional rail services and new guided transport systems</p>												
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		<p>Please also note that for lump sum grant proposals, the external evaluators will provide comments on the detailed lump sum budget table in the Evaluation Summary Report for proposals invited to grant agreement preparation (or placed in the reserve list) that may lead to possible cost rejections.</p> <p>The above information can be found under parts D 'Award criteria' of the General Annexes of the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2026-2027.</p>
<p>Q 1 3</p>	<p>With reference to EU-Rail 2026-01 call for proposals, among the partners of our potential consortium we're debating on the interpretation of the Work-Stream 2 "Validation of control command and signalling system with special focus on the communication aspects in low frequency but high density environment" topic.</p> <p>Does the "Low frequency" aspect refer to:</p> <p>a) the need for a low carrier radio frequency (since inside an hyperloop tube very high frequency signals will suffer massive guided-wave attenuation and reflections) and hence the multi-GHz bands currently used in open-air high-speed rail are no more practical,</p> <p>or does it refer to:</p> <p>b) the fact that for the existing railway signalling systems is the information between the vehicle and the infrastructure is shared at large time intervals (e.g. every few seconds via radio link or only when driving over Eurobalises) and this would be not acceptable / sufficient anymore with the higher speed of the hyperloop system and the fact that there will be a lot more vehicles on the network (high density environment)?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question regarding the Work-Stream 2 under the EU-Rail 2026-01 call topic "HORIZON-JU-ER-2026-FA7-01: Safety and certification guidelines and demonstration of safety components for hyperloop", specifically the requirement: "Validation of control command and signalling system with special focus on the communication aspects in low frequency but high density environment". This requirement aims to ensure that the designed control command and signalling (CCS) communication system for hyperloop is validated under realistic operational constraints.</p> <p>The call text is also referring to the results available from the EU-Rail Hyper4Rail project. The chapter 5 "Underlying Technologies and Design Options" and especially sub-chapter 5.6 "Signalling" of the Hyper4Rail deliverable "D2.1 - Hyperloop Technologies, Opportunities and Applications" (https://www.hyper4rail.eu/deliverables) list the most important underlying technologies and conceptual choices. The table 11 in chapter 5.6 provides an overview of vehicle, command, control and signalling systems. The reference to "low frequency" should be understood in a broad manner. It does not prescribe a specific carrier frequency or communication technology. The intention is to highlight the challenges related to communication inside a confined tube environment. The "high density" environment mainly refers to the expected operational scenario of hyperloop systems, including high number of vehicles and high infrastructure utilisation.</p> <p>The call text foresees a focus on demonstrating practical and safe communication means at TRL4, as communication is a key element of the control command and signalling (CCS) system. However, this should remain part of a broader CCS system-level validation, ensuring alignment with the safety and certification requirements defined in Work-Stream 1.</p>

	<p>Are we correct in interpreting the “high density” aspect referred to the number of pods per hour and utilization of the infrastructure or is the “high density” aspect more related to the signal/data density (i.e. the volume or concentration of critical safety-related data messages that must be exchanged between each pod and the ground-side CCS infrastructure)?</p> <p>Would it be reasonable to focus the TRL4 effort in the demonstration of the most practical / safe communication means and have a less focus on the CCS solutions?</p>	
Q 1 4	<p>Hello, As a founder of a start-up I wanted to know if there were any networking, or match making events where I could start building a consortium? My interest is in robotics and automation in the rail sector.</p>	<p>You can use the B2match platform or Partner search in the EU Funding & Tender Portal to find and contact stakeholders that could have similar interest in the call for proposals 2025-02.</p>
Q 1 5	<p>Based on the presentation from the Info Day for this call for proposals, it appears that only one project will be funded (1 for Regional rail services and 1 for Innovation on new approaches) Is that correct?</p>	<p>Yes, as specified in topics HORIZON-JUER-2026FA6/FA7-01 and HORIZON-JUER-2026-FA701, it is expected to fund one project. However, please note that under Horizon Europe rules, calls are competitive by design, and even where a single project is ultimately selected, multiple high-quality proposals are encouraged. This is to ensure the best possible proposal is chosen.</p>
Q 1 6	<p>My company is planning to participate as partner in a consortium for the proposal for the 2026-1 call, which will also include partners of one on-going EU-RAIL project (grant agreement). I am contributing to the proposal as company’s employee, not as independent person. I am not employed/contracted by any of the entities that are part of the on-going EU-RAIL project. At the same time I am an expert contracted by EU-RAIL for the review of the same EU-RAIL project. Could you please confirm is this would lead to a issue regarding the expert’s code of conduct, and in particular a potential conflict of interest?</p>	<p>In accordance with the Horizon Europe Expert Code of Conduct the fact that you are an contracted as an EU-RAIL expert participating in the review of an on-going EU-RAIL project (Grant Agreement) is not considered as a conflict of interest situation that automatically prevents you to participate in the proposal for the 2026-1 call. Nevertheless, as an current EU-RAIL expert, you must act with the highest ethical and moral standards and inform EU-RAIL in case you consider your impartiality as an EU-RAIL expert is compromised during your participation in the proposal for the 2026-1 call.</p> <p>In addition, in case the proposal for the 2026-1 call you are contributing is successful (i.e.: the grant is awarded to the company you are employed or any of the partners involved in the proposal) you will not be able to be contracted by EU-RAIL as an expert in any capacity (evaluator, observer, project review, monitoring etc).</p>