

DECISION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

Approving the ranked lists of innovation actions selected for funding and the list of rejected proposals under the Europe's Rail call for proposals HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-02

N° 04/2026

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 2021 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 24 June 2025, the EU-RAIL Governing Board adopted the Amended Europe's Rail Work Programme 2025-2026 –1st amendment (hereafter WP 2025-2026)¹. This amended WP 2025-2026 was the basis for the launch of the call for proposals HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-02, which was published on the Horizon Europe Funding and Tenders Portal on 8 October 2025 with a deadline of 11 February 2026.
- (2) The call for proposals HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-02 comprised a total of 10 topics open to entities eligible under the general rules of Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025². Each of those topics had its own dedicated budget line.
- (3) In return to its 2025-02 Call for Proposals, the Europe's Rail received 34 proposals for a total estimated value of EUR 390 080 296.33 and a funding request of EUR 206 640 254.68.
- (4) The proposals were verified for their compliance with the admissibility requirements and eligibility conditions of the call. During the verification, it was found that 29 proposals were admissible and eligible. Four proposals were found inadmissible and one proposal was found ineligible. The list and the detailed reasons for inadmissibility and ineligibility of proposals is provided in **Annex 4** of the Decision. As a result, five proposals were declared inadmissible and/or ineligible by EU-RAIL.
- (5) The proposals submitted were evaluated by an evaluation committee composed of independent experts, as set out in Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025 (General Annexes– Part D) and in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the EU-RAIL WP 2025-2026 (Annex VIII). On the basis of this evaluation, amongst the proposals considered admissible and eligible, the experts established a ranking list per topic (**Annex 1** of the Decision). The experts recommended a priority order of proposals having equalled or passed all the award criteria thresholds (i.e.: "excellence", "impact" and "quality and efficiency of the implementation"), as well as a list of proposals not retained

¹https://rail-research.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/GB-Decision_02-25_WP2025-2026_amendment1_Clean-1.pdf

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2023-2024/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf

for funding (**Annex 2** of the Decision) since they did not meet the overall thresholds and/or one or more of the individual thresholds.

- (6) In accordance with the Horizon Europe applicable rules, one independent observer was appointed by EU-RAIL to observe and 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 (**Annex 3** of the Decision) concluded that the evaluation was conducted to a very high standard, demonstrating strong adherence to principles of fairness, transparency, and compliance with the established rules.
- (7) The Governing Board took note and acknowledged the Report of the Executive Director on the outcome of the call for proposals HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-02, which includes the Call Evaluation Report with its annexes, as well as the evaluation summary reports (ESR) which will be attached to the individual notification letters to be sent to the applicants (Annex 8 of the Call Evaluation Report). The full Call Evaluation Report was disclosed to the European Commission, whereas Annexes 8, 10, 11 and 12 of the report were not disclosed to the private Members 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 per topic for the following topics: HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-FA1-TT-01, HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-FA2-01, HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-FA3-01, HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-FA4-01, HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-FA5-01, HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-FA6-01, and HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-ExplR-04; as well as three activities from the following topics: HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-ExplR-01 and HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-ExplR-02, in the ranking order stemming from the independent experts' evaluations (see "Main list" flagged proposals in the "Annex 1: EU ranked list(s)" of the Call Evaluation Report) for an indicative total amount of EUR 147 391 771.49;
 - to consider the unused budget of EUR 808 228.51 (compared to the total budget appropriation of EUR 148 200 000.00) for other operational activities of the JU in 2026 or future years.
 - In addition, considering:
 - the provisions of the Call 2025-02, and
 - the intrinsic link and interdependencies of the proposed Flagship Projects within the Innovation Pillar, System Pillar and Deployment Group activities,to take note of the fact that any substantial misalignment or inconsistency not satisfactorily addressed during the Grant Preparation Phase will be reported back to the Governing Board to establish a possible way forward, including the termination of the preparation phase without signature of the concerned Grant(s).

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The ranked lists pertaining to the call for proposals HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-02 including the lists of actions selected for funding and the reserve list (**Annex 1**), the list of proposals that do not meet the applicable thresholds for funding (**Annex 2**), as well as the list of inadmissible and/or ineligible proposals (**Annex 4**), are approved.

Article 2

The Executive Director shall inform the applicants of the results of the evaluation and shall communicate simultaneously to each of them the relevant evaluation summary reports (ESR), as an attachment to the notification letter. For the actions selected for funding, the notification letter sent by the Executive Director shall invite applicants to start the grant preparation.

Article 4

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 5

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

Done at Brussels, on 9 April 2026.

For the Governing Board



Magda KOPCZYNSKA
The Chairperson

- Annex 1: Ranked lists pertaining to the call for proposals HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-02 including the lists of actions selected for funding and the reserve list.
- Annex 2: List of below threshold proposals pertaining to the call for proposals HORIZON-JU-ER-2025-02.
- Annex 3: Independent Observer's Report.
- Annex 4: List of inadmissible and/or ineligible proposals.