

Research and Enterprise Newsletter (January 2026 edition)

Horizon Europe

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We value your input

Please take a moment to share your thoughts and feedback on our Horizon Europe Special Edition Newsletter. Your insights will help us improve and better serve our community. You can send your feedback to kosta.tabakakis@otago.ac.nz.

1. What's New?

Otago Horizon Europe Digital Assistant Now Live

We are pleased to announce that the **Otago Horizon Europe Digital Assistant** is now live for all University of Otago staff. The tool runs on **Microsoft Copilot within the University's secure M365 environment**, meaning your data remains inside Otago's protected tenant. Staff must be **logged into their University account**, and you should always see the **green shield** confirming you are in the safeguarded version of Copilot.



The Assistant is designed to help you resolve **initial Horizon Europe queries** quickly—covering eligibility, proposal structure, budgeting rules, Open Science, ethics, and post-award processes—while ensuring alignment with Otago’s policies and EU requirements. **Research & Enterprise staff** will, of course, remain fully available to provide personalised support for complex queries and proposal development.

Please remember: Copilot must only be used with documents stored in approved University M365 locations and correctly sensitivity-labelled. **Do not upload or use Copilot with Restricted data**, highly confidential material, unpublished sensitive research data, or information subject to contractual, ethical, or regulatory limits. If unsure, contact cybersecurity@otago.ac.nz.

Access the Digital Assistant here:

https://m365.cloud.microsoft:443/chat/?titleId=T_49f49536-5f5a-fa75-c773-0a0baae015e7&source=embedded-builder

For any questions or feedback on the Digital Assistant, please contact:

kosta.tabakakis@otago.ac.nz

European Partnerships

Opportunities for funding in the **European Partnership for Brain Health (EP-BH)** have opened. Funding will support **multinational and translational research projects**.

This landmark initiative brings together **54 partners across 33 countries** with a commitment of over **€500 million** to advance brain health research over the next decade. We are now inviting ambitious, interdisciplinary research consortia that include New Zealand researchers and community members to apply for funding for **Call 1: Neurological, Mental and Sensory Disorders**.

This call aims to explore how biological, social and environmental factors affect the trajectory of brain health across the lifespan, with a focus on improving prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and care.

Key Information:

- **Applications close:** March 10, 2026
- **Funding Duration:** Up to 3 years
- **Consortium Requirements:** 3-6 research partners from at least 3 different countries
- **Eligibility:** Universities, research institutions, hospitals, SMEs, patient organisations, and more

- **New Zealand specific details and criteria** for 2026 applications are stated here - <https://www.brainhealth-partnership.eu/wp-content/uploads/NationalAnnexesCompiledCall-1.pdf>
 - NZD\$100K to support salary, research costs, travel (but not overheads), must be at a New Zealand organization, Māori Health Advancement statement required and some additional **information to be submitted mid-February** to ep-bh-nz@otago.ac.nz.

Learn More & Apply:

Full details on scope, eligibility criteria, and application guidelines are available at: <https://www.brainhealth-partnership.eu/calls/jtc2026-neurological-mental-sensory-disorders/>

Please be in touch if you have questions.



The poster features the BrainHealth Partnership logo on the left, which includes a stylized brain icon. To the right, it announces 'Coming January 2026: Call for Proposals for Multinational & Translational Research Projects'. The central focus is 'CALL ONE: BIOLOGICAL, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS THAT IMPACT THE TRAJECTORY OF BRAIN HEALTH ACROSS THE LIFESPAN IN THE FIELD OF NEUROLOGICAL, MENTAL AND SENSORY DISORDERS'. This text is surrounded by icons representing a microscope, a globe, a DNA helix, and a group of people. On the right side, there is a graphic of a brain composed of interlocking puzzle pieces in blue, orange, and grey. At the bottom, it states 'Co-funded by the European Union' with the EU flag logo and a small text box: 'This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101259512'.

BE READY Joint Transnational Call 2026 – Pandemic Preparedness

The **European Partnership for Pandemic Preparedness (BE READY)** has launched its **Joint Transnational Call (JTC) 2026**, supporting **international, interdisciplinary research** to strengthen preparedness for future pandemics.

The call aims to advance understanding of **host–pathogen interactions** and disease-driven pathophysiology, with a strong focus on identifying **novel therapeutic and vaccine-relevant**

targets for emerging and re-emerging viruses. Research must be **hypothesis-driven** and aligned with a **One Health** approach. Projects may address specific virus families (including **Coronaviridae, Flaviviridae, Orthomyxoviridae** and others) or take a transferable “**Pathogen X**” approach. Clinical studies and antimicrobial-resistant pathogens are **out of scope**.

Proposals require an **international consortium** of at least **three partners from three participating countries**. **New Zealand is an eligible participating country**, with funding available via the **New Zealand Institute for Public Health and Forensic Science (PHF Science)**. New Zealand institutions may participate in **one consortium only**.

Pre-proposals close 13 April 2026 (13:00 CET).

Projects may run for up to **36 months**, with anticipated starts in **2027**.

🔗 Full call details: <https://beready4pandemics.eu/joint-transnational-calls/>

Please contact your RA if you are interested in applying to calls relating to European Partnerships. Further details on European Partnerships can be found [here](#).

Reminder

Projects in **Cluster 2** (Culture, Creativity & Inclusive Society) and projects relating to **New European Bauhaus** calls will **no longer be eligible for funding through the MBIE Horizon Europe Top-Up funding scheme**.

Horizon Europe – Work Programmes

Official 2026-2027 Horizon Europe Work Programmes (PDFs) can be found [here](#).

Changes to Horizon Europe Application and Evaluation Process

Horizon Implementation day – Novelties in the 2026-2027 Horizon Europe work programme (20 January 2026, recording available [here](#)).

2026 Info Days and Brokerage Events

The European Commission has announced a packed agenda of Horizon Europe Info Days and Brokerage Events for early 2026 – a great opportunity to get insights about upcoming calls and start building strong consortia across Europe. **Recordings will be available for Info Days.**

Cluster 1 – Health

Info Day – 10 February: [link](#)

Brokerage Event – 26–30 January: [link](#)

Cluster 2 – Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society

Info Day – 26 March: [link](#)

Brokerage Event – 25 February: [link](#)

Cluster 3 – Civil Security for Society

Info Day – 4 March (more information coming soon)

Cluster 4 – Digital, Industry and Space

Info Days – 29–30 January: [link](#)

Brokerage Events:

- Speed-Dating Platform (12 Nov 2025 – 15 Apr 2026): [link](#)

- Industry Brokerage Platform (12 Jan – 17 Apr 2026): [link](#)

Cluster 5 – Climate, Energy and Mobility

Info Day – 15 January: [link](#)

Brokerage Event – 14 January: [link](#)

Cluster 6 – Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment

Info Days – 22–23 January: [link](#)

Brokerage Event – 21 January 2026: [link](#)

EU Missions

Info Days – 20–21 January: [link](#)

Brokerage Event – 28–29 January: [link](#)

New European Bauhaus (NEB)

Info Day – 24 February (more information coming soon)

2. What is Horizon Europe

Horizon Europe is the European Union's key funding programme for research and innovation. On 9 July 2023, [New Zealand associated to Pillar II of Horizon Europe](#). This means that New Zealand pays into the Horizon Europe budget, and NZ researchers can participate in project

consortia under similar conditions as EU Member States. The UK, Canada, South Korea and Switzerland. Negotiations are still ongoing between the EU and Singapore.

Benefits of joining Horizon Europe:

- Horizon Europe enables New Zealand researchers and institutions to access significant funding, collaborate with leading global researchers, and contribute to solving major global challenges.
- Being part of Horizon Europe also allows New Zealand to have a voice in shaping global research agendas and policy discussions. As an associated country, New Zealand holds observer status in the Programme Committees which govern Horizon Europe funding and priorities. New Zealand is represented on these Committees by MBIE officials and the Chief Science Advisors.
- At an individual level, participating in Horizon Europe offers significant networking and career development opportunities as well exposure to different research methodologies and perspectives.

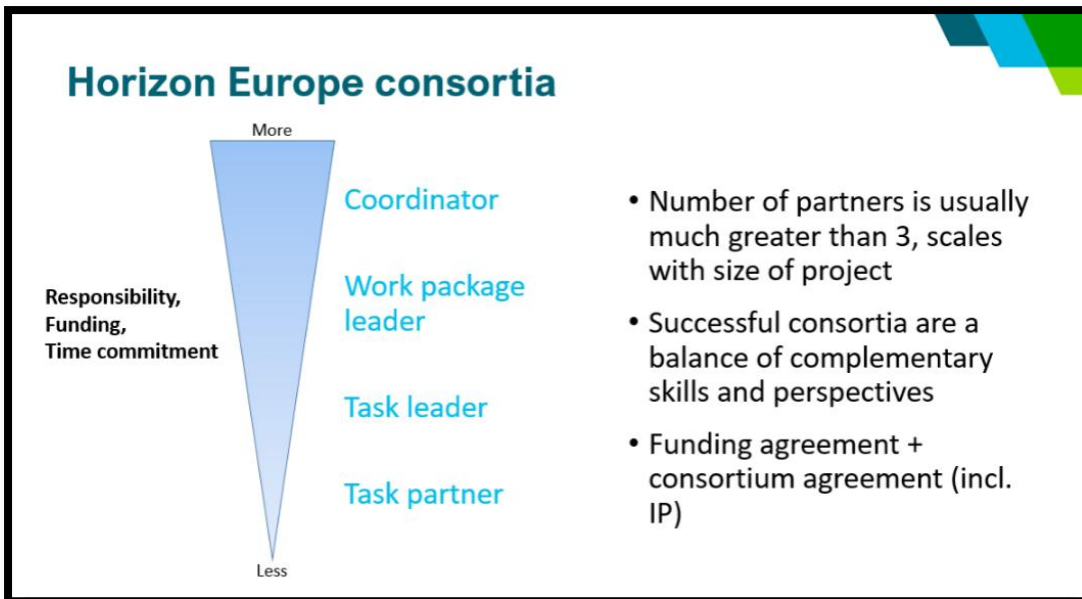
3. Pillar II Key Points

What is Pillar II?

Pillar II of Horizon Europe focuses on science and technologies to address major global challenges, such as climate change, energy and health, with funding of €53.5 billion over the 2021 to 2027 period.

Funding opportunities are organised under 'Work Programmes', grouped by cluster:

- Cluster 1: [Health](#)
 - Cluster 2: [Culture, Creativity and an Inclusive Society](#)
 - Cluster 3: [Civil Security for Society](#)
 - Cluster 4: [Digital, Industry and Space](#)
 - Cluster 5: [Climate, Energy and Mobility](#)
 - Cluster 6: [Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment](#)
-
- **Horizon Europe Pillar II funding is not 'curiosity driven'**, it is highly directed with detailed calls for proposals that require applicants to show how they will address specific listed outcomes and expected impact.



- [Work programmes](#) detail the funding opportunities (calls) available under Horizon Europe. Year on year these do not change significantly, and the 'Clusters' and 'Destinations' remain the same.
- Horizon Europe requires mandatory open access to publications and adherence to open science principles - [Open science - European Commission](#)
- Organisations applying for Horizon Europe funds are required to have a gender equality plan in place. The University of Otago's plan is available on our [website](#).

4. How do I Apply?

Notify your dedicated Research Advisor (RA) that you intend to apply.

1. Create and Update Your Profile:

- You need an online and up-to-date [personal profile](#) to be found by consortia and take full advantage of networking opportunities.
- Register your personal profile by creating an account on the Funding & Tenders (F&T) Portal under "[How to Participate](#)".
- Upload your information from your [ORCID profile](#) to populate your profile information tabs.

2. Eligibility and Consortium Requirements:

- Eligibility for Horizon Europe Pillar II is characterised by “general openness” to consortia, which are multinational and interdisciplinary groups of individuals, research organisations, industry, and/or governments.
- To be funded, you must be part of a consortium comprised of **at least three organisations** representing at least two Associate Members (AM) countries and one Member State (MS). Organisations representing **low and middle-income countries (LMICs)** should also be invited to participate.
- Be mindful of specific eligibility criteria, such as the requirement for law enforcement agencies to be part of a consortium for crime-related calls.

3. **Joining Consortia:**

- Identify and harness your existing network of research contacts in the European Union and abroad.
- Utilise online resources and contestable seed funding available through the Royal Society’s [Catalyst Fund](#) (Leaders and Seeding) if you wish to travel.
- In the [F&T Portal](#), publish “partner search announcements” per call for proposals, allowing others to note your interest and invite you to joint bids.

4. **Accessing Past and Present Projects:**

- Consult [CORDIS](#) Europa to access all past and present Horizon projects and learn what other organisations are doing in your research space.
- [Register to work as an expert](#) and assess proposals to help you network and understand the application process upfront.

5. **Application Process:**

- Notify the Research Office through your dedicated RA when applying to Horizon Europe.
- The application will be submitted through the F&T Portal. The Research Office holds UO's "PIC," a **9-digit Participant Identification Code** needed to participate in a proposal. Use this PIC only with permission from your RA.
- Communicate proactively with your RA to guarantee institutional signoff and full support of your application.

6. **Consortium Coordination:**

- If invited to join a research consortium, ask the “Primary Coordinator Contact” (PCoCo) to nominate you and your RA as a “Participant Contact” (PaCo). This

allows you and your RA to receive pre- and post-award notifications and manage your award through the F&T Portal.

7. Budget and Funding:

- The standard overhead rate for Horizon is 25% on Direct costs. The Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) will top-up the overhead costs shortfall (up to 100% of Direct Costs) if a proposal is successful, **up to NZ\$1.05 million per project**.
- Structure your submission as a fully funded application with a budget including 25% overheads. Your RA will help you prepare the budget and obtain necessary internal approvals.

8. Grant Preparation and Agreement:

- When an application is awarded, liaise with your RA to receive a signed Financial Identification Form and Declaration of Honour.
- Your RA will support you through the Grant Agreement Signature phase and reporting.

9. Searching for Calls for Proposals:

- Look at the Cluster PDF Work Programme documents available [here](#) and select those that interest you. Note potential keywords and run a search on the PDF document using these keywords.
- Check for application deadlines and award budgets associated with each call for proposal.
- Alternatively, identify calls for proposals in the F&T Portal, searching by keyword and using available filters.

10. Partner Search Announcements:

- Where applicable, add your own partner search announcement on the Funding and Tenders portal under the relevant call, with an expertise offer or request.
- Think about your profiles on other platforms and what comes up on a Google search.

5. How can the R & E Team help?

The R & E team is available to support with Horizon Europe (HE) funding in several ways.

Kosta Tabakakis (Research Adviser focused on HE) can help with:

- Navigating the HE Work Programmes and [Funding & Tenders portal](#) to identify potential opportunities based on your research area.
- Introducing you to your National Contact Point (NCP) and setting up a meeting for your research colleagues/group/institute.
- Developing your HE 1-page profile document.
- Facilitating connections with potential project partners in Europe/associated countries and information about networking events for your Cluster (research area).
- Regular updates about HE and forthcoming funding calls.

If you would like to know more, please contact Kosta
(kosta.tabakakis@otago.ac.nz)

As with other funding sources, your [Research Adviser](#) can support with the following:

- Proposal development, proofreading, and final application checks.
- Drafting a budget, including advice about the [MBIE domestic top up scheme for Horizon Europe](#).
- Reviewing consortium agreements/contracts and any variations/amendments.
- Understanding the specific reporting requirements, audits, and financial documentation needed for HE projects.
- Project management support (for HE projects, this primarily takes place within the EU Funding and Tenders portal).
- General advice about university policies and practices.

For a full list of the Research & Enterprise team and related colleagues,
see [Research and Enterprise People](#)

6. National Contact Points

The National Contact Points (NCPs) provide guidance, practical information, assistance on building research consortia, and all aspects of participation in Horizon Europe. NCPs details can be found on the MBIE Horizon Europe [website](#).

Take the time to communicate with the **NCP assigned to your Cluster or area of interest** by sending a copy of your completed 1-page profile.

7. Events

Details on **upcoming events** can be found [here](#) on the European Commission's website.

Keep an on the events page for upcoming *info days* and *brokerage events*.

The Horizon Europe **Info Days** provide prospective applicants and other stakeholders of EU research and innovation the opportunity to get information and ask questions about the main funding instruments, processes of Horizon EU per programme Cluster. You can attend these online.

The Horizon Europe **Brokerage Events** provide unique opportunities for Horizon Europe proposers to find partners, discuss project ideas, stay informed, and build networks. Brokerage events can be in person-only, online-only or hybrid (in-person and online).

Previous Events

Links to recordings and slides can be found on the R & E Horizon Europe UO Researcher Support MS Teams channel [here](#) (under Key Resources). Please liaise with your RA if you require access.

8. University of Otago Horizon Europe Researcher Register

Please complete the following table and email it to your dedicated RA if you would like to be added to the register to receive key updates from the Research Office.

First name	
Last name	
Department	
Division	

Research expertise (up to five keywords)	
Early career	Yes/No (delete one)
Horizon Europe Pillar II Readiness level (started working on bid)	Yes/No (delete one)
Pillar II (Global Challenges) cluster(s)	List here
Horizon 2020 or Horizon Europe Funding experience	Yes/No (delete one)
EU External collaborating institutions (previous and current)	List here if applicable
I would like access to the Horizon Europe – UO Researcher Support MS Teams channel. <i>Your RA will send you the link.</i>	Yes/No (delete one)

9. University of Otago Horizon Europe MS Teams Channel

A collaborative space designed specifically for university academics and researchers seeking guidance and support for submissions related to Horizon Europe Pillar II. It aims to provide a supportive environment where individuals can exchange insights, ask questions, receive guidance, and stay updated on the latest information and best practices related to Horizon Europe funding opportunities.

10. Decision Tree

