March 2026

Horizon Europe Newsletter

Dear colleagues,

The 2026-2027 Horizon Europe Work Programme is well underway. Canadians are collaborating with their European and other international counterparts as part of interdisciplinary consortia and contributing their world-class talent and expertise to solve global challenges.

In this edition of the newsletter, we are excited to detail the role of Canada's National Contact Point (NCP) network and share their insights for a competitive Horizon Europe (HE) proposal. We have also included new Canadian success stories including projects relating to artificial intelligence, health and agriculture. At the end of the newsletter, you will find a list of upcoming events, links to previous webinar recordings and an updated applicant toolkit.

If you are not already registered, please consider subscribing to our email distribution list for regular program updates, including upcoming webinars, matchmaking events and applicant resources. Please feel free to share this newsletter with your network.

Best regards,

Canadian Horizon Europe Secretariat
Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) Canada
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What's in the newsletter?

Use the links below to navigate across the different featured content of this edition of the Horizon Europe newsletter!

- Canada's National Contact Point (NCP) Network
- Insights from Canadian Horizon Europe Participants
- Upcoming Events and Webinars
- Horizon Europe Applicant Toolkit

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Canada's Horizon Europe National Contact Points

The Canadian National Contact Point (NCP) network was established soon after Canada's association to Pillar 2 of Horizon Europe in 2024. The Canadian NCP network is comprised of subject matter experts from different federal departments and agencies. They are equipped with the program knowledge and technical expertise to help you navigate the program (e.g., identify relevant calls and destinations), find partners, and the corresponding opportunities to expand your research and innovations.

The Canadian NCP network and their international counterparts regularly collaborate with the Canadian HE Secretariat and Canadian Trade Commissioner Service. Together, these collaborative networks promote the funding and collaboration opportunities under HE and facilitate the formation of interdisciplinary partnerships through focused matchmaking events.

For general inquiries and the administrative components of the program, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Canadian HE Secretariat at horizoneurope@ised-isde.gc.ca.

NCP TIP CORNER

We asked the Canadian NCP Network to share their tips and tricks for a competitive HE proposal. We have consolidated their best tips and tricks below!

If you were to give one piece of guidance to an applicant, what would it be?

- We encourage applicants to start early and carefully review the call text. Successful proposals clearly demonstrate strong alignment with the objectives and expected outcomes for each call.
- Engage with consortiums well in advance of the proposal deadline. Early engagement not only helps clarify eligibility requirements but also increases the chances of finding appropriate and complementary partners to strengthen the proposal and collaboration outcomes.
- Ensure that you are using the correct proposal template for your application. Horizon Academy has annotated templates that can help navigate the different components of the application.

How can Canadian applicants best engage with you?

- Canadian applicants can find their cluster specific NCP contact information here: Horizon Europe contact information. If you have specific questions or would like to generally learn about the different thematic clusters of HE, please contact your cluster-specific NCP by email.

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Insights from Canadian Horizon Europe Participants

Since 2024, Canadian organizations have been awarded funding and have participated in HE Pillar 2 consortia. As members of interdisciplinary consortia, Canadian researchers and innovators are contributing their knowledge and expertise in common Canada-EU priority areas such as artificial intelligence, health, and agriculture.

The Canadian HE Secretariat has invited successful Canadian organizations to tell us about their project, share their experience, and provide insights to prospective applicants. We are fortunate to hear about their motivations for applying, challenges they have overcome and their tips for other Canadians interested in applying to HE.

To learn more about each project, please click the project title to access its CORDIS profile. If you have success stories to share, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Secretariat at horizoneurope@ised-isde.gc.ca.

An agentic, multi-layer, GenAI-powered backbone to make an AI system explainable, accountable and transparent

Cluster: Digital, Industry and Space
Thematic Area: Artificial Intelligence
Country Collaborators: Canada, Greece, Spain, Netherlands, United Kingdom, France, Sweden, Bulgaria, Cyprus

The Vector Institute is a globally renowned artificial intelligence institute, based in Toronto, Ontario. It brings together researchers, industry partners, and advanced computing/engineering capabilities to advance AI application, adoption and commercialization across Canada. The testimonial below highlights the work and insights of Dr. Shaina Raza and the AIXPERT consortium.

What prompted your decision to apply to HE?

"The Vector Institute (Vector) was invited to join the AIXPERT consortium on the basis of our advanced technical capabilities in artificial intelligence (AI) trust and safety. The dedicated work and global reputation of our Applied Machine Learning Scientist, Shaina Raza, PhD, has been a distinguishing factor, as is Vector's core capability in developing practical tools and production-ready implementations. Beyond technical strength, Canada and Europe share fundamental values around Responsible AI and democratic governance. As the sole Canadian partner in a grouping of European countries, we recognized the potential for meaningful transatlantic

collaboration on critical challenges. In essence, the combination of technical excellence, quality partners and the values-alignment made this compelling beyond the research opportunity itself."

Which aspect of your participation are you most proud?

"Impact. The consortium isn't just citing our papers; they are using our code. We have delivered practical tools that partners are actively deploying, not only theoretical frameworks. For instance, at an external review, an independent evaluator specifically highlighted Vector's role in the project's success. This external validation confirms that when European partners need to move from concept to execution on responsible AI, they can rely on Vector to bring production-ready solutions that work in real-world conditions. As such, we're demonstrating that you can operationalize responsible AI at scale, and AIXPERT is evidence of that commitment."

What is one program obstacle that surprised you and how did you overcome it?

"Time zones. Coordinating between Canada and multiple European countries meant someone was always working outside ideal hours. We solved it through communication transparency and flexibility, asynchronous updates, rotating meeting times, and clear documentation so no one was in the dark. Consortia are inherently complex, but this one works because of mission alignment and mutual respect. When everyone genuinely values each contribution, you find solutions. The time zone challenge actually strengthened our collaboration. We became more intentional about communication and inclusive in decision-making. What started as an obstacle became a driver of better practices. Shared values matter, especially when logistics get complicated."

If you were to give one tip to an aspiring applicant, what would it be?

"Don't optimize for application success, optimize for impact. Do work that matters, then share it widely. Open source your code. Present at conferences. Publish where practitioners will see it. Vector didn't "apply" to AIXPERT. We were invited because our work in responsible AI is visible and valuable. The best opportunities don't come from chasing calls; they come from building a reputation. Be generous with your knowledge and solve real problems. Make your work accessible. When you're doing something genuinely useful and people know about it, partnerships will find you. And when time comes to submit an application, most of the real work will have already been done."

Quantifying atrial fibrillation burden to inform screening, treatment, and health policy

Cluster: Health
Thematic Area: Health Economics, Health Data Sets
Country Collaborators: Canada, Germany, Netherlands, France, Switzerland, Denmark, Poland

McMaster University is one of Canada's most research-intensive universities, based in Hamilton, Ontario. It offers world-class research infrastructures and facilities, fosters interdisciplinary research, and supports entrepreneurship. The testimonial below highlights the work and insights of Dr. William F. McIntyre and the AF-B-STEP consortium.

What prompted your decision to apply to HE?

"Atrial fibrillation (AF) research has entered a phase where no single centre, country, or sector can answer the most important questions alone. The rapid evolution of monitoring technologies, consumer devices, and data platforms means that meaningful progress now depends on collaboration across borders and disciplines. I was motivated by the opportunity to help build a network that connects academic investigators, industry partners, and patient representatives in a shared effort to define clinically useful standards. International collaboration allows us to move beyond siloed datasets and toward harmonized approaches that can truly influence practice."

What aspect of your participation are you most proud of?

"I am most proud of helping to build bridges — between countries, between academia and industry, and between researchers and patients. Creating an environment where diverse partners can contribute expertise while working toward a common clinical goal is both challenging and deeply rewarding. I am particularly proud that we are fostering a culture of openness and responsiveness, one that allows the scientific direction to adapt as new data, technologies, and insights emerge."

What is one program obstacle that surprised you and how did you overcome it?

"One of the key challenges is that the field of AF research is evolving rapidly. Device technologies change, definitions evolve, and data are often collected for purposes that were never originally aligned with emerging research questions. Rather than seeing this as a limitation, we have approached it as an opportunity. Through structured dialogue with partners and careful methodological work, we are finding ways to harmonize and reinterpret existing datasets so they can answer new, clinically relevant questions. Flexibility and continuous communication within the consortium have been critical."

If you were to give one tip to an aspiring applicant, what would it be?

"Invest in relationships as much as in research design. Large-scale scientific progress increasingly depends on trusted networks that span countries, sectors, and perspectives — including patient voices. It is also important to recognize the latent value within the data we have already collected. Many transformative insights come not from new data alone, but from re-examining existing datasets through collaborative and interdisciplinary lenses."

Agriculture of Data (AgData)

Cluster: Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment
Thematic Area: Agriculture, Digital Technologies, Sustainability
Country Collaborators: Canada, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, France, Italy, Romania, Belgium, Portugal, and many others.

The University of Guelph is a top-ranked Canadian university recognized for their expertise in veterinary medicine, agriculture, and hospitality management. The testimonial below highlights the work and insights of Dr. Rozita Dara and the AgData consortium.

What prompted your decision to apply to HE?

"My decision to apply for Horizon Europe funding was driven by the urgent need to address critical issues within the agricultural data landscape. The opportunity to collaborate with my existing partners in Europe, as well as within the Agriculture of Data consortium, perfectly aligned with my research goals. I wanted to leverage innovative strategies and interdisciplinary approaches to tackle the challenges associated with agri-food data and artificial intelligence technologies. Furthermore, Horizon Europe's emphasis on international collaboration offered a valuable chance to share insights and enhance the impact of research at the University of Guelph, which made it an appealing opportunity for both my team and the University of Guelph."

Which aspect of your participation are you most proud?

"I am most proud of the collaborative spirit within the Agriculture of Data consortium and the potential impact this consortium can have on adoption of artificial intelligence technologies in agriculture and food systems. Working alongside diverse experts from 60+ organizations from various fields will enhance our understanding of data governance issues, artificial intelligence applications, and ethical practices in agriculture. The ability to contribute to the development of best practices and frameworks that can be utilized in Canada, Europe and beyond is incredibly fulfilling. It is incredibly fulfilling to know that our work has the potential to drive meaningful change in the agri-food sector."

What is one program obstacle that surprised you and how did you overcome it?

"One obstacle that surprised me was the complexity involved in managing large funding programs. I didn't anticipate how time-consuming the process would be, particularly when it came to finalizing research agreements and ensuring all partners were aligned with the project objectives. Coordinating with multiple stakeholders often led to delays, which put our timelines and project milestones at risk. Managing such a large consortium requires significant effort and time from both the consortium staff and the institutions involved, such as the staff at the University of Guelph. This collaborative dynamic can be challenging, but I am very grateful for the support and dedication from everyone involved."

If you were to give one tip to an aspiring applicant, what would it be?

"My key tip for aspiring applicants is to invest time in building strong partnerships and networks before even aiming for a Horizon Europe call and well before submitting your proposal. Engage with potential collaborators early in the process to understand their expertise and how it aligns with your project goals. This collaborative approach can significantly enhance your proposal's strength by creating a well-rounded team committed to tackling the objectives outlined in the call. A solid network can provide valuable insights and support that lead to a successful application."

Tuberculosis Antimicrobial Stewardship Program: Tackling bedaquiline-resistant tuberculosis

Cluster: Health – EDCTP3 Partnership
Thematic Area: Global Health, Antibiotic Resistance
Country Collaborators: Canada, Belgium, Nigeria, Mozambique, Netherlands, Benin, Rwanda, South Africa, and Sweden

The University of Toronto has achieved top ranks in research, sustainability and entrepreneurship. The testimonial below highlights the work and insights of Dr. Jeffrey Siegel and the TASP consortium.

What prompted your decision to apply to HE?

"If I am being honest, it fell in my lap. A researcher at the lead institution (Institute for Tropical Medicine in Antwerp) was looking for someone expertise that matched my own and invited me to participate. They found me through my professional network, my published work, and a certain amount of luck. I was excited by the science and the innovation in the project and the genuine interest that the other participants (who were mostly from medicine and public health) showed in my engineering research and approach. Also, the project builds upon work my team has done before but expands its utility and potential applications and so it is exciting to contribute."

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Which aspect of your participation are you most proud?

"I am going to cheat and give two aspects. The first is that the reviewer comments on the second-round proposal specifically acknowledged the engineering aspects that are associated with my contributions and their importance to the likely success of the project. The second is that we are working collaboratively with the partners in Africa to ensure that all the project design, data collection, analysis, and ultimately control is with local personnel and partners."

What is one program obstacle that surprised you and how did you overcome it?

"Our project involves a lead institution and three others in Europe, seven partners in Africa, and myself in Canada. There are five work packages in the proposal that are aligned around a general theme, but also with substantial differences in approach and expertise/participants. There are a lot of personalities, incentives, and organizational cultures/approaches. Although perhaps not surprising or specific to Horizon Europe, the importance of relationship building and listening is both time consuming and critical to the success of the project."

If you were to give one tip to an aspiring applicant, what would it be?

"Work with partners who have expertise with Horizon Europe. Past experience, particularly with project planning, management, and documentation have aspects that are specific to Horizon Europe, is crucial for successful applications. Even experience with the pillars and the different funding calls is an important aspect of the Horizon Europe landscape. Even though my part in the overall project is small, I am trying to learn from my experience on this project to build future applications and proposals."

If you have success stories to share, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Secretariat at horizoneurope@ised-isde.gc.ca.

Upcoming Horizon Europe Events & Webinars

Information Sessions

Looking to learn more about Horizon Europe and its technical aspects? Check out the events below:

- **March 6 - April 8, 2026:** Application period for Mitacs' International Mobility Award.
- **March 23, 2026**: The European Commission(EC) is hosting a webinar on consortium agreements with a focus on intellectual property rights and internal reporting.
- **March 26, 2026**: The EC is hosting a Cluster 2 info day and question-and-answer (Q&A) session to discuss the funding and collaboration opportunities under the 2026-2027 Work Programme.
- **March 29, 2026:** Final day to submit a draft proposal for feedback from the NCP4Industry Network. This is a free service being offered to coordinators planning to submit a proposal in select Cluster 4 Industry calls. Register using the following link.
- **May 22, 2026:** Deadline to apply for Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's Destination Horizon Grant.
- **June 1 – 2, 2026:** Net4Society (Cluster 2 NCP Network) is hosting an in-person matchmaking event for 2026 Cluster 2 calls in Paris. Register using this link.

Past Webinar Recordings

- **European Commission Info Day Recordings:** Provides tips and tricks for high quality proposals, including the policy context behind each call.
- **Delegation of the EU to Canada YouTube Page:** Includes recordings of previous information sessions such as the introduction to HE clusters, collaboration opportunities with the EU's Joint Research Centre and best practices for proposal preparation.
- **Health NCP Network (HHN) – Webinar: From Idea to Winning Proposal**: Provides tips and tricks on preparing competitive Cluster 1 – Health proposals.
- **European IP Helpdesk – Consortium Agreement Webinar**: Provides an overview of consortium agreements, who signs them, and shares existing model agreements.
- **European Commission – Lump Sum Funding in HE**: Provides an overview of lump sum funding and how to prepare lump sump proposals.

The Secretariat regularly organizes webinars and matchmaking events. Stay up to date with all things HE by visiting our website and subscribing to our distribution list.

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Horizon Europe Applicant Toolkit

Toolkit Essentials

> **NEW!** The Secretariat has recently published *__Applicant how-tos__*, answering frequently asked questions to help you navigate the program. Check them out!

- **ISED HE Website:** Dedicated webpage for Canadians navigating HE with an overview of the programme, applicant resources, and NCP contact information.
- **HE Glossary**: Explains the general HE concepts and terminology.
- **HE Annotated Grant Agreement**: Reference document for grant administration policies (e.g., reporting, auditing and other legal and financial topics).
- **HE Annotated Templates**: NCP annotated templates to craft a competitive proposal.
- **HE Legal, Financial, and Administrative Rules**: Guide prepared by Horizon Academy
- **Horizon Academy**: Publicly accessible portal for NCPs with training modules, event information and applicant tools.
- **CORDIS:** Database of EU funded research with project descriptions (e.g., coordinator, participating countries, funding and grant timelines).

Navigating Horizon Europe – Key Support Resources

- **Canada's National Contact Point (NCP) Network:** NCPs offer both sector specific and program expertise to Canadian applicants.
- **Canadian HE Secretariat Inbox**: Provides guidance on general eligibility requirements, and the financial and administrative components of Pillar 2 of Horizon Europe
- **European Enterprise Network (EEN)**: It is the world's largest network helping startups, small and medium-sized enterprises and researchers connect internationally, with more than 3,000 experts in over 60 countries.
  - EEN offers concrete tools such as partner search profiles, sector-focused groups and cooperation databases that help organizations identify European partners for research, innovation and business projects. The European Canadian Centre for Innovation and Research (ECCIR) coordinates the network in Canada.
- **EURAXESS North America:** Promotes European research and innovation opportunities in Canada and the United States and provide expert insights on Pillar 1 programs.
- **EU Funding & Tenders Research Enquiry Service**: Dedicated service for questions regarding EU research and funding and account-related questions.
- **European IP Helpdesk:** Provides free-of-charge support to small and medium-sized enterprises and beneficiaries of EU-funded projects to manage their intellectual property