EU support for researchers and digital innovators

The Commission offers a range of support to researchers and digital innovators, from programmes such as Horizon Europe to innovation funding and more.

The European Union (EU) is the world’s largest scientific powerhouse. It accounts for almost a third of all global science and technology production. It is now working to ensure ideas from researchers and digital innovators become successful products and technologies.

One of the EU’s targets for the digital decade is to encourage research and innovation. It aims to double the number of EU unicorns – companies that reach a value of $1 billion without being listed on the stock market. And, it wants to keep growing innovative scale-ups throughout the 2020s.

Therefore, the EU is supporting researchers and digital innovators through programmes such as:

- Horizon Europe
- New Innovation Agenda
- European Innovation Council
- Innovation Radar

Keep reading to find out more about each of these initiatives.

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Horizon Europe is the EU’s biggest ever research and innovation programme, with a budget of €95 billion for 2021-2027 - not including public and private investments the projects attract.

Its funding has helped individuals and groups achieve breakthroughs and discoveries, such as pictures of black holes in space and world-firsts in laboratories like funding BioNTech for their COVID-19 mRNA vaccine. And, it is helping to bring these ideas from the lab to the market.

Horizon Europe focuses on research and innovation in a number of areas, including:

- AI and robotics
- Next generation internet
- High performance computing
• Big data
• Key digital technologies
• 6G

Funding opportunities for Horizon Europe are listed on the dedicated funding and tenders page (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-search;callCode=null;freeTextSearchKeyword=;matchWholeText=true;typeCodes=1;statusCodes=31094501,31094502,31094503;programmePeriod=2021 - 2027;programCcm2Id=43108390;programDivisionCode=null;focusAreaCode=null;destination=null;mission=null;geographicalZonesCode=null;programmeDivisionProspect=null;startDateLte=null;startDateGte=null;crossCuttingPriorityCode=null;cpvCode=null;performanceOfDelivery=null;sortQuery=sortBy;orderBy=asc;onlyTenders=false;topicListKey=topicSearchTablePageState). Direct advice is available through National Contact Points (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/ncp) for the Horizon Europe programme. National contact points provide guidance on:

1. choosing relevant Horizon Europe topics and types of action;
2. administrative procedures and contractual issues;
3. training and assistance on proposal writing;
4. distribution of documentation, such as forms, guidelines and manuals;
5. searching for partners.

The Horizon results platform (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/horizon-results-platform) advertises around 1,350 project results, helping to match them with partners, investors in cutting edge technology, and finding licencing agreements.

A New European Innovation Agenda

A New European Innovation Agenda (https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/support-policy-making/shaping-eu-research-and-innovation-policy/new-european-innovation-agenda_en) will put Europe at the forefront of deep-tech innovation and start-ups. It aims to help Europe develop new technologies to address pressing societal challenges. It will improve access to finance for start-ups and scale-ups and improve conditions to allow innovators to experiment.

Moreover, the European Innovation Agenda will create ‘regional innovation valleys’ to strengthen and connect innovation players in Europe, including in regions lagging behind. It will also help to attract and retain talent through training and support.

European Innovation Council

The European Innovation Council (EIC) is an ambitious initiative to turn science into business. It offers grants and equity to small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) and start-ups, with the aim of supporting breakthrough innovations from early-stage research to proof of concept, technology transfer, and scale-up.

The EIC itself offers funding for innovators such as entrepreneurs, companies and researchers. They can receive funding of up to €2.5 million to enable them to develop impactful and scalable projects. Meanwhile, funding of up to €4 million can be used to enable partners from different parts of the EU
to develop innovative ideas together.

The new EIC Equity Fund (https://eic.ec.europa.eu/investment-opportunities_en) provides equity from €0.5-€15 million for breakthrough innovation companies selected for the EIC Accelerator blended finance support.

There is a range of other support options for researchers and digital innovators on the EIC Community Platform (https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-communities/eic-community-platform_en).

**Innovation Radar**

The Innovation Radar (https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/innovation-radar) identifies innovations with a high-potential and key innovators in EU-funded projects. It showcases achievements of EU innovation funding and helps people connect with innovators who have the potential to replicate the successes of other European companies who received EU funding, such as Skype, TomTom and ARM Holdings.

**AI and Robotics**
Next Generation Internet
High performance computing
Data and cloud computing
Advanced Digital Technologies

Follow the latest progress and learn more about getting involved.
Follow the Commission's work on tech and digital @DigitalEU (https://twitter.com/DigitalEU)

Related Content

Big Picture


The EU’s long-term EU budget, also known as the multiannual financial framework, will boost digital technologies and aid in recovery from the pandemic.

See Also

EU support for the digital public sector
The Commission wants to ensure the public sector is able to keep pace with new technologies and benefit from innovation.

**EU support for education and training**

The Commission offers a number of education and training opportunities to help you get started in digital, such as entrepreneurship guidance, exchanges and more.

**EU support for businesses in the digital world**

The EU offers a range of support for businesses, from start-ups to scale-ups to small and medium enterprises and beyond. You can find out more on this page.

**The Digital Europe Programme**

The Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL) is a new EU funding programme focused on bringing digital technology to businesses, citizens and public administrations.

**Connecting Europe Facility - CEF Digital**

The digital part of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF Digital) will support and catalyse both public and private investments in digital connectivity infrastructures between 2021 and 2027.