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ANNEX

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*to the*

**Commission Decision**

**approving the work programme 2026 of the European Innovation Council and SMEs  
Executive Agency**

# Annual work programme 2026

European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive  
Agency (EISMEA)

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# FOREWORD. Message from the Director

In 2026, EISMEA will continue to support the political priorities of its parent DGs by implementing ambitious programmes that aim to drive forward competitiveness and innovation with a strong focus on start-ups and SMEs.

## **Pioneering transformative innovation**

The agency will launch a new pilot EIC Advanced Innovation Challenges under Horizon Europe to support high-risk, demand-driven deep tech innovation with transformative potential, while continuing to manage calls under the EIC Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP) to stimulate groundbreaking innovation in strategic technologies.

The annual EIC Summit on 3-4 June 2026 will showcase tangible evidence of the EIC's impact, cementing the programme's place in the heart of the European deep-tech eco-system.

## **Scaling up innovation across regions**

EISMEA will support the EU's startup and scaleups strategy through both the EIC and European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE), with the latter launching calls centred on competitiveness-driven topics, including the European startup and scaleup hubs pilot. At the same time, the agency continues to provide support for Ukrainian tech SMEs and startups.

Supporting the New European Innovation Agenda, the agency will continue implementing the Regional Innovation Valleys projects (funded under Horizon Europe and the I3 Instrument) promising to accelerate innovation in connected regional innovation ecosystems across the EU.

## **Supporting SMEs, strengthening the Single Market and consumers' rights**

The agency will focus on unleashing the full potential of the Single Market through its three flagships [Enterprise Europe Network](#) (EEN), [Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs](#) (EYE), [Joint Cluster Initiatives](#) (EUROCLUSTERS), while continuing its support of consumer organisations and bodies.

## **Building up an efficient and purpose-driven agency**

Internally, EISMEA will continue to enhance its environmental responsibility through implementing its greening strategy, and build on staff engagement through initiatives such as staff visits to local beneficiaries, fostering a greater understanding of the impact of EISMEA's work.

# PART 1. Mission statement

## **From ideas to global markets: Innovation made in Europe.**

The European Innovation Council and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Executive Agency ([EISMEA](#)) was established on 1 April 2021 <sup>(1)</sup>. With a focus on innovation and the single market, it will create strong synergies to support the recovery, strengthening and twin transition of the European economy. The agency has been entrusted with the implementation of the following (parts of) Union programmes:

- [Horizon Europe, pillar III](#): the [European Innovation Council \(EIC\)](#) and [European Innovation Ecosystems \(EIE\)](#);
- [European Regional Development Fund](#): Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) Instrument;
- [Single Market Programme: SME Pillar](#); [Internal market](#); [support to standardisation](#); and [Consumer Protection Pillar](#).

By implementing these programmes and specific delegated tasks <sup>(2)</sup>, the agency will help unleash the full potential of the single market and contribute to reaching the European Commission's objective of a new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness. In particular, it will help to make sure that Europe's open strategic autonomy is ensured and contribute to the objectives of the STEP Regulation <sup>(3)</sup> to stimulate investments in critical technologies.

EISMEA's mission is to provide high quality support to European innovators, researchers, businesses, regions and consumers. We aim to reinforce the European Union's position as a global leader in Research and Innovation, strengthen its Single Market, open up opportunities for SMEs and maintain high standards of protection for its citizens towards a more competitive, digital, green and inclusive EU.

The agency implements its mission in close cooperation with its six parent DGs who are represented on EISMEA's Steering Committee:

- DG Research and Innovation (DG RTD),
- DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CONNECT),
- DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW),
- DG Justice and Consumers (DG JUST), DG Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) and
- DG Mobility and Transport (MOVE).

It also benefits from the presence of Secretariat-General (SG) and of Directorate A of DG RTD as Observers in the Steering Committee. This close cooperation is essential not only for programme implementation tasks but also for the feedback the agency provides to the Commission in view of the latter's policy tasks.

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<sup>(1)</sup> COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2021/173 of 12 February 2021

<sup>(2)</sup> Article 4 and annexes Commission Decision C(2021)949 final, amended by C(2023) 4256 final

<sup>(3)</sup> Regulation (EU) 2024/795

# PART 2. Key performance indicators

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OVERVIEW

### 1) EFFICIENT PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

SOURCE OF DATA: EISMEA (UNIT C.01)



#### TIME TO GRANT<sup>(1)</sup>



#### % OF BUDGET EXECUTION

#### BASELINE (2025)

85.4% of grants signed within deadlines<sup>(2)</sup>

operational budget: 100% (commitments & payments)<sup>(3)</sup>

#### TARGET (2026)

100% of grants signed within deadlines.

operational budget: 100% (commitments & payments).

### 2) SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

SOURCE OF DATA: EISMEA (UNIT C.01)



#### TIMELY PAYMENTS<sup>(4)</sup>

#### BASELINE (2025)<sup>(5)</sup>

96% of payments within legal deadlines (administrative budget).

98% of payments within legal deadlines (operational budget).

#### TARGET (2026)

100% of payments within legal deadlines (administrative and operational budget).

100% of payments within legal deadlines (administrative and operational budget).

### 3) POLICY SUPPORT IMPACT OF EIC PROGRAMME MANAGERS' F2P WORKSHOPS

SOURCE OF DATA: EISMEA (UNIT 01)

#### BASELINE (2024)<sup>(6)</sup>

One thematic workshop per year per PM.

#### MID-TERM (2025)

One thematic workshop per year per PM.

#### TARGET (2027)

One thematic workshop per year per PM.



SATISFACTION RATE<sup>(7)</sup>  
(usefulness of feedback to policy)

89%



SATISFACTION RATE

90%



SATISFACTION RATE

above 80%

### 4) ROBUST INTERNAL CONTROL

SOURCE OF DATA: EISMEA 2023 AAR (TEAM C-CONTROL)



#### BASELINE (2025)

Overall risk at closure

3,20%

#### TARGET (2026)

Overall risk at closure

< 2% of relevant expenditure.

#### TARGET (2027)<sup>(9)</sup>

HIGHER LEVELS OF SATISFACTION BY CLIENT GROUP / PROGRAMME.

### 5) % OF SATISFIED CLIENTS

SOURCE OF DATA: EISMEA CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

#### BASELINE (2023)<sup>(8)</sup>

EIC PRIZES APPLICANTS  
53.1%

GRANT APPLICANTS  
63.8%

COACHES  
71.9%

EIC PRIZES AWARDEES  
74.5%

TENDERERS & CONTRACTORS  
78%

BENEFICIARIES  
83.2%

EXPERTS  
91%

(1) In addition to time to grant, indicators 'time to inform' and 'time to sign' will be used (and reported on).

(2) Source: Compass report

(3) Source: SUMMA budget implementation dashboard – expiring budget

(4) In value

(5) Source: SUMMA payment times dashboard

(6) Indicator agreed in 2023 (previous indicator concerned EIC Board – these tasks were repatriated to the Commission in 2023)

(7) Measured via a survey of participants

(8) EISMEA client satisfaction survey conducted in 2023 (mid-term)

(9) Survey to be conducted at end of mandate (2027)

# PART 3. Delivering on the Commission's priorities: main outputs for 2026

## Horizon Europe

As part of [Horizon Europe](#) – the EU's research and innovation framework programme – pillar 3 (Innovative Europe), the agency will implement actions under [European Innovation Council](#) and [European Innovation Ecosystems](#).

By implementing these actions EISMEA will help accelerate the conversion of emerging research into transformative innovation that is commercialised and scaled up in the EU, while strengthening digital and frontier technologies for Europe's strategic autonomy. In doing so, EISMEA will contribute to the European Commission's objective 'A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness.'

## European Innovation Council (EIC)

The EIC aims to support the rapid scale up of innovative technologies and companies (mainly start-ups and SMEs) at EU and international level. It is organised into three main funding schemes:

- the [EIC Pathfinder](#) for advanced research to develop the scientific basis to underpin breakthrough technologies;
- the [EIC Transition](#) to validate and test technologies and plan a pathway to market; and
- the [EIC Accelerator](#) to help companies bring their innovations to market and scale up.

The financial support is complemented with access to **Business Acceleration Services (BAS)**. In addition, EIC **prizes** and other related actions, provide complementary support to promising innovators. As well as implementing this funding and support, EISMEA also supports the European Commission in its coordination of the activities of the [EIC Board](#).

## EIC Programme Managers

The priorities of the EIC Programme Managers for 2026 are as follows:

- Handover of EIC portfolios from six outgoing Programme Managers whose contract with EISMEA will end in 2026 to six new Programme Managers.
- Awareness-raising of the Challenges of the EIC Work Programme 2026 among potential applicants, helping to build a community that can respond to the relevant calls for proposals. Activities include the (co-)organisation of info days: the EIC WP 2026 Challenges developed by the Programme Managers for Pathfinder, Advanced Innovation and Accelerator Challenges, as well as workshops and engagement with national contact points (NCP).

- Development of Challenges for the EIC Work Programme 2027 in collaboration with the parent DGs.
- Pro-active portfolio management for 25 Pathfinder Challenges coming from the 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 Work Programmes, including the development and update of their respective portfolio strategy plans.
- Participation in selection panels and juries for Pathfinder, Transition, Advanced Innovation and Accelerator topics coming from the Work Programme 2026.
- Feedback to policy workshops with relevant DGs will be run by each Programme Manager with relevant policy DGs and their impact measured via satisfaction surveys (see KPI table above).
- Contribution to the EIC Impact Report and EIC Tech Report 2026.

## EIC Pathfinder

The [EIC Pathfinder](#) offers grants to achieve proof of principle and validate the scientific basis of breakthrough technology. EIC Pathfinder projects are characterised by their interdisciplinary / multidisciplinary nature. In 2026, the agency will launch one “Open” call and three “Challenges” (thematic calls) in the following areas:

- Advanced Materials for Miniaturised Energy Harvesting Systems,
- Biotechnology for Healthy Ageing,
- DeepRAP: Deep Reasoning, Abstraction & Planning towards trustworthy Cognitive AI Systems.

These calls will offer grants up to EUR 4 million (Open and Challenges), or more if duly justified.

Put together, the calls will help accelerate the conversion of emerging research into transformative innovation that is commercialised and scaled up in the EU, while strengthening digital and frontier technologies for Europe’s strategic autonomy.

In addition, the agency will implement the 443 projects selected under the EIC Pathfinder calls within Horizon Europe to date as well as the related legacy activities of the Horizon 2020 Programme Future and Emerging Technologies (FET) – around 95 grants. The agency will amend a number of EIC Pathfinder projects by adding participants from widening countries that were selected via the [“Hop-on facility”](#) call.

Further information is available in the annexed [EIC Pathfinder performance table](#).

## EIC Transition

The [EIC Transition](#) funds innovation activities that go beyond the experimental proof of principle in laboratory. It targets research teams, established SMEs and spin-off companies willing to bring closer to the market research results stemming from Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe eligible projects.

The agency will launch one Transition call in 2025 that is open to any scientific and application topic, offering around 40 grants of up to EUR 2.5 million to single applicants or small consortia. Successful applicants must validate and demonstrate a technology in an application-relevant

environment and develop its market readiness. EIC Transition is open for proposals from European Research Council Proof of Concept (ERC PoC) and Pillar II of Horizon Europe to Joint Undertakings and Research Infrastructure, demonstrating synergies with other parts of Horizon Europe.

Implementing EIC Transition actions supports the Commission's priority of putting research and innovation (R&I) at the heart of the European economy, helping to accelerate the conversion of emerging research into transformative innovation that is commercialised and scaled up in the EU, while strengthening digital and frontier technologies for Europe's strategic autonomy.

Further information is available in the annexed [EIC Transition performance table](#)

## EIC Accelerator

The [EIC Accelerator](#) focuses on innovations building on scientific discovery or technological breakthroughs ('deep tech') and where significant funding is needed over a long timeframe before returns can be generated ('patient capital'). Funding and support from the EIC Accelerator are designed to enable such innovators attract the full investment amounts needed for scale up in a shorter timeframe.

To implement the EIC Accelerator, the agency runs continuously open calls as well as specific challenges, targeting EU policy priorities including the future proposals for European Biotech Act II, Quantum Act, Advanced Materials Act, Cloud and AI Development Act <sup>(4)</sup>, as well as concerning critical technologies for the EU's economic security <sup>(5)</sup>. In 2026, the agency will manage an "Open" call (continuously open for short proposals, with six batches through the year for full proposals), and launch five "Challenges" (thematic calls) in the following areas:

- advanced materials for renewable energy and energy storage system;
- alternative concepts and key enabling technologies for fusion power plants;
- biotech for regenerating agricultural soils;
- boosting the European critical raw materials value chain; and
- deep tech for climate adaptation .

EISMEA will continue to select (with the help of external experts) the beneficiaries of EIC Accelerator support, carry out technical due diligence with the help of experts, manage the grant component and ensure coordination between the grant and investment components.

The agency will also continue to implement legacy activities (Fast Track to Innovation, SME Instrument and EIC Pilot projects) launched under Horizon 2020 as well as more than 470 ongoing grants under Horizon Europe. EISMEA will implement its responsibilities in relation to the EIC Fund along with its lead parent DG (DG RTD) and with the other implementing parties (EIB, AlterDomus (Fund Manager) and AlterDomus (administrator)) according to the third Commission Decision of

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<sup>(4)</sup> 2026 Commission work programme [https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2026-commission-work-programme-and-annexes\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2026-commission-work-programme-and-annexes_en)

<sup>(5)</sup> C(2023) 6689 Annex to the Commission Recommendation on critical technology areas for the EU's economic security for further risk assessment with Member States.

December 2023 <sup>(6)</sup> and as stipulated under the internal operating guidelines agreed between the implementing parties.

Further information is available in the annexed [EIC Accelerator performance table](#).

## Strengthening the EIC: additional calls

In addition to the three pillars of the EIC (Pathfinder, Transition and Accelerator), the EIC foresees several complementary initiatives in 2026 addressing specific political objectives.

### **Pilot EIC Advanced Innovation Challenges**

In 2026 EISMEA will manage this pilot call under Horizon Europe that aims to support high-risk, demand-driven deep tech innovation with transformative potential especially in areas where there is extensive research but a lack of commercial uptake.

### **Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP) scale-up call**

In 2026 EISMEA will continue to manage the EIC Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP) Scale Up Call which seeks to stimulate groundbreaking innovation in strategic technologies, propelling Europe's economic, industrial, and technological competitiveness.

### **EIC Pre-Accelerator call**

EISMEA also manages the EIC Pre-Accelerator call, offering grants between EUR 300,000 to EUR 500,000. The call aims to increase the innovation potential of early-stage deep tech startups in widening countries to create a pipeline of projects for the Accelerator, helping them to attract private investments and to scale up.

### **Support for Ukrainian tech SMEs and startups**

EISMEA manages the support to Ukrainian tech SMEs in the form of EIC grants between EUR 300,000 to EUR 500,000. The action supports Ukrainian tech SMEs and start-ups and SMEs to enable them to better attract private investments, deploy innovations on the market, and scale up.

### **Women TechEU initiative**

EISMEA will implement a new EUR 15 million Coordination and Support Action (CSA) to continue implementing the Women TechEU initiative. The consortium will provide support to third parties in the form of grants of EUR 75 000. The initiative is designed to support early-stage women-led deep-tech startups, paving their way for participation in future EIC calls.

Further information is available in the annexed [EIC Additional Calls performance table](#).

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<sup>(6)</sup> C(2023) 8183 COMMISSION DECISION on the completion of the restructuring of the European Innovation Council (EIC) Fund in the context of the implementation of the EIC Accelerator under Horizon Europe

## EIC Prizes

[EIC Prizes](#) are a powerful tool to support and foster innovation. They engage with citizens by shedding light on the best innovators and their practices while also having a direct impact on the ecosystems and their players. The agency will pay the Award winners of the 2026 edition of the European Capital of Innovation Awards (iCapital) and the 2026 edition of the EU Prize for Women Innovators.

The Agency will also manage the process for:

The 2027 **European Capital of Innovation Awards** (iCapital) that recognise the role of cities as catalysers of the local innovation ecosystem and stimulate new activities to boost game-changing innovation.

The 2027 **EU Prize for Women Innovators** that celebrates and supports talented women entrepreneurs from the EU and countries associated to Horizon Europe whose disruptive innovations are driving positive changes for the people and the planet.

Further information is available in the annexed [EIC Prizes performance table](#)

## EIC Community and Business Acceleration Services

The EIC's **Business Acceleration Services (BAS)** use the pan-European reach of the EIC to connect EIC beneficiaries, Seal of Excellence companies Women Tech EU, Pre-Accelerator and Ukraine call beneficiaries with ecosystem and business partners. The objective is to stimulate the development of the innovations as well as the growth of supported companies.

To do so, EISMEA deploys coaches and manages contracts and grants delivering value-added services, such as 1-to-1 investment readiness support and access to business partners, corporates, innovation procurers and investors. Initiatives include events, visits, access to overseas trade fairs, global business expansion missions, pilots and trial collaborations to facilitate the international expansion of EIC beneficiaries. The provision of these activities will be renewed with increased budget through two new tender procedures to be launched in 2026.

All BAS services are accessible through the [EIC Community platform](#) which also offers peer-to-peer activities, including a [Women Leadership Programme and traineeship programme for researchers to work in startups and gain entrepreneurship skills](#). In 2026 the agency will further stimulate the uptake of services offered by selected ecosystem partners (including [EIT KICs](#)) in the [online catalogue](#) by offering financial support to cover up to 50% of the costs for EIC beneficiaries. It will also provide EIC beneficiaries with tailored services to enhance their capabilities to take part in innovation procurement bids and will provide financial support for pilots between EIC beneficiaries and public and private procurers. Pathfinder and Transition beneficiaries will benefit from a continued set of venture building and training activities. The most promising companies - in line with the STEP strategic domains - will receive scaleup support through the EIC Scaling Club programme (a specific action within the New European Innovation Agenda). These activities will be renewed through two calls for proposals and one call for tenders to be launched in 2026.

Further information is available in the annexed [EIC Community and BAS performance table](#)

## European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE)

The agency is responsible for implementing [European Innovation Ecosystems](#)' calls for proposals and monitoring successful projects. In 2026, the calls will align with the EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy, and support the completion of the [New European Innovation Agenda \(NEIA\)](#) Flagships, with a specific focus on:

- **Interconnected Innovation Ecosystems:** The agency will continue to implement efficient, inclusive, and interconnected innovation ecosystems across the EU, enhancing synergies and cooperation between them, and supporting the creation and development of common knowledge assets, for example, within regional innovation valleys.
- New competitiveness-driven topics such as the “European startup and scaleup hubs pilot” and “From lab to market: strengthening the role of Technology Transfer Offices” will build upon the EU’s strategic vision outlined in the [EU Competitiveness Compass](#), the EIC scaling strategy, and the [EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy](#). They will contribute to the strengthening Europe’s deep tech capabilities, increasing regional innovation cohesion and supporting the growth of globally competitive companies.

The agency will also launch and implement **procurement actions** that support programme objectives articulated in the NEIA, such as:

- European Assistance for Innovation Procurement
- Mapping of European philanthropic organisations
- Renewal of Benchmarking of national policy frameworks and investments on innovation procurement across Europe
- Renewal of the EU Intellectual Property Helpdesk.

Further information is available in the annexed [European Innovation Ecosystems performance table](#)

## Single Market Programme

The agency will implement several complementary strands of the [Single Market Programme](#): the [Consumer protection](#) pillar (actions aimed at protecting the rights of consumers in the internal market); the [SME pillar](#) (actions to support the competitiveness of SMEs), as well as actions designed to strengthen the [internal market](#) and provide [support to standardisation](#). The actions reinforce the Commission’s focus on unleashing the full potential of the Single Market (?).

In implementing the actions outlined below, EISMEA will help to ensure that the Single Market is more integrated. In line with the Single Market Strategy, this will contribute to enabling companies to scale up and compete globally while driving industrial innovation and strengthening supply chains. It will also help to ensure a prosperous and competitive tourism eco-system that creates opportunities for businesses, while ensuring that consumers are empowered and better protected.

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(?) 2026 Commission work programme [https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2026-commission-work-programme-and-annexes\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2026-commission-work-programme-and-annexes_en)

As such it will contribute to achieving the European Commission's objectives of a new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness, as well as supporting people, and strengthening our societies and our social models.

## Consumer protection pillar of the Single Market Programme

The agency will be responsible for implementing **grants** to:

- [Support the consumer organisations and bodies](#).
- Support individual consumers policy initiatives and objectives.

It will also be responsible for **procurement** in areas such as:

**Market surveillance and enforcement** including:

- joint actions (“Coordinated Activities on the Safety of Products”) to support the exchanges of EU Member States and EEA EFTA enforcement officials notified to the European Commission for the purposes of CPC Regulation (EU) 2017/2394;
- actions to support the capacity building of consumer protection enforcement authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer law for projects.

**Capacity building and education** including:

- consumer education and awareness raising, preparation and implementation of innovative tools and collaborative programmes, in relation to the enforcement of consumer rights and products safety as well as to support the implementation of the General Product Safety Regulation (GPSR).

**Studies, analyses and surveys** including:

- consumers' attitudes, behaviours, and experiences with respect to domestic and cross-border trade, awareness of consumer rights and product safety, handling of consumer complaints, and unfair commercial practices.

**Events and external communication** including the Consumer Summit, High-level Ministerial/Presidency meetings, and Info Days.

By implementing these delegated actions, the agency will contribute to improving the empowerment and protection of consumers.

In addition, the agency will finalise procedures planned under the 2025 Work Programme.

Further information is available in the annexed [Consumer protection pillar performance table](#)

## SME pillar of the Single Market Programme

The agency will continue to strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of SMEs by implementing **grants** for the three flagships [Enterprise Europe Network](#) (EEN), [Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs](#) (EYE), [Joint Cluster Initiatives](#) (EUROCLUSTERS) and for other actions focused on support to SMEs scaling up and tourism.

It will also be responsible for **public procurement** for the International IP SME Helpdesks, the EU Construction Sector Observatory and a project to facilitate access to mentors for entrepreneurs facing insolvency.

The agency will implement actions of the SME pillar under the Single Market Programmes from the work programmes 2021 to 2025, and the legacy activities of the COSME programme (2014-2020).

In addition to the work under the Single Market Programme, the agency will also ensure the implementation of pilot and preparatory actions, mainly in the areas of tourism, retail and industrial permitting procedures, stemming from the European Parliament and delegated via the parent DG. These include the first two editions of the European Capitals of Small Retail Awards.

Further information is available in the annexed [SME pillar performance table](#)

## Internal Market and support to standardisation

The agency will implement grants and procurement actions aimed at promoting and supporting market surveillance and standardisation activities, specifically through:

- The support of the establishment and functioning of Union testing facilities;
- The support to joint enforcement actions by Market Surveillance Authorities;
- The development of high-quality standards and standardisation deliverables;
- The enhancement of the involvement of stakeholders representing SMEs, consumers, environmental interests, and trade unions in the standardisation process.

In addition, the agency will continue managing action grants, concluded in the period 2013 to 2020 under successive Framework Partnership Agreements with European standardisation organisations CEN, CENELEC, and ETSI.

All activities and calls will be promoted via social media channels and info days.

Further information is available in the annexed [Internal Market and support to standardisation performance table](#)

## European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

### Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) Instrument

The [European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#) aims to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Union by correcting imbalances between its regions. The [I3 Instrument](#) is implemented under the EU Cohesion Policy, that encourages regions and Member States to enhance existing European value chains and/or develop new ones in less developed regions. By implementing the I3 instrument, the agency will help to boost innovation through investments

related to research and digitalisation. It will thus contribute to the [European Commission's objective](#) of 'a new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness'.

The I3 Instrument focuses on joint or complementary [smart specialisation](#) areas to accelerate innovation creation and deployment in connected regional innovation ecosystems across the EU. It provides [financial and advisory support](#) through strands 1 and 2. Investment Strands 1 and 2a provide financial and advisory support to innovation actors (with Strand 2a focussing on innovation diffusion in less developed regions). Strand 2b supports actions to increase the capacity of regional innovation ecosystems in less developed regions.

In 2026, EISMEA will implement the I3 instrument as follows:

- Monitor [ongoing projects](#) from previous calls including the ten projects under the [Regional Innovation Valleys](#) initiative (the cornerstone of flagship 3 of the [New European Innovation Agenda](#)).
- Evaluate and perform grant agreement preparations.
- Continue to monitor the new '[I3 Support Facility](#)', a technical assistance supporting innovation actors from less developed regions to participate in and implement I3 Instrument projects and provide policy feedback on the actions'/projects' impact.
- Meet with project coordinators/beneficiaries (in the framework of the I3 Support Facility: e.g. during the [annual I3 Forum](#)).
- Analyse the results and technological/economic regional impact of the funded projects (policy feedback)
- Perform diverse I3 Instrument promotion activities and organise related events such as dedicated info days for applicants.

Further information is available in the [Interregional Innovation Investments performance table](#)

# PART 4. A modern and sustainable public administration: outputs in 2026

The internal control framework <sup>(8)</sup> supports sound management and decision-making. It notably ensures that risks to the achievement of objectives are addressed and reduced to acceptable levels through cost-effective controls.

EISMEA has established an internal control system tailored to its particular characteristics and circumstances. The effective functioning of this internal control system will be assessed on an ongoing basis throughout the year and will be subject to a specific annual assessment covering all internal control principles.

## A. Human resource management

In 2026, EISMEA will continue building on the progress and success of its recovery plan, fostering a transparent and supportive organisational culture. The focus will be on sustaining the upward trend of the staff engagement index (from 58% in 2023 to 72% in the 2025 mid-term survey) through various learning initiatives for staff and managers. Actions include inter-agency initiatives such as the secondment of Temporary Agents (TA 2f), non-violent communication training bytes, and mini masterclasses dedicated to management. Additional targeted actions will be developed in early 2026 following the results of the staff survey and of a EISMEA staff consultation on training needs. In addition, the introduction of the new interagency mediation network will contribute to a culture of communication and peaceful conflict resolution.

EISMEA has adopted a competency framework that will be used in the agency's selection processes. Accompanied by an assessment tool, this framework will support colleagues in their professional development and help them shape their own career.

The agency will also continue to participate in interinstitutional initiatives such as the DG/Executive Agencies' exchange programme, the Interinstitutional Job Shadowing scheme and the Interagency Talent Programme open to all staff.

### **Shaping the agency's organisational culture**

The agency will continue implementing its internal communication strategy in 2026, putting a strong emphasis on transparency, community and purpose. Activities will include:

- Frequent "open door" slots and coffee chats for staff with senior management as well as Town Hall meetings to encourage open and transparent exchanges.
- Visits for staff to local EISMEA beneficiaries to foster a greater understanding of the impact of EISMEA's work.

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<sup>(8)</sup> [Communication C\(2017\)2373 - Revision of the Internal Control Framework](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/about_the_european_commission/eu_budget/revision-internal-control-framework-c-2017-2373_2017_en.pdf)[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/about\\_the\\_european\\_commission/eu\\_budget/revision-internal-control-framework-c-2017-2373\\_2017\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/about_the_european_commission/eu_budget/revision-internal-control-framework-c-2017-2373_2017_en.pdf)

- Regular support on the use of SharePoint Online (SPO) to encourage internal collaboration and communication – with a particular focus on EISMEA’s intranet.
- Support for bottom-up initiatives and organisation of internal events to bring colleagues together and build a team spirit.

## **2026 Staff allocation and Full Time Equivalent (FTEs) reduction**

According to the revised Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) and Specific Financial Statement (SFS), EISMEA will undergo a workforce reduction of 20 Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) in 2026. However, EISMEA will also receive 5 additional FTEs funded by contributions from Third Countries. The net reduction will thus be 15 FTEs for 2026.

This reduction will be aligned with the allocation by delegated programme, while ensuring a balance between activity types: approximately 86% dedicated to operational activities and 14% to horizontal activities.

EISMEA will continue to plan and anticipate a further reduction of 21 FTEs in 2027. This will mainly be accomplished by freezing vacant positions.

## **Promoting gender balance**

The agency continues to work closely with the parent DGs, providing regular overview of the situation, to maintain the balanced representation <sup>(9)</sup> in middle management positions, aiming to maintain a good gender balance.

Further information is available in the annexed [HR Management performance table](#)

## **B. Digital transformation and data management**

In 2026 EISMEA will continue to drive digital transformation and enhance data management, aligning with the Commission’s Digital Strategy and IT security strategy, working towards the following goals.

To foster a **digital culture** the agency will focus on developing digital skills by offering targeted IT training. It will enhance, cybersecurity awareness including through an inter-agency cybersecurity awareness week. The agency will also continue to actively promote the use of M365 and Microsoft TEAMS.

To enhance **business-driven digital transformation**, the agency will foster synergies with other Commission departments to reuse and publish data, promoting the use of corporate data services and ensuring interoperability. This will include an active collaboration track on EIC Taxonomies. It will also work on increasing AI technical capabilities by promoting AI training to staff and encouraging the use of Commission-wide AI solutions like GPT@EC.

To ensure a **seamless digital environment**, EISMEA will adopt a Reuse-Buy-Build approach for embedding newer technologies and ensure all information systems are properly mapped for

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<sup>(9)</sup> The responsibility for making these appointments lies with the parent DG

strategic fitness. It will prioritise the reuse of existing IT solutions, foster open-source software practices, and encourage the use and sharing of code on code.europa.eu. To better align with IT governance policies of the Commission, EISMEA will follow a detailed IT Governance policy for Delegated IT Systems developed with parent DGs and will test the new approach with at least one pilot by end-2026.

To remain **green, secure and resilient**, EISMEA will adopt the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme and promote sustainable practices and technologies, such as paperless, energy efficiency and promoting the use of Green Public Procurement Criteria (GPPC). It will work to ensure that its IT security plans are updated.

The agency will continue to actively monitor compliance with the Data Protection Regulation (EU) N° 2018/1725 and update its Data protection action plan when required, largely based on the Action Plan of the Commission (C(2020) 7625) and the IAS recommendations on processing of personal data. The agency's Data Protection Officer will provide regular awareness and training opportunities to staff and management, e.g. during the European Data Protection Day, and update internal rules and guidelines, if required.

In 2026 the agency will continue its efforts to raise awareness on the handling of data breaches, data subject rights, international transfers, obligations of Data controllers to update Data Protection Notices (DPNs) and publish records, and recall that appropriate agreements with Commission Services and external service providers should be in place as well as appropriate resources to ensure compliance with data protection obligations.

## **Data Management**

The Agency will work to enhance its data maturity level from “basic” to “developing” across four key areas, following guidance from central services and under the supervision of its Local Data Correspondent (LDC):

**Data Management** – Key activities will include the mapping of the Agency's key data assets.

**Ownership and Responsibilities** – the Agency will assign data owners and stewards for key datasets identified.

**Data Quality and FAIRness<sup>(10)</sup>** – EISMEA will set up a data quality framework and seek to consolidate and re-use key datasets.

**Data Skills** - EISMEA will also provide targeted training for staff members who are responsible for processing and interpreting data.

Further information is available in the annexed [Digital Transformation and Information Management Performance Table](#).

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<sup>(10)</sup> FAIR principles are defined as Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable

## C. Sound financial management

EISMEA continues to implement simplified cost options, including lump sums, with a view to simplifying and making its procedures more efficient.

EISMEA applies cost-effective control procedures, guided by its recently updated Control Strategy, to ensure the proper implementation of delegated programmes and the legality and regularity of financial transactions, in line with the principle of sound financial management and effective protection of the Union's financial interests.

The agency will monitor the implementation of the Internal Control Framework based on updated Internal Control Monitoring Criteria and implement actions identified following the 2025 Internal Control Assessment exercise to further improve its Internal Control Systems. In the second quarter of the year, the agency will review the risks identified in relation to programme implementation in 2026 and at the end of the year it will conduct its 2027 annual risk assessment exercise. As part of its ongoing risk management, the agency will closely monitor the implementation of SUMMA (the Commission's corporate finance system introduced in 2025), with a view to minimising risks of delays of financial operations relating to the migration of data from the previous system and technical failures.

To raise awareness among staff on key topics including the implementation of the risk assessment exercise and the appropriate use of exception reporting, the agency will provide training and information sessions for staff on different aspects of Internal Control, supported by an internal network of colleagues. Furthermore, it will continuously monitor, assess and report to the management on the implementation of action plans related to risk assessment and exception reporting.

The agency will continue to implement its ex-post audit strategy for the delegated programmes under the Single Market Programme (SMP) and the Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) Instrument.

For Horizon 2020 (H2020) and Horizon Europe (HORIZON), the Common Audit Service (CAS) of the Common Implementation Centre (CIC) carries out financial audits on grants based on actual costs, including those concerning grants managed by the agency. EISMEA will continuously monitor and report on the progress of CAS audits and support the CAS as required. For HORIZON lump sum grants, the agency will carry out ex-post technical reviews based on guidance from the CAS.

Finally, the agency will regularly update its internal guidance and the Manual of Procedures to ensure adequate coverage and dissemination of the relevant rules, processes and procedures.

Further information is available in the annexed [Sound Financial Management performance table](#).

## D. Fraud risk management

The agency will complete the implementation of its Anti-Fraud Strategy (adopted in 2023) and will carry out a full revision of its strategy to ensure its continued effectiveness. The agency will also contribute to the implementation of the Common Anti-Fraud Strategy in the Research and

Innovation Family and to the revised Commission Anti-Fraud strategy Action Plan<sup>(11)</sup>. The agency will undertake the following anti-fraud activities:

- Strengthen anti-fraud capacity through training, including mandatory sessions for newcomers, to reinforce prevention and detection of potential fraud cases.
- Enhance responsiveness in case of suspicion of fraud by taking timely precautionary measures and timely notifications of cases to OLAF.
- Cooperate closely with OLAF by providing timely and complete information to support handling of selections and investigations.
- Reinforce monitoring mechanisms to ensure effective follow-up on recoveries, penalties and other corrective measures in cases of fraud.
- Actively participate in the Fraud Prevention and Detection Network to contribute to the design and implementation of the anti-fraud measures across the Commission.
- Actively participate in the Fraud and Irregularities in Research Committee as a platform for exchanging best practices on fraud prevention, detection and correction.
- Contribute to the working group collecting user requirements to enhance a corporate risk-scoring tool.

Further information is available in the annexed [Fraud Risk Management performance table](#)

## **E. Sound environmental management**

EISMEA will continue to enhance its sustainability and environmental responsibility in line with [the Commission's Communication on Greening the Commission \(C\(2022\)2230\)](#).

In particular, the agency will continue implementing its own Greening Strategy and Action Plan while working towards its target of reducing its emissions from staff professional travel through close monitoring and awareness-raising in line with the Commission's 2025-2029 strategic plan.

Initiatives planned for 2026 include:

- Engaging with EMAS initiatives and campaigns complemented by agency / inter-agency greening initiatives such as Inter-agency Green Week.
- Following BEST (Building Energy Saving Together) actions by closing EISMEA's building during summer and winter holiday periods.
- Implementing the EC Guidelines for sustainable meetings and events.

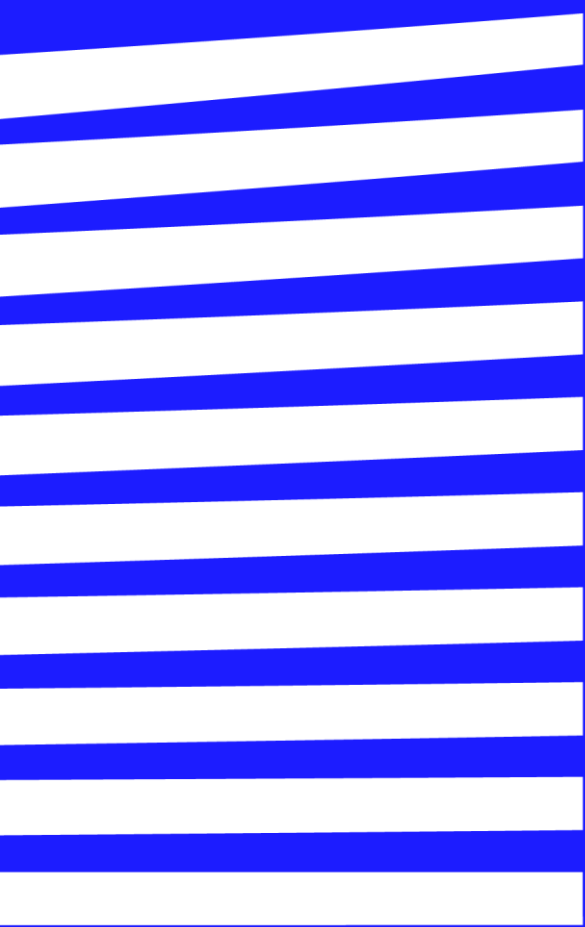
Further information is available in the annexed [Sound Environmental Management performance table](#).

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<sup>(11)</sup> COM(2023)405 and SWD(2023)245



# ANNEXES



# ANNEX 1: Performance tables

## Part 3 – Delivering on the Commission’s priorities: main outputs for 2026

### EIC Pathfinder performance table

| <b>General objective: A new plan for Europe’s sustainable prosperity and competitiveness.</b>   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Specific objectives: Accelerating the conversion of emerging research into transformative innovation that is commercialised and scaled up in the EU (DG RTD)</b> |   |  |
| <b>Strengthening digital and frontier technologies for Europe’s strategic autonomy (DG CNECT)</b>   |   |  |
| <b>From <u>2025-2029 Commission strategic plan</u> and parent DG’s strategic outlook</b>  |   |  |
| <b>Main outputs in 2026:</b>  |   |  |
| <b>Output</b>   | <b>Indicator</b>  | <b>Target</b>  |
| Calls for proposals   | Number of calls published   | 2  |
| Evaluation sessions   | Number of evaluation sessions implemented                                 | 2 Evaluations: EIC Pathfinder Open and Challenges 2026                         |
|   | Time to inform applicants   | 100% within legal time limit (5 months)  |
|   | % of evaluated proposals challenged under the evaluation review procedure | Less than 3% proposals   |
|   | % of evaluated proposals re-evaluated following review requests           | Less than 1% proposals   |
| Grant agreements  | Number of grant agreements signed   | ~74 grant agreements and 22 Hop-on Facility amendments                         |
|   | Time to grant   | 100% within legal time limit (8 months indicative, average number of days 245) |
| Final reports of concluded Grant Agreements and Contracts   | Number of final reports assessed  | 100  |
| Payments  | Time to pay   | 100% within legal time limit (90 days)   |

## EIC Transition performance table

**General objective: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness.**

**Specific objectives: Accelerating the conversion of emerging research into transformative innovation that is commercialised and scaled up in the EU (DG RTD)**

**Strengthening digital and frontier technologies for Europe's strategic autonomy (DG CNECT)**

***From 2025-2029 Commission strategic plan and parent DG's strategic outlook***

### **Main outputs in 2026:**

| <b>Output</b>   | <b>Indicator</b>  | <b>Target</b>  |
|---|---|--|
| Calls for proposals                                       | Number of calls published   | 1  |
| Evaluation sessions                                       | Number of evaluation sessions implemented                                 | 1 EIC Transition   |
|   | Time to inform applicants   | 100% within legal time limit (3.5 months)                                      |
|   | % of evaluated proposals challenged under the evaluation review procedure | Less than 3%   |
|   | % of evaluated proposals re-evaluated following review requests           | Less than 2%   |
| Grant agreements  | Number of grant agreements signed   | ~40  |
|   | Time to grant   | 100% within legal time limit (6 months indicative, average number of days 183) |
| Final reports of concluded Grant Agreements and Contracts | Number of final reports assessed  | 40 project monitoring reports  |
| Payments  | Time to pay   | 100% within the legal time limit (90 days)                                     |

## EIC Accelerator performance table

**General objective: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness.**

**Specific objective: Accelerating the conversion of emerging research into transformative innovation that is commercialised and scaled up in the EU (DG RTD)**

**Strengthening digital and frontier technologies for Europe's strategic autonomy (DG CNECT)**

***From 2025-2029 Commission strategic plan and parent DG's strategic outlook***

### **Main outputs in 2026:**

| <b>Output</b>       | <b>Indicator</b>   | <b>Target</b>   |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Calls for proposals | Number of calls published  | 1 continuous call (short proposal)  |
|                     |  | 1 call with 6 topics (1 open + 5 challenges) with 6 batching dates for the challenges and 6 batching dates for the Open topic (full proposal) |
| Evaluation sessions | Number of evaluation sessions implemented  | 1 continuous session for continuous call (short proposal)   |
|                     |  | 3 interview sessions (6 batching dates for Open and 6 batching dates for Challenges mentioned above - full proposals with interviews)         |
| Evaluation sessions | Time to inform applicants  | 100% within the legal time limits:  |
|                     |  | 2 months for short proposal from first Tuesday of the month to outcome  |
|                     |  | 2.5 months for full proposal from 2 <sup>nd</sup> batching date of a session to outcome of remote evaluation                                  |
|                     | % of evaluated proposals challenged under the evaluation review procedure (for short and full proposals) | 4 months max from 2 <sup>nd</sup> batching date of a session to final decision of interview   |
|                     |  | < 7%  |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Grant agreements                             | % of evaluated proposals re-evaluated following review requests (for short and full proposals) | < 0.5%   |
|  | Number of grant agreements signed  | 114  |
|  | Time to grant  | 100% within the legal time limit (8 months, average number of days 245)  |
| Final reports of concluded Grant Agreements, | Number of final reports assessed   | 13 SME Instrument and FTI; 3 EIC Pilot   |
|  |  | 55 EIC Accelerator   |
| Tech DD reports                              | Number of Tech DD reports managed (contracted, coordinated and approved)                       | 100 for EIC Accelerator  |
| Payments                                     | Time to pay  | 100% within the legal time limit   |
|  |  | <p>- <b>For EIC Accelerator Pilot and Horizon Europe projects:</b> 60 days for periodic reporting linked to additional pre-financing requests and 90 days for final periodic reporting;</p> <p>- <b>For SMEI Phase 2 and FTI projects:</b> 90 days for interim and final periodic reporting.</p> |

# Strengthening the EIC: additional calls

| <b>General objective: A new plan for Europe’s sustainable prosperity and competitiveness.</b><br><b>Specific objective: Accelerating the conversion of emerging research into transformative innovation that is commercialised and scaled up in the EU (DG RTD)</b><br><b>From <u>2025-2029 Commission strategic plan and parent DG’s strategic outlook</u></b> |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Main outputs in 2026:</b>  |   |   |
| Output  | Indicator   | Target                                      |
| Calls for proposals   | Number of calls published   | 1 Advanced Innovation Challenges (AIC)      |
|   |   | 1 continuously open call (STEP)             |
|   | 1 Women TechEU (WTEU)   |   |
| Evaluation sessions   | Number of evaluation sessions implemented                                 | 2 (AIC)                                     |
|   |   | 4 (STEP ScaleUp)                            |
|   | 1 Pre-accelerator   |   |
|   | 1 UkraineTech   |   |
|   | 1WTEU   |   |
|   | 100% within legal time limit:   |   |
|   | 3.5 months for AIC  |   |
| Time to inform applicants   | 5 months for Pre-Accelerator  |   |
|   | 5 months for UkraineTech  |   |
| Grant agreements  | % of evaluated proposals challenged under the evaluation review procedure | 2.5 months <sup>(12)</sup> for STEP ScaleUp |
|   |   | 5 months for WTEU                           |
|   | % of evaluated proposals re-evaluated following review requests           | Less than 3% for AIC                        |
|   |   | Less than 7% for Pre-Accelerator            |
|   | Number of proposals selected for investment                               | Less than 7% for UkraineTech                |
|   |   | Less than 5% for STEP ScaleUp               |
| Number of grant agreements signed   | Less than 5% for WTEU   |   |
|   | Less than 2% for AIC  |   |
| Time to grant   | Less than 0.5% for Pre-Accelerator  |   |
|   | Less than 0.5% for UkraineTech  |   |
|   |   | Less than 0.5% for STEP ScaleUp             |
|   |   | Less than 0.5% for WTEU                     |
|   |   | 15-20 (STEP ScaleUp)                        |
|   |   | 15-20 for AIC                               |
|   |   | 50 for Pre-Accelerator                      |
|   |   | 40 for UkraineTech                          |
|   |   | 1 for WTEU                                  |
|   |   | 100% within legal time limit:               |

(12) From batching date to result from interview

|                 |  |   |
|-----------------|--|---|
|                 |  | 6 months indicative, average number of days 183 for AIC             |
|                 |  | 8 months indicative, average number of days 245 for Pre-Accelerator |
|                 |  | 8 months indicative, average number of days 245 for UkraineTech     |
|                 |  | 8 months indicative, average number of days 245 for WTEU            |
| Tech DD reports | Number of Tech DD reports managed (contracted, coordinated and approved) | 100 (STEP ScaleUp)  |
| Payments        | Time to pay  | 100% within the legal time limit (90 days)                          |

## EIC Prizes performance table

**General objective: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness.**

**Specific objective: Accelerating the conversion of emerging research into transformative innovation that is commercialised and scaled up in the EU (DG RTD)**

***From 2025-2029 Commission strategic plan and parent DG's strategic outlook***

### **Main outputs in 2026:**

| <b>Output</b>          | <b>Indicator</b>  | <b>Target</b>   |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Calls for applications | Number of calls for applications published                                | 2   |
| Evaluation sessions    | Number of evaluation sessions implemented                                 | 4   |
|                        | Time to inform applicants   | Not applicable. (This will not apply to EIC Prizes due Time-To-Inform aligning with the EIC Summit dates (June 2026)) |
|                        | % of evaluated proposals challenged under the evaluation review procedure | < 2.5%  |
|                        | % of evaluated proposals re-evaluated following review requests           | < 0.5%  |
| Prizes awarded         | Number of individual prizes awarded                                       | 12  |
| Payments               | Time to pay   | 100% within the legal time limit (90 days)  |

## EIC Community and BAS performance table

**General objective: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness.**

**Specific objective: Accelerating the conversion of emerging research into transformative innovation that is commercialised and scaled up in the EU (DG RTD)**

***From 2025-2029 Commission strategic plan and parent DG's strategic outlook***

### **Main outputs in 2026:**

| <b>Output</b>   | <b>Indicator</b>                   | <b>Target</b>     |
|---|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Calls for proposals                                       | Number of calls published (CSA)    | 2                 |
| Calls for tender  | Number of calls published          | 3                 |
| Grant agreements  | Number of grant agreements signed  | 1                 |
|   | Time to grant                      | N/A               |
| Contracts   | Number of contracts signed         | 3 <sup>(13)</sup> |
| Final reports of concluded Grant Agreements and Contracts | Number of final reports assessed   | 2 <sup>(14)</sup> |
| Coaching cases  | Number of coaching cases           | 450               |
|   | Satisfaction from coaching service | 90%               |
| EIC Community   | Number of members                  | 17000             |
| BAS Events  | Number of BAS events               | 50                |
|   | Participating EIC beneficiaries    | 750               |
|   | Average Deals for matching events  | 1-2               |

<sup>(13)</sup> 2 Issued from call for tenders launched in 2025

<sup>(14)</sup> One from contract ending in December 2025

## European Innovation Ecosystems performance table

**General objective: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness.**

**Specific objective: Accelerating the conversion of emerging research into transformative innovation that is commercialised and scaled up in the EU (DG RTD)**

***From 2025-2029 Commission strategic plan and parent DG's strategic outlook***

### **Main outputs in 2026:**

| <b>Output</b>   | <b>Indicator</b>  | <b>Target</b>   |
|---|---|---|
| Calls for proposals                                       | Number of calls published   | 2   |
| Calls for tender  | Number of calls published   | 1   |
| Evaluation sessions                                       | Number of evaluation sessions implemented                                 | 2 in 2026   |
|   | Time to inform applicants   | 100% within the legal time limit (5 months)                                     |
|   | % of evaluated proposals challenged under the evaluation review procedure | <5%   |
|   | % of evaluated proposals re-evaluated following review requests           | <3%   |
| Grant agreements  | Number of grant agreements signed   | 20  |
|   | Time to grant   | 100% within legal time limit (8 months indicative, average number of days 245). |
| Contracts   | Number of contracts signed  | 2 +2 renewals   |
| Final reports of concluded Grant Agreements and Contracts | Number of final reports assessed  | 15-20   |
| Payments  | Time to pay   | 100% (grants) within legal time limit 90 days                                   |

## SMP Consumer Protection Pillar performance table

**General objective: Supporting people, and strengthening our societies and our social models.**

**Specific objective: Consumers are empowered and better protected (DG JUST)**

***From 2025-2029 Commission strategic plan and parent DG's strategic outlook***

### **Main outputs in 2026:**

| <b>Output</b>   | <b>Indicator</b>  | <b>Target</b>   |
|---|---|---|
| Calls for proposals incl. invitations to submit proposals | Number of calls published incl. invitations sent                          | 2   |
| Calls for tender incl. RfS                                | Number of calls published incl. RfS                                       | 6-12 (incl. 2-5 legacy) <sup>(15)</sup>   |
| Evaluation sessions                                       | Number of evaluation sessions implemented                                 | 2 (calls for proposals)   |
|   | Time to inform applicants   | 100 % within the legal time limit (6 months)                                    |
|   | % of evaluated proposals challenged under the evaluation review procedure | Less than 8%  |
|   | % of evaluated proposals re-evaluated following review requests           | Less than 8%  |
| Grant agreements  | Number of grant agreements signed   | 20-40 (incl. 20-30 legacy)  |
|   | Time to grant   | 100 % within legal time limit (9 months indicative, average number of days 275) |
| Contracts   | Number of contracts signed  | +/- 6-12 (incl. 2-5 legacy and contract renewal)                                |
| Final reports of concluded Grant Agreements and Contracts | Number of final reports assessed  | 35-50   |
| Payments  | Time to pay   | 100% within the legal time limit (90 days)                                      |

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<sup>(15)</sup> Work Programme leaves flexibility on the number of RfS to be launched. Legacy refers to previous work programme

## SMP SME pillar performance table

**General objective: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness**

**Specific objective: The Single Market is more integrated (DG GROW);**

**A prosperous and competitive tourism eco-system that develops sustainably in Europe, respecting our heritage, creating opportunities for local businesses and quality employment (DG MOVE)**

***From 2025-2029 Commission strategic plan and parent DG's strategic outlook***

### **Main outputs in 2026:**

| <b>Output</b>   | <b>Indicator</b>   | <b>Target</b>  |
|---|--|--|
| Calls for proposals                                       | Number of calls published  | 7  |
|   |  | 2 from WP 2025, 3 from WP 2026 and 2 Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions (PPPA) |
| Calls for tender  | Number of calls published  | 5-6  |
|   |  | 2-3 from WP 2025 and 2-3 from WP 2026  |
| Evaluation sessions                                       | Number of evaluation sessions implemented (i.e., information letters sent) | 5 for call for proposals   |
|   |  | 3 for calls for tenders  |
|   | Time to inform applicants  | 100% informed within the legal time limit (6 months)                               |
|   |  | Less than 3% of evaluated proposals.   |
| Grant agreements  | % of evaluated proposals challenged under the evaluation review procedure  | Max. 0.5% of evaluated proposals.  |
|   |  | % of evaluated proposals re-evaluated following review requests                    |
|   | Number of grant agreements signed  | 22 (15 from WP 2025, 5 from WP 2026, and 2 from PPPA)                              |
|   |  | 100 % within legal time limit (9 months indicative, average number of days 275)    |
| Contracts   | Number of contracts signed   | 3 contracts  |
| Final reports of concluded Grant Agreements and Contracts | Number of final reports assessed (i.e., final payment authorised in SUMMA) | 16   |
| Payments  | Time to pay  | 100% within the legal time limit (90 days)   |

## SMP Internal Market and support to standardisation performance table

**General objective: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness**

**Specific objective: The Single Market is more integrated (DG GROW);**

***From 2025-2029 Commission strategic plan and parent DG's strategic outlook***

### **Main outputs in 2026:**

| <b>Output</b>   | <b>Indicator</b>  | <b>Target</b>   |
|---|---|---|
| Calls for proposals                                       | Number of calls published   | 4-5 (2 or 3 ESOs calls, 1 Annex III call, 1 EUTF call)                          |
| Calls for tender  | Number of calls published   | 2   |
| Evaluation sessions                                       | Number of evaluation sessions implemented                                 | 4-5   |
|   | Time to inform applicants   | 100% within the legal time limit (6 months).                                    |
|   | % of evaluated proposals challenged under the evaluation review procedure | Less than 5%  |
|   | % of evaluated proposals re-evaluated following review requests           | Less than 3%  |
| Grant agreements  | Number of grant agreements signed   | 20-30 <sup>(16)</sup>   |
|   | Time to grant   | 100 % within legal time limit (9 months indicative, average number of days 275) |
| Contracts   | Number of contracts signed  | 2<br>15-20  |
| Final reports of concluded Grant Agreements and Contracts | Number of final reports assessed  | Standardisation: 1 on-paper legacy grants; 12-15 in e-Grants                    |
|   |   | Market surveillance: 4 grants and contracts                                     |
| Payments  | Time to pay   | 100% within the legal time limit (90 days)                                      |

<sup>(16)</sup> Figures are an estimate: the number of grant agreements depends on number of topics requested by the parent DG. This information is not known at time of writing

## Interregional Innovation Investments performance table

**General objective: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness**

**Specific objective: Boosting innovation through investments in research and digitalisation (DG REGIO)**

***From 2025-2029 Commission strategic plan and parent DG's strategic outlook***

### **Main outputs in 2026:**

| <b>Output</b>   | <b>Indicator</b>  | <b>Target</b>   |
|---|---|---|
| Calls for proposals                                       | Number of calls published   | 2   |
| Evaluation sessions                                       | Number of evaluation sessions implemented                                 | 5   |
|   | Time to inform applicants   | 100 % within the legal time limit (6 months)                                    |
|   | % of evaluated proposals challenged under the evaluation review procedure | <5%   |
|   | % of evaluated proposals re-evaluated following review requests           | <5%   |
| Grant agreements  | Number of grant agreements signed   | 5 for Cap2b 2026 , 6 for investment calls INV1 and INV2a                        |
|   | Time to grant   | 100 % within legal time limit (9 months indicative, average number of days 275) |
| Final reports of concluded Grant Agreements and Contracts | Number of final reports assessed  | 15-19   |
| Payments  | Time to pay   | 100% within the legal time limit (90 days)                                      |

# Part 4 – A modern and sustainable administration: main outputs for 2026

## A. Human resource management

| <b>Objective:</b> EISMEA employs a competent and engaged workforce and contributes to gender equality at all levels of management to effectively deliver on the agency's priorities and core business. |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Main outputs in 2026:</b>   |  |   |
| <b>Output</b>  | <b>Indicator</b>   | <b>Target</b>   |
| Staff satisfaction: bi-annual Management Charter survey  | Positive response rate   | 70% of positive replies   |
| Staff engagement: Create an action plan following the results of the Staff survey 2025   | % of actions being implemented                                   | 100% of actions of the plan are launched (under implementation) by end 2026 |
| Female representation in middle management <sup>(17)</sup> : regular updates to Steering Committee on gender and geographical balance.   | Number of updates per year:                                      | 4 updates in 2026   |
| Visits to beneficiaries (fostering a greater understanding of the impact of the Agency's work)   | Number of visits<br>Satisfaction of staff (surveyed after event) | 2 visits in 2026<br>75% satisfaction rate                                   |

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<sup>(17)</sup> Seconded middle managers are part of the seconding DGs' staff: The responsibility for achieving the targets is at DG level. The agency is responsible for providing a regular overview to its parent DGs to help enable them to make informed decisions

## B. Digital transformation and data management

**Objective:** EISMEA is using innovative, trusted digital solutions for better policymaking, data management and administrative processes to create a digitally transformed, user-focused and data-driven Commission.

### Main outputs in 2026:

#### Digital Transformation

| Output  | Indicator  | Target  |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Digital Culture</b><br>. Increase Cybersecurity Awareness at Agency level  | Number of awareness-raising initiatives                            | 1 Cybersecurity event / roadshow in 2026                                      |
| <b>Business Driven Digital Transformation</b><br>Promote AI training to staff (through the AI@EC guidelines for staff) and encourage the use of Commission-wide general-purpose AI solutions (such as GPT@EC) | Number of promotional campaigns to staff.                          | 1 promotion campaign in 2026  |
| <b>Seamless Digital Environment</b><br>Leverage open-source solutions when designing modern applications or websites.   | % of IS / IT solutions using open-source solutions                 | 50% of IS / IT solutions using open-source solutions by end 2026              |
| <b>Green, resilient and secure infrastructure</b><br>Update Security plans of IS/ IT systems where needed   | % of IS/ IT systems covered by an updated IT Security Plan and GRC | 100% of IS/IT systems covered by an updated IT Security Plan and GRC in 2026. |

#### Data Management

| Output  | Indicator  | Target  |
|---|--|---|
| Participation in data training programmes or local capacity-building initiatives. | Number of staff following data training programmes | 10 statutory staff following data training programmes in 2026 |

#### Data Protection

| Output  | Indicator  | Target  |
|---|--|---|
| Participants in Data protection training and awareness sessions | % of Agency staff retrained, including compulsory training for newcomers | 90% of all staff in 2026<br>100% of newcomers in 2026 |

## C. Sound financial management

**Objective:** The authorising officer by delegation has reasonable assurance that resources have been used in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and that cost-effective controls are in place which give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of underlying transactions.

### Main outputs in 2026:

| Output   | Indicator                          | Target   |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| Effective controls: Legal and regular transactions | Estimated risk at payment          | remains < 2 % of relevant expenditure (HE and SMP)<br>remains as close as possible to 2% (H2020) <sup>(18)</sup> |
|  | Estimated risk at closure          | remains < 2 % of relevant expenditure (HE and SMP)<br>remains as close as possible to 2% (H2020)                 |
| Efficient controls                                 | Budget execution                   | remains 100% of C.1 payment appropriations on time   |
| Efficiency of controls                             | Timely payments                    | remains 100% within legal deadlines (administrative and operational budget).                                     |
| Economy of controls                                | Overall estimated cost of controls | remains under 4% of funds managed  |

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<sup>(18)</sup> For the Research, industry, space, energy and transport family, it is necessary to make a distinction between Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe since they have different materiality criteria. A common approach among the relevant departments should be applied

## D. Fraud risk management

**Objective:** The risk of fraud is minimised through the application of effective anti-fraud measures and the implementation of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy (CAFS) <sup>(19)</sup> aimed at the prevention, detection and correction <sup>(20)</sup> of fraud.

### Main outputs in 2026:

| Output  | Indicator   | Target   |
|---|---|--|
| Anti-fraud awareness training sessions                                    | Number of training sessions organised during the year   | Twice per year in line with the agency's Anti-Fraud Strategy |
| Reports on the state of play of the Anti-Fraud Strategy implementation    | Reporting to management on the state of play of the implementation of the Anti-Fraud Strategy Action Plan | Twice per year in line with the agency's Anti-Fraud Strategy |
| Reports to OLAF on implementation of recommendations following OLAF cases | Reporting on the implementation of recommendations issued by OLAF following their investigations          | Six months after the issuance of the OLAF report             |

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<sup>(19)</sup> Communication from the Commission "Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy: enhanced action to protect the EU budget", COM(2019)176 of 29 April 2019; Communication from the Commission "Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy Action plan – revision 2023", [COM\(2023\)405](#) of 11 July 2023 – "the Communication on the 2023 revision", and the accompanying revised action plan, [SWD\(2023\)245](#)– "the revised Action Plan"

<sup>(20)</sup> Correction of fraud is an umbrella term, which notably refers to the recovery of amounts unduly spent and to administrative sanctions

## E. Sound environmental management

**Objective:** Reaching climate neutrality by 2030 and a reduced environmental footprint for the Commission.

### Main outputs in 2026

| Output  | Indicator   | Target   |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Actions to reduce emissions from staff professional travel:</p> <p>1. Monitoring of mission's budget and emissions</p> <p>2. Awareness raising among staff</p> | <p>Number of specific initiatives to reduce emissions from staff emission professional travel</p>   | <p>2 Actions implemented by end 2026:</p> <p>1. Monitoring leading to missions performed within budget and reduction in emissions.</p> <p>2. Awareness raising action implemented.</p> |
| Energy saving actions   | <p>% of EISMEA building participating in the annual BEST energy saving actions (summer action)</p> <p>% of EISMEA building participating in the annual BEST energy saving actions (winter action)</p> | Remains at 100% participation (winter and summer action)   |
| Staff awareness actions   | Number of staff awareness actions (EMAS/greening corporate campaigns and agency initiatives).   | 3 actions in 2026  |
| Sustainable events  | % Agency's events, incorporating the <a href="#">EC Guidelines for sustainable events</a>   | Target 100%  |

# ANNEX 2: Resources: staff and budget

## A. Administrative budget

| Programmes  | Title 1<br>(€ million) | Title 2<br>(€ million) | Title 3<br>(€ million) | Total         |              |                          |                    | Grand total   |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
|   |                        |                        |                        | EU Budget     | EFTA/ EEA    | Third countries contrib. | Next Generation EU |               |
| <b>Horizon Europe, Pillar III</b>   |                        |                        |                        |               |              |                          |                    |               |
| <b>European Innovation Council (EIC)</b><br><b>European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE)</b> | 32,745                 | 4,273                  | 1,859                  | 30,781        | 0,841        | 5,698                    | 1,557              | 38,877        |
| <b>Single Market Programme</b>  |                        |                        |                        |               |              |                          |                    |               |
| <b>SME Pillar</b>   | 7,116                  | 1,124                  | 0,489                  | 8,505         | 0,225        | -                        | -                  | 8,730         |
| <b>Internal Market and Support to Standardisation</b>                                   | 2,147                  | 0,339                  | 0,148                  | 2,566         | 0,068        | -                        | -                  | 2,634         |
| <b>Consumers</b>  | 0,299                  | 0,047                  | 0,021                  | 0,357         | 0,009        | -                        | -                  | 0,366         |
| <b>European Regional Development Fund</b>   |                        |                        |                        |               |              |                          |                    |               |
| <b>Interregional Innovation Investments</b>   | 1,332                  | 0,210                  | 0,092                  | 1,634         | -            | -                        | -                  | 1,634         |
| <b>Total per source of financing within each Title</b>                                  | <b>43,639</b>          | <b>5,993</b>           | <b>2,609</b>           | <b>43,843</b> | <b>1,143</b> | <b>5,698</b>             | <b>1,557</b>       | <b>52,241</b> |

## B. Human resources

| Programmes   | Staff (EU budget) |                             |        |      |                       | Staff from other fund sources           |                   |        | Total all staff |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------------|--------|------|-----------------------|---|-------------------|--------|-----------------|
|  | TAs               | Of which seconded officials | CAs    | SNEs | Total staff EU budget | EFTA/EEA, Third countries contributions | NextGeneration EU |        |                 |
| <b>Horizon Europe, Pillar III</b>                              |                   |                             |        |      |                       |   |                   |        |                 |
| <b>European Innovation Council (EIC): DG RTD</b>               | 58,76             | 16,00                       | 136,11 | 1,00 | 195,87                | 41,00                                   | 13,69             | 250,56 |                 |
| <b>Subtotal operational FTEs</b>                               | 50,89             | 10,00                       | 117,87 | 0,87 | 169,62                | 33,21                                   | 11,86             | 214,69 |                 |
| <b>Subtotal management &amp; admin support staff</b>           | 7,87              | 8,00                        | 18,24  | 0,13 | 26,25                 | 7,79                                    | 1,83              | 35,87  |                 |
| <b>European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE): DG RTD</b>            | 3,86              | 4,00                        | 9,00   |      | 12,85                 |   |                   | 12,85  |                 |
| <b>Subtotal operational FTEs</b>                               | 3,34              | 3,00                        | 7,79   |      | 11,13                 |   |                   | 11,13  |                 |
| <b>Subtotal management &amp; admin support staff</b>           | 0,52              | 1,00                        | 1,21   |      | 1,72                  |   |                   | 1,72   |                 |
| <b>Single Market Programme</b>                                 |                   |                             |        |      |                       |   |                   |        |                 |
| <b>SME pillar: DG GROW</b>                                     | 20,90             | 5,00                        | 62,71  |      | 83,62                 | 2,00                                    |                   | 85,62  |                 |
| <b>Subtotal operational FTEs</b>                               | 18,10             | 3,00                        | 54,31  |      | 72,41                 | 1,62                                    |                   | 74,03  |                 |
| <b>Subtotal management &amp; admin support staff</b>           | 2,80              | 2,00                        | 8,40   |      | 11,20                 | 0,38                                    |                   | 11,58  |                 |
| <b>Internal Market and support to standardisation: DG GROW</b> | 1,25              | 2,00                        | 3,75   |      | 5,00                  |   |                   | 5,00   |                 |
| <b>Subtotal operational FTEs</b>                               | 1,08              | 2,00                        | 3,25   |      | 4,33                  |   |                   | 4,33   |                 |
| <b>Subtotal management &amp; admin support staff</b>           | 0,17              | 0,00                        | 0,50   |      | 0,67                  |   |                   | 0,67   |                 |
| <b>Consumers: DG JUST</b>                                      | 2,43              | 1,00                        | 7,30   |      | 9,74                  |   |                   | 9,74   |                 |
| <b>Subtotal operational FTEs</b>                               | 2,11              | 1,00                        | 6,33   |      | 8,43                  |   |                   | 8,43   |                 |
| <b>Subtotal management &amp; admin support staff</b>           | 0,33              | 0,00                        | 0,98   |      | 1,31                  |   |                   | 1,31   |                 |

| Programmes  | Staff (EU budget) |                             |              |            |                       | Staff from other fund sources           |                   |  | Total all staff |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|------------|-----------------------|---|-------------------|--|-----------------|
|   | TAs               | Of which seconded officials | CAs          | SNEs       | Total staff EU budget | EFTA/EEA, Third countries contributions | NextGeneration EU |  |                 |
| <b>European Regional Development Fund</b>             |                   |                             |              |            |                       |   |                   |  |                 |
| <b>Interregional Innovation Investments: DG REGIO</b> | 3,12              | 1,00                        | 9,36         |            | 12,48                 |   |                   |  | 12,48           |
| <b>Subtotal operational FTEs</b>                      | 2,70              | 1,00                        | 8,11         |            | 10,81                 |   |                   |  | 10,81           |
| <b>Subtotal management &amp; admin support staff</b>  | 0,42              | 0,00                        | 1,25         |            | 1,67                  |   |                   |  | 1,67            |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>90,3</b>       | <b>29,0</b>                 | <b>228,2</b> | <b>1,0</b> | <b>319,6</b>          | <b>43,0</b>                             | <b>13,7</b>       |  | <b>376,2</b>    |

## C. Delegated operational appropriations

| Budget lines (*)                                 |   | Commitment appropriations (€ million) |              |                                |                          |        | Payment appropriations (€ million) |              |                                |                          |        |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------|
|  |   | EU Budget                             | EFTA/<br>EEA | Third<br>countries<br>contrib. | Next<br>Generation<br>EU | Total  | EU Budget                          | EFTA/<br>EEA | Third<br>countries<br>contrib. | Next<br>Generation<br>EU | Total  |
| <b>Horizon Europe, Pillar III</b>                |   |                                       |              |                                |                          |        |                                    |              |                                |                          |        |
| 01 02 03 01                                      | European Innovation Council (EIC)               | 530.73                                | 30.18        | 101.44                         |                          | 662.35 | 505.28                             |              | 101.44                         | 34.45                    | 641.17 |
| 01 02 03 02                                      | European Innovation Systems (EIE)               | 62.13                                 | 1.64         | 4.33                           |                          | 68.1   | 80.99                              | 1.60         | 4.33                           |                          | 86.93  |
| 01 02 04 01                                      | Widening participation and spreading excellence |                                       |              |                                |                          |        | 34.07                              |              |                                |                          | 34.07  |
| <b>Single Market Programme (SMP)</b>             |   |                                       |              |                                |                          |        |                                    |              |                                |                          |        |
| 03 02 01 07                                      | Market Surveillance                             | 6.00                                  |              |                                |                          | 6.00   | 6.02                               |              |                                |                          | 6.02   |
| 03 02 02 00                                      | SME Pillar                                      | 92.27                                 | 2.51         |                                |                          | 94.78  | 97.75                              | 1.95         |                                |                          | 99.70  |
| 03 02 03 01                                      | Support to Standardisation                      | 13.80                                 |              |                                |                          | 13.80  | 13.97                              |              |                                |                          | 13.97  |
| 03 02 04 01                                      | Consumers                                       | 18.53                                 |              |                                |                          | 18.53  | 12.38                              |              |                                |                          | 12.38  |
| <b>European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)</b> |   |                                       |              |                                |                          |        |                                    |              |                                |                          |        |
| 05 02 01 00.08                                   | Inter-regional Innovation Investments           | 58.69                                 |              |                                |                          | 58.69  | 63.95                              |              |                                |                          | 63.95  |
| 05 02 09 00                                      | Horizon Europe - Contribution from the ERDF     |                                       |              |                                |                          |        | 3.31                               |              |                                |                          | 3.31   |

| Budget lines (*)                                   |  | Commitment appropriations (€ million) |              |                                |                          |       | Payment appropriations (€ million) |              |                                |                          |       |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
|  |  | EU Budget                             | EFTA/<br>EEA | Third<br>countries<br>contrib. | Next<br>Generation<br>EU | Total | EU<br>Budget                       | EFTA/<br>EEA | Third<br>countries<br>contrib. | Next<br>Generation<br>EU | Total |
| <b>Pilot Projects / Preparatory Actions (PPPA)</b> |  |                                       |              |                                |                          |       |                                    |              |                                |                          |       |
| 01 20 01<br>00.P012105                             | Pilot project - European entrepreneurial E-learning platform helping SMEs to adapt to the current context              |                                       |              |                                |                          |       | 0.32                               |              |                                |                          | 0.32  |
| 01 20 01<br>00.P012202                             | Pilot project — Establish new common methodologies, including metrics and statistics and using data analytics ...      |                                       |              |                                |                          |       | 1.04                               |              |                                |                          | 1.04  |
| 03 20 01<br>00.P032301                             | Pilot project - Building Capacity for Tourism Ecosystem - Accessing EU Funding   |                                       |              |                                |                          |       | 0.72                               |              |                                |                          | 0.72  |
| 03 20 01<br>00.P032302                             | Pilot project - European network of gender-conscious investors   |                                       |              |                                |                          |       | 0.55                               |              |                                |                          | 0.55  |
| 03 20 01<br>00.P032503                             | Pilot project — Net-Zero AI4Permitting   | 2.50                                  |              |                                |                          | 2.50  | 3.63                               |              |                                |                          | 3.63  |
| 03 20 02<br>00.A032401                             | Preparatory action — Creation of the European Capital of Small Retail (ECSR)   |                                       |              |                                |                          |       | 1.05                               |              |                                |                          | 1.05  |
| 03 20 02<br>00.A032403                             | Preparatory action — Upskilling and reskilling the Tourism Ecosystem I<br>Tourism Knowledge hub and Tourism Data Space |                                       |              |                                |                          |       | 0.80                               |              |                                |                          | 0.80  |

| Budget lines (*)   |                              | Commitment appropriations (€ million) |              |                          |                    |               | Payment appropriations (€ million) |             |                          |                    |               |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
|  |                              | EU Budget                             | EFTA/EEA     | Third countries contrib. | Next Generation EU | Total         | EU Budget                          | EFTA/EEA    | Third countries contrib. | Next Generation EU | Total         |
| <b>Completion - Legacy</b>   |                              |                                       |              |                          |                    |               |                                    |             |                          |                    |               |
| 01 02 99 01  | Completion - H2020           |                                       |              |                          |                    |               | 7.05                               |             |                          |                    | 7.05          |
| 03 02 99 01  | Completion - COSME           |                                       |              |                          |                    |               | 0.35                               | 0.00        |                          |                    | 0.35          |
| 03 02 99 04.02   | Completion - Standardisation |                                       |              |                          |                    |               | 0.56                               |             |                          |                    | 0.56          |
| <b>Total of operational appropriations managed by the Executive Agency</b> |                              | <b>784.65</b>                         | <b>34.33</b> | <b>105.77</b>            | <b>0.00</b>        | <b>924.75</b> | <b>833.78</b>                      | <b>3.56</b> | <b>105.77</b>            | <b>34.45</b>       | <b>977.56</b> |

(\*) The Commitment and payment appropriations are best estimates based on the information made available thus far and the arrangements between EISMEA and its parent DGs. The figures may vary throughout the year due to changes in the delegated budget and/or transfers of appropriations among the different co-delegated implementing entities.

## ANNEX 3: Call Planning Tables

| European Innovation Council             |  |   |              |
|---|--|---|--------------|
| Planning calls for proposals 2026:      |  |   |              |
| Call title                              | Call identifier  | Publication date                            | Closing date |
| EIC Pathfinder Open 2026                | HORIZON-EIC-2026-PATHFINDEROPEN  | 05/02/2026                                  | 12/05/2026   |
| EIC Pathfinder Challenges 2026          | HORIZON-EIC-2026-PATHFINDERCHALLENGES-01   | 28/07/2026                                  | 28/10/2026   |
|   | Advanced Materials for Miniaturised Energy Harvesting Systems                            | HORIZON-EIC-2026-PATHFINDERCHALLENGES-01-01 |              |
|   | Biotechnology for Healthy Ageing   | HORIZON-EIC-2026-PATHFINDERCHALLENGES-01-02 |              |
|   | DeepRAP: Deep Reasoning, Abstraction & Planning towards trustworthy Cognitive AI Systems | HORIZON-EIC-2026-PATHFINDERCHALLENGES-01-03 |              |
| EIC Transition Open 2026                | HORIZON-EIC-2026-TRANSITIONOPEN  | 22/04/2026                                  | 16/09/2026   |
| EIC Advanced Innovation Challenges 2026 | HORIZON-EIC-2026-AIC   | 03/12/2025                                  | 26/02/2026   |

|                                   |   |   |            |  |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|------------|--|
|                                   |   |   |            |  |
|                                   | Accelerating Physical AI: Embodied Intelligence for the Next Frontier of AI-Powered Robotics    | HORIZON-EIC-2026-AIC-01                       |            |  |
|                                   | Translating Disruptive New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) into Practice                          | HORIZON-EIC-2026-AIC-02                       |            |  |
| EIC ACCELERATOR 2026 (Call)       | HORIZON-EIC-2026-ACCELERATOR-02   |   |            |  |
| EIC Accelerator Open 2026 (Topic) | HORIZON-EIC-2026-ACCELERATOR-02-OPEN  |   | 06/11/2025 | 7/01/2026;<br>04/03/2026;<br>06/05/2026;<br>08/07/2026;<br>02/09/2026;<br>04/11/2026 |
| EIC Accelerator Challenges 2026   | Advanced Materials for Renewable Energy and Energy Storage Systems                              | HORIZON-EIC-2026-ACCELERATOR-02-CHALLENGES-01 | 06/11/2025 | 7/01/2026;<br>04/03/2026;<br>06/05/2026;<br>08/07/2026;<br>02/09/2026;<br>04/11/2026 |
|                                   | Alternative Concepts and Key Enabling Technologies for Fusion Power Plants Background and scope | HORIZON-EIC-2026-ACCELERATOR-02-CHALLENGES-02 | 06/11/2025 |  |
|                                   | Biotech for Regenerating Agricultural Soils   | HORIZON-EIC-2026-ACCELERATOR-02-CHALLENGES-03 | 06/11/2025 |  |

|                                    |  |   |            |   |
|------------------------------------|--|---|------------|---|
|                                    | Boosting the European Critical Raw Materials value chain<br>Background and Scope | HORIZON-EIC-2026-ACCELERATOR-02-CHALLENGES-04 | 06/11/2025 |   |
|                                    | Deep Tech for Climate Adaptation   | HORIZON-EIC-2026-ACCELERATOR-02-CHALLENGES-05 |            |   |
| EIC Accelerator Step Scale-Up Call | HORIZON-EIC-2026-STEP  |   | Any time   | 11/02/2026;<br>06/05/2026;<br>09/09/2026;<br>25/11/2026 |

| <b>EIC Prizes*</b>                        |                                 |                         |                     |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Planning calls for proposals 2026:</b> |                                 |                         |                     |
| <b>Call title</b>                         | <b>Call identifier</b>          | <b>Publication date</b> | <b>Closing date</b> |
| The European Capital of Innovation Awards | HORIZON-EIC-2026-PRIZE-ICAPITAL | 19/03/2026              | 17/06/2026          |
| European Prize for Women Innovators       | HORIZON-EIC-2026-PRIZE-WIP      | 18/06/2026              | 24/09/2026          |

\*Information (call identifiers and timetable) for EIC Prizes is provisional (pending corrigendum to EIC WP).

## European Innovation Ecosystems

### Planning calls for proposals 2026:

| Call title  | Call identifier                | Publication date | Closing date |
|---|--------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| European network of national competence centers for innovation procurement                                    | HORIZON-EIE-2026-01-CONNECT-01 | 10-09-2025       | 20-01-2026   |
| Expanding Investment Ecosystems   | HORIZON-EIE-2026-01-CONNECT-02 | 10-09-2025       | 20-01-2026   |
| Scaling up deep tech ecosystems   | HORIZON-EIE-2026-01-CONNECT-02 | 10-09-2025       | 20-01-2026   |
| European Startup and Scaleup Hubs pilot   | HORIZON-EIE-2026-02-CONNECT-01 | 11-12-2025       | 10-03-2026   |
| From lab to market: Strengthening the role of Technology Transfer Offices in bringing knowledge to the market | HORIZON-EIE-2026-03-CONNECT-01 | 09-06-2026       | 22-09-2026   |

### Planning calls for tenders 2026:

| Call title  | Call identifier      | Publication date | Closing date |
|---|----------------------|------------------|--------------|
| European Assistance Network for Innovation procurement        | Open procedure       | Q1 2026          | tbc          |
| Mapping of philanthropic organisations (negotiated procedure) | Negotiated procedure | tbc              | tbc          |

**SMP / CONSUMER PILLAR****Planning calls for proposals 2026:**

| <b>Call title</b>           | <b>Call identifier</b>      | <b>Publication /opening date</b>   | <b>Closing date</b> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---------------------|
| SMP-CONS-2027-EU-ORG-OG-IBA | SMP-CONS-2027-EU-ORG-OG-IBA | 03.03.2026 (tbc)   | 20.05.2026 (tbc)    |
| SMP-CONS-2026-ADR-RAD       | SMP-CONS-2026-ADR-RAD       | 24.02.2026 (tbc)   | 21.05.2026 (tbc)    |
| SMP-CONS-2025-ECC-IBA       | SMP-CONS-2025-ECC-IBA       | n/a: the 2 <sup>nd</sup> instalment of the 2025 ECC invitation (no new invitation in 2026) | n/a                 |

**Planning calls for tenders 2026:**

| <b>Call title</b>                        | <b>Call identifier</b> | <b>Publication date</b>  | <b>Closing date</b> |
|--|------------------------|--|---------------------|
| CASP                                     | tbc                    | Q4 2026 (tbc)<br><br>(RfS under FWC with reopening of competition) | tbc                 |
| Capacity building - CPC authorities      | tbc                    | Q1/Q2 2026 (tbc)<br><br>(RfS under FWC in cascade)                 | tbc                 |
| Consumer Condition Survey                | tbc                    | n/a<br><br>(RfS under FWC in cascade)                              | n/a                 |
| CCD + DMFSD transposition study          | tbc                    | Q1 2026 (tbc)<br><br>(RfS under FWC with reopening of competition) | tbc                 |
| Empowering consumers transposition study | tbc                    | Q4 2026 (tbc)<br><br>(RfS under FWC with reopening of competition) | tbc                 |

|  |     |  |     |
|--|-----|--|-----|
| Study on RAD EU Ombudsman                                  | tbc | Q3 2026 (tbc)<br>(RfS under FWC with reopening of competition) | tbc |
| Study on AI Powered Solution for ADR entities              | tbc | Q1 2026 (tbc)<br>(RfS under FWC with reopening of competition) | tbc |
| Study on online market places                              | tbc | Q2 2026 (tbc)<br>(RfS under FWC with reopening of competition) | tbc |
| <b>Events and external communication actions</b>           |     |  |     |
| Consumer Summit and Presidency Meeting Lithuania June 2027 | tbc | n/a<br>(RfS under FWC in cascade)                              | n/a |
| Product Safety Award                                       | tbc | n/a<br>(RfS under FWC in cascade)                              | n/a |

**SMP / SME PILLAR****Planning calls for proposals 2026:**

| <b>Call title</b>   | <b>Call identifier</b>              | <b>Publication date</b> | <b>Closing date</b> |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs   | SMP-COSME-2026-EYE                  | 3/02/26                 | 16/04/26            |
| EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation  | SMP-COSME-2026-EUJAPAN-IBA          | 24/02/26                | 25/03/26            |
| Creation of EU biohubs for strategic collaboration and SME scale-up support   | SMP-COSME-2026-BIOHUB               | 25/02/26                | 29/04/26            |
| SME Innovation Support in Connected and Automated Mobility (CAM)  | SMP-COSME-2026-CAM                  | 25/03/26                | 27/05/26            |
| Supporting sustainable competitiveness of tourism SME   | SMP-COSME-2026-TOURSME-01           | 24/02/26                | 28/04/26            |
| Sustainable growth and building resilience in tourism: Improving the competitiveness of tourism SMEs, encouraging start-ups and female entrepreneurs in tourism | SMP-COSME-2026-TOURSME-02           | 25/06/26                | 03/09/26            |
| Upskilling and reskilling the Tourism Ecosystem   Tourism Knowledge hub and Tourism Data Space  | PPPA-2026-TOURISM-CAPACITY-BUILDING | 09/12/2025              | 04/03/2026          |
| Net-Zero AI4Permitting  | PPPA-2026-NETZERO                   | 11/03/2026              | 19/05/2026          |

**Planning calls for tenders 2026:**

| <b>Call title</b>  | <b>Call identifier</b> | <b>Publication date</b> | <b>Closing date</b> |
|--|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| SME Policy - Late Payment Directive<br>(Continuation of the Observatory)   | GRO/SME/25/14213       | Q1 2026                 | Q2 2026             |
| Developing blueprints of efficient channels and methods to facilitate access of entrepreneurs at risk of insolvency to early warning mentors |                        | Q2 2026                 | Q3 2026             |
| International Intellectual Property SME Helpdesks  |                        | Q2 2026                 | Q3 2026             |

**SMP /INTERNAL MARKET STANDARDISATION****Planning calls for proposals 2026:**

| <b>Call title</b>   | <b>Call identifier</b>              | <b>Publication date</b> | <b>Closing date</b> |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Support to Standardisation activities performed by CEN, CENELEC and ETSI  | SMP-STAND-2026-ESOS-01-IBA          | 26/03/26                | 10/06/26            |
| Support to Standardisation activities performed by CEN, CENELEC and ETSI  | SMP-STAND-2026-ESOS-02-IBA          | 8/07/26                 | 08/10/26            |
| Support to Standardisation activities performed by CEN, CENELEC and ETSI  | SMP-STAND-2026-ESOS-03-IBA 21/10/26 | 21/10/26                | 14/01/27            |
| Support to organisations representing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and societal stakeholders in standardisation activities | SMP-STAND-2026-A3-IBA               | 11/03/26                | 20/05/26            |
| Establishment and functioning of Union testing facilities 2026  | SMP-SURV-2026-EUTF-01-IBA           | 20/05/26                | 12/08/26            |

**Planning calls for tenders 2026:**

| <b>Call title</b>  | <b>Call identifier</b> | <b>Publication date</b> | <b>Closing date</b> |
|--|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Joint Action on the Compliance of Products 2027 (JACOP 2027) |                        | Q2 2026                 | Q3 2026             |

## Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) Instrument

### Planning calls for proposals 2026:

| <b>Call title</b>                                 | <b>Call identifier</b> | <b>Publication date</b> | <b>Closing date</b> |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Interregional Innovation Investments Strand 1     | I3-2026-INV1           | 13/05/2026              | 12/11/2026          |
| Interregional Innovation Investments Strand 2a    | I3-2026-INV2a          | 13/05/2026              | 12/11/2026          |
| Interregional Innovation Investments Strand Cap2b | I3-2026-Cap2b          | 22/10/2025              | 19/03/2026          |