



HORIZON EUROPE

THE EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION PROGRAMME

2021 – 2027

CLUSTER 2
InfoDay Work Programme 2026
26 March 2026

Rickard Bucksch
Policy Officer
Directorate-General for Research and Innovation
Unit '*Democracy, Equality and Culture*'

Horizon Europe Cluster 2, Work Programme 2026: **CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CCIS**



EXPECTED IMPACT

The full **potential** of cultural heritage, arts and cultural and creative industries and sectors as drivers of both sustainable **innovation** and a European **sense of belonging** is realised through a continuous **engagement** with society, citizens and economic sectors.

EUROPE'S SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY AND COMPETITIVENESS

Unlock the innovative power of our cultural heritage and CCIs

- “Artistic intelligence”: The power of the arts to boost innovation and competitiveness
- Creative startups for disruptive innovation
- AI integration in CCSI work practice
- Cultural and creative content in the era of generative AI
- Creative alliances: Global partnerships for CCI innovation

SUPPORTING PEOPLE, STRENGTHENING OUR SOCIETIES AND OUR SOCIAL MODEL

Cultural heritage, the arts and the CCIs for resilient and socially sustainable societies

- Safeguard linguistic diversity
- Prevent illicit trafficking of cultural goods

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-01: RIA

“Artistic intelligence”: harnessing the power of the arts to address complex challenges, enhance soft skills and boost innovation and competitiveness

€ 15.0
million

~3 projects

Expected outcomes

- Better understanding of **Art-Science-Tech innovation potential**; guidance, toolkits, methodologies
- Strengthened Art-Science-Tech networks; expanded artist opportunities in science-technology engagement
- **AND one focus** to be chosen:
 - Approaches and methods for integrating arts and creativity to **enhance soft skills** across sectors
 - **3 low-TRL pilots on emerging technologies** developed by interdisciplinary teams including artists

Scope

- Artistic research fosters inter- and **transdisciplinary thinking** and **creativity-driven innovation** across policy areas. EU initiatives (SciArt, S+T+ARTS) show art-science-tech collaborations enhance scientific progress, bring human-centred perspectives to emerging technologies, make complex concepts accessible.
- Need to consolidate understanding of transformative potential, develop evaluation methods, **distill insights for policy application**.
- Consortia should include artists/creatives. Financial support to third parties up to €60,000 available

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-02: IA

Boosting creative startups for disruptive innovation

€ 12.0
million

~2 projects

Expected outcomes

- Deepened **knowledge of specific factors favouring the growth of creative startups**, in particular those with potential for **disruptive innovation**
- Effective **methods to favour the growth of creative startups** are developed and put in practice
- Depending on the option chosen, **at least one creative startup** supported via the action:
 - a) **becoming a scaleup** or
 - b) succeeding in **bringing a disruptive innovation to the market**

Scope

- The CCIs count a high rate of startups, and those are among the early adopters of new technologies
- However, few European creative startups scale up and contribute to disruptive innovation
- To better support European creative startups to grow into scaleups and multiply their potential as high-impact disruptive innovators, additional measures are needed
- These measures should build on and improve existing knowledge and support systems

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-03: IA

AI integration in CCSI work practice: catalysing innovation and competitiveness

€ 15.0
million

~3 projects

Expected outcomes (all required)

- **Insights, guidelines, methods and tools** supporting full AI integration in CCI practices
- **Scenarios for CCI-tailored and co-created solutions** using quality data, federated data sources, digital infrastructures, inclusive cooperation
- **Ethical AI-powered solutions** and tools that benefit creators, cultural professionals, and society
- CCI empowered as drivers of innovation, competitiveness and societal wellbeing through ethical and inclusive AI mastery

Scope

- Despite AI's transformative potential and increasing use by CCI, **comprehensive understanding is lacking of enabling frameworks and what's missing** in terms of data, standards, infrastructures, computing power, tools, knowledge, and capacity for CCI to fully embrace AI opportunities.
- Proposals should **assess CCI AI readiness, investigate barriers, develop tailored scalable tools, and pilot innovative solutions** (in one or both options: value chain innovation, or accessibility and inclusion)

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-04: RIA

Towards a fair and transparent market for cultural and creative content in the era of generative AI

€ 12.0
million

~3 projects

Expected outcomes

- **Deep socio-economic analysis** of generative AI impacts on CCI: creators' rights, value chains, consumption patterns, market dynamics
- Scenarios, standards and agile **solutions for transparent, trustworthy generative AI supply chains**: from provenance detection, to rights management to long-term preservation of AI-generated works
- **Adaptive policy frameworks** embedding ethical considerations in AI developments relevant for CCI and their market
- **Systemic innovation framework** enabling agile experimentation for sustainable, future-proof CCI

Scope

- Gen. AI's impact on CCI is complex and multifaceted. While offering new possibilities, it raises concerns about copyright, manipulation, revenue models and employment.
- Novel frameworks and solutions for managing AI-generated cultural and creative content and establishing business models, infrastructures and policies for a fair market are needed.
- **Transparency is key**; challenges include access to quality data, content accuracy, identification of copyright holders and rightsholders, and ensuring fair compensation. *Disclaimer: information not legally binding*

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-05: RIA

Creative alliances: Fostering global partnerships in cultural policies and CCI innovation

€ 15.0 million

~4 projects

Expected outcomes

- **Comprehensive evaluation** of cultural policy models, CCI ecosystems and promotion strategies worldwide; identification of opportunities for cross-regional collaboration and global CCI development
- **International partnerships** established for knowledge exchange, and/or for boosting CCIs and facilitating collaborative productions across world regions
- **Actionable strategies** for cross-regional collaborations to leverage creative innovation for resilience and Global Europe.

Scope

International partnerships strengthen cultural and creative innovation while supporting sustainable development and global relations. Proposals should examine innovative approaches that benefit partners while enhancing Europe's global standing.

Focus 1: CCI innovation beyond borders – pilot projects for cross-regional CCI cooperation

Focus 2: International cultural relations for global resilience – testing innovative forms of ICR, cultural diplomacy, intercultural dialogue, and mutual understanding

Priority regions: Africa, Far East, South-East Asia, Latin America

Disclaimer: information not legally binding

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-06: RIA

Safeguarding linguistic diversity in Europe

€ 11.5
million

~2 projects

Expected outcomes

- Enhanced understanding of **how to encourage multilingualism in society**;
- Strategies and policy recommendations for promoting multilingualism and **safeguarding linguistic diversity**;
- Citizens empowered and engaged in the sustainable management of their own linguistic heritage;
- Maps and visual presentations showing the linguistic diversity in Europe.

Scope

- Linguistic diversity as a fundamental part of Europe's cultural heritage, and of cultural diversity;
- Knowledge and culture are lost when languages are lost;
- Aim: document and map the situation of linguistic diversity in Europe;
- Consider existing frameworks, initiatives and working terminology established by the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-07: CSA

Preventing and fighting illicit trafficking of cultural goods



1 project

Expected outcomes

- **Cross border and cross domain** cooperation with **uptake** by Law Enforcement Authorities and experts
- Increased **evidence collection** and **intelligence** with **actionable solutions**
- **Consolidation** of existing solutions, tools and platform with operational systems and methodologies
- Capacity building, practical learning materials and trainings
- A robust and long-term **operational sustainable plan**

Scope

- Building on existing proven expertise develop a mature and highly integrated market ready ecosystem based on LEA systems, operational interfaces, developed among LEAs and relevant stakeholders to ensure effective and measurable impact
- Strengthen collaboration between relevant stakeholders to boost capacity in cataloguing and provenance
- Improve data quality & data governance between the different players and access to interoperable critical databases
- Open source intelligence and interpolation of diverse datasets to provide evidence

Disclaimer: information not legally binding



DEADLINE TO APPLY
23 September 2026
17:00 - Brussels time



Tips



Read the **topic text**, the **general introduction** and the **general annexes** carefully!



Start **early** and submit **before** the deadline



Connect to the **live InfoDay 26 March** and ask questions via **Slido**



Ask your National Contact Point (NCP) for **help** and **use** the brokerage platform



Thank you!

HorizonEU

<http://ec.europa.eu/horizon-europe>



© European Union 2021

Unless otherwise noted the reuse of this presentation is authorised under the [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license. For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the EU, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective right holders.

Image credits: © ivector #235536634, #249868181, #251163013, #266009682, #273480523, #362422833, #241215668, #244690530, #245719946, #251163053, #252508849, 2020. Source: Stock.Adobe.com. Icons © Flaticon – all rights reserved.