

DECISION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

Approving the ranked lists of innovation actions selected for funding and the list of rejected proposals under the Europe's Rail call for proposals

HORIZON-ER-JU-2023-01

N° 06/2024

THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE EUROPE'S RAIL JOINT UNDERTAKING, (hereafter referred as "EU-RAIL")

Having regard to Council Regulation (EU) No 2021/2085 of 19 November 2021 establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe and repealing Regulations (EC) No 219/2007, (EU) No 557/2014, (EU) No 558/2014, (EU) No 559/2014, (EU) No 560/2014, (EU) No 561/2014 and (EU) No 642/2014, and in particular point of Article 17(2)(u).

Whereas:

- (1) On 30 November 2022, the EU-RAIL Governing Board adopted the Europe's Rail Work Programme 2023-2024 (hereafter WP 2023-2024) as amended on 23 June 2023 and on 5 December 2023¹. This amended WP 2023-2024 was the basis for the launch of the call for proposals HORIZON-ER-JU-2023-01, which was published on the Horizon Europe Funding and Tenders Portal on 4 October 2023 with a deadline of 7 February 2024 at 17:00:00 Brussels time.
- (2) The call for proposals HORIZON-ER-JU-2023-01 comprised a total of 7 topics open to entities eligible under the general rules of Horizon Europe Work Programme. Each of those topics had its own dedicated budget line. Hence, projects do not compete against each other for the same budget insofar as they come under different topics.

¹ <https://rail-research.europa.eu/about-europes-rail/europes-rail-reference-documents/europes-rail-annual-work-plan-and-budget/>

- (3) In return to its 2023-01 call for Proposals, the Europe's Rail received 24 proposals for a total estimated value of EUR 66 577 248,13 and a funding request of EUR 66 577 248,13.
- (4) The proposals were verified for their compliance with the admissibility requirements and eligibility conditions of the call. During the verification, it was found that 21 proposals were admissible. 1 proposal was found inadmissible, while 2 other proposals were found inadmissible and ineligible. The list and the detailed reasons for inadmissibility and ineligibility of proposals is provided in **Annex 4** of the Decision. As a result, 21 proposals were declared admissible and eligible by the Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking.
- (5) The proposals submitted were evaluated by an evaluation committee composed of independent experts, as set out in Horizon Europe Work Programme (General Annexes - Annex F) and in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the WP 2023-2024 (Annex VIII). On the basis of this evaluation, amongst the 21 proposals considered eligible, the experts established a ranking list per topic (Annex 1 of the Decision). The experts recommended a priority order of proposals having equalled or passed all the award criteria thresholds (i.e.: "excellence", "impact" and "quality and efficiency of the implementation"), as well as a list of proposals not retained for funding (Annex 2 of the Decision) since they did not meet the overall thresholds and/or one or more of the individual thresholds.
- (6) In accordance with the procedures laid down in the Guide on the procedures from proposal submission to managing grants under Horizon Europe (Online Manual), one independent observer was appointed by the Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking to observe and offer independent advice on the conduct and fairness of all phases of the evaluation process, on how evaluators apply award criteria and on how to improve processes. The report of the independent observer (**Annex 3** of the Decision) concluded that "the evaluation was impartial, fair and confidential, constituting an international best-practice example in this respect".
- (7) The Governing Board took note and acknowledged the Report of the Acting Executive Director on the outcome of the call for proposals HORIZON-ER-JU-2023-01, which includes the Call Evaluation Report with its annexes, as well as the individual evaluation summary reports which will be attached to the individual notification letters to be sent to the applicants. Nevertheless, Annexes 8, 10, 11 and 12 of the report were not disclosed to the private Founding Members of the Governing Board due to the risk of Conflict of Interest.

- (8) Having examined the results of the evaluation process as reported in the Call revaluation report, the Acting Executive Director recommends to fund one activity per topic in the ranking order stemming from the independent experts' evaluation (Main list" flagged proposals in Annex 1: EU ranked list(s) for an indicative total amount of EUR 21 198 125,67 and to consider the unused budget of EUR 1 874,33 (compared to the total budget appropriation of EUR 21 200 000,00) for other operational activities of the JU in 2024 or the following years.

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The ranked lists pertaining to the call for proposals HORIZON-ER-JU-2023-01 including the lists of actions selected for funding and the reserve list (Annex 1), the list of proposals that do not meet the applicable thresholds for funding (Annex 2) as well as the list of inadmissible and ineligible proposals (Annex 4), are approved.

Article 2

The Executive Director shall inform the applicants of the results of the evaluation and shall communicate simultaneously to each of them the relevant individual evaluation summary reports, as an attachment to the notification letter. For the actions selected for funding, the notification letter sent by the Executive Director shall invite applicants to start the grant preparation.

Article 3

This Decision shall enter into force on the day following that of its adoption.

Done at Brussels, on 9th April 2024.

For the Governing Board

Magda KOPCZYNSKA

The Chairperson

- Annex 1: Ranked lists pertaining to the call for proposals HORIZON-ER-JU-2023-01 including the lists of actions selected for funding and the reserve list.
- Annex 2: List of below threshold proposals pertaining to the call for proposals HORIZON-ER-JU-2023-01.
- Annex 3: Independent Observer's Report.
- Annex 4: List of inadmissible and ineligible proposals.