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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	European Research and Innovation Area Committee (ERAC) – plenary session, 12-13 October 2026, Dublin European Partnerships under the next Framework Programme - state of play on priority areas (additional document for the ERAC plenary meeting)

European Research and Innovation Area Committee (ERAC) delegations will find attached a background note on "European Partnerships under the next Framework Programme – state of play on priority areas (additional document for the ERAC plenary meeting)", in view of the ERAC plenary on 12-13 October 2026.



European Partnerships under the next Framework Programme – state of play on priority areas

Additional document for the ERAC plenary meeting

12-13 October 2026

The Commission proposal and position of the Council (PGA) for Horizon Europe 2028–2034 calls for a more selective, strategic and coherent portfolio of European Partnerships, used where they provide clear added value compared with other implementation approaches.

Since the previous ERAC discussion, the portfolio-building process has progressed from the identification of R&I needs towards an increasingly selective and coherent portfolio, drawing on input from Commission services, MS/ACs and the independent Expert Group. This has resulted in an emerging portfolio configuration, reflecting proposed choices on prioritisation and thematic aggregation.

The purpose of this ERAC discussion is to take stock of progress and seek strategic guidance on the ambition and coherence of the emerging portfolio, in particular whether it provides a sufficiently focused basis for areas where a partnership approach brings clear added value.

The emerging portfolio remains work in progress and should not be considered a final Commission proposal. It will continue to evolve through the iterative process, taking into account further exchanges with MS/ACs and within the Commission, advice from the Expert Group and, in particular, the results of the open public consultation closing on 16 October.

1. CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

The Commission in its proposal for Horizon Europe 2028–2034 and the Council in its partial general approach (PGA) set a clear direction towards a **more selective, strategic, and coherent portfolio of European Partnerships**. Partnerships should not be the default instrument for addressing important R&I priorities.

The proposed Regulation provides that they should be established “**only in cases where Union action alone or other forms of support under the Programme cannot achieve the desired objectives**”, and for challenges requiring “a critical mass of resources and a unified and coordinated approach” across actors.

The objective of the portfolio exercise is therefore not simply to identify important R&I areas, but to determine **where a partnership is genuinely the right instrument and how the resulting partnerships form together a coherent whole**. This means focusing the future portfolio on areas that contribute to strategic European priorities, require long-term substantial R&I efforts, and where achieving the objectives depends on **sustained pooling and alignment of resources, priorities, and activities** across the Union, Member States, industry, and other partners. The **broader funding toolbox** creates an opportunity to clarify the distinctive role of European Partnerships and to use them where **long-term coordination and integration provide clear added value over other forms of support**. At portfolio level, it also means considering the scope and complementarities of partnerships, addressing potential overlaps and gaps, and ensuring the coherence of the portfolio as a whole.

The resulting portfolio should therefore be **limited and coherent**, concentrating the partnership instrument where its specific characteristics are necessary to achieve the intended objectives.

2. CONSULTATION: FROM THEMATICS TO SCOPING OF PARTNERSHIP AREAS

Commission services and Member States (MS)/Associated Countries (ACs) were consulted in parallel to identify the thematic priorities they considered should be addressed through the future European Partnerships portfolio¹. The consultation gathered contributions from **15 Commission services and 30 Member States and Associated Countries**², resulting in approximately **1000 thematic suggestions** (85% of which MS/ACs suggestions).

¹ Collecting input at the level of thematic areas instead of proposing fully defined partnership areas:

- allowed countries and policy DGs to identify priority needs and gaps without being constrained by predefined structures
- avoided artificial boundaries or premature choices on how themes should be grouped
- ensured that inputs are complementary rather than competing

² 26/27 MS (missing Greece), 4 ACs (UK, Türkiye, Norway, Switzerland) + 15 DGs/services. (AGRI, CLIMA, CNECT, DEFIS, EAC, ENER, ENV, GROW, HERA, INTPA, MARE, MOVE, REGIO, RTD and SANTE)

There is a large common core between current partnerships and future priorities. The bigger change is in how these priorities are framed and how they could be grouped.

Broad consultation areas and examples of thematic families (Number of entries)													
 Digital, AI & Data 226				 Health, Life Sciences & Care 181				 Industry, Manufacturing & Materials 125					
Digital platforms, virtual worlds & language tech		Artificial Intelligence & Foundation Models		HPC, quantum & advanced computing		Health data, digital health & care systems		Health security & preparedness		Advanced manufacturing & automation		Critical raw materials & value chains	
Semiconductors, photonics & microelectronics		Cybersecurity & trusted digital infrastructure		AI for science & research data		Personalised medicine, therapies & diagnostics		Rare, brain & chronic diseases		Clinical research & trials		Advanced materials & textiles	
Robotics & Autonomous Systems		Connectivity, Cloud & Digital Infrastructure								Metrology & quality infrastructure		Sustainable chemistry & industrial circularity	
One Health, AMR & veterinary health													
 Energy, Climate & Industrial Decarbonisation 91				 Environment, Biodiversity, Water & Circularity 87				 Society, Culture, Education & Democracy 67					
Clean energy systems & renewables		Storage, batteries & flexibility		Industrial decarbonisation & carbon management		Hydrogen & renewable fuels		Climate adaptation, observation & resilience		Biodiversity & ecosystems		Water resilience & management	
								Circularity, Raw Materials & Industrial Value Chains		Pollution & chemical safety		SSH, social innovation & work transitions	
										Education, skills & talent		Cultural heritage, creative industries & sport	
										Cities, urban transitions & regions		Democracy, trust & disinformation	
 Food, Agriculture & Bioeconomy 59				 Transport & Mobility 29				 R&I System, SMEs & Horizontal Enablers 24					
Food systems & territorial nexus		Agriculture, agroecology & soil		Bioeconomy & bio-based value chains		Clean aviation & aeronautics		Road mobility, automotive & electromobility		Rail & multimodal logistics		Maritime transport & shipping	
										SMEs, scale-ups & innovation financing		R&I system, infrastructures & capacity	
 Ocean, Maritime & Polar 27				 Space & Aerospace 22				 Security, Defence & Resilience 18					
Blue economy, fisheries & marine resources		Polar, Arctic & Antarctic		Ocean observation & blue tech		Space technologies, systems & services				Defence, dual-use & civil security			

Numbers indicate count of submitted entries.

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The **thematic inputs** were progressively translated into potential partnership areas through thematic consultations across Directorate-Generals of the European Commission, drawing on the expertise of relevant Commission services across policy domains and advice from the independent Expert Group³. These areas have been tested and consolidated through an iterative process. The **methodology and considerations guiding this process** are set out in **Annex I**, including the successive assessment of partnership necessity and portfolio-level choices on prioritisation, aggregation and mainstreaming.

The **criteria** and considerations for selection, prioritisation and aggregation are:

- the justification for the need for a partnership approach
- the long-term relevance and stability of the underlying R&I priorities
- opportunities for integration identified during the consultations, including options on which full consensus had not been reached

³ Commission Expert Group on the Design and Selection of Directional Initiatives under the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation ([E03996](#))

- thematic proximity, interdependencies and the potential to build broader coherent ecosystems
- the size, maturity and coherence of the relevant ecosystem, and whether it provides sufficient critical mass for a dedicated partnership
- complementarity with other available instruments and initiatives, including EU Missions, existing partnerships which will remain active well into or throughout Horizon Europe 2028-2034⁴, and the extent to which these already address the identified needs
- the potential for sustained industry engagement and commitment
- the breadth of support reflected in the number of Commission services and MS/ACs proposing thematics
- the overall coherence, balance and level of aggregation of the portfolio

The mode of implementation should be proportionate to the needs of each partnership area, with work programme-based partnerships as the default approach. Treaty-based partnerships (Art. 185 and 187) should be reserved for cases where a dedicated legal entity is justified.

At the previous exchange with MS/ACs in the Partnership Knowledge Hub, three portfolio configurations were presented to expose different levels of selectivity and aggregation and support discussion of the associated trade-offs. Following this discussion and further portfolio-level consolidation, the Commission is now presenting **an emerging configuration that maintains the intended level of streamlining ambition**, while drawing on the elements and feedback gathered through the preceding iterations. Moving to a single configuration provides a more concrete basis for further discussion and convergence.

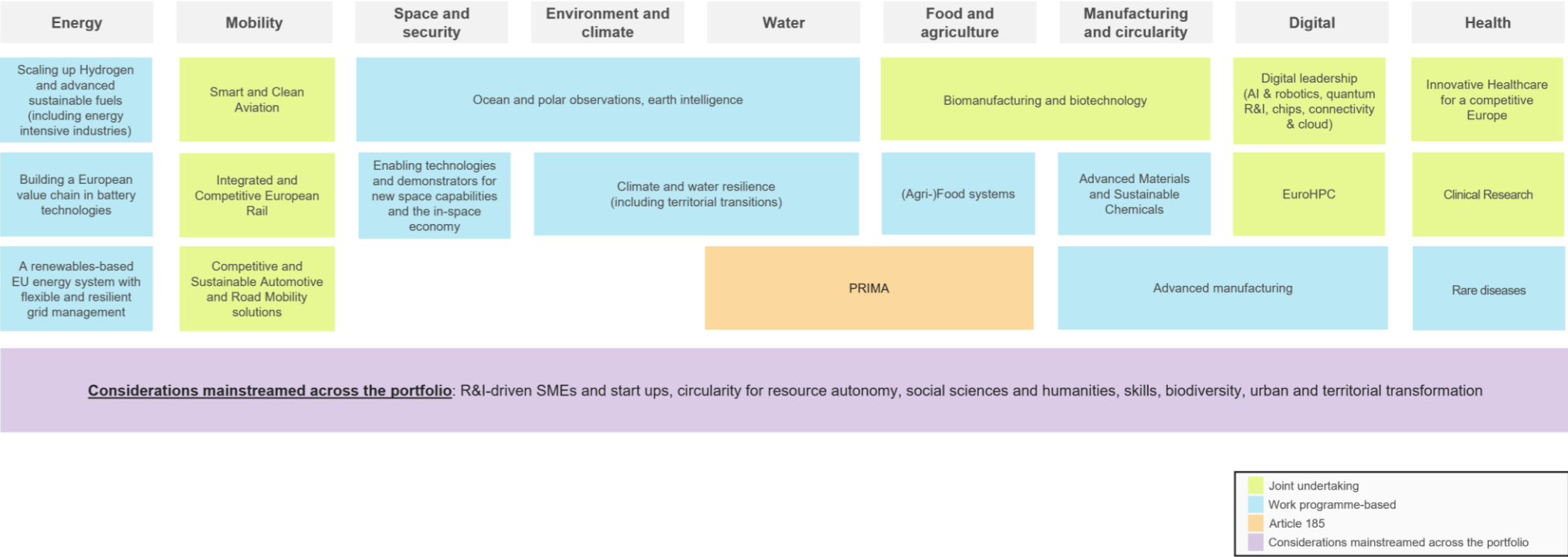
3. THE EMERGING DRAFT PORTFOLIO CONFIGURATION

The proposed portfolio of 19 partnerships, together with the proposed mainstreaming of cross-cutting areas, covers or provides a potential pathway for addressing around 80% of the thematics received through the consultation of Commission services and MS/ACs. Analysis of configurations addressing all requests made by Commission services showed that expanding the portfolio would provide relatively limited additional thematic coverage, while increasing fragmentation.

⁴ End dates listed below include a winding up phase – where no calls are launched – of typically 2-3 years.

Taken together, these observations suggest that the **configuration below achieves the strongest degree of streamlining while retaining broad coverage of the current portfolio**. Its broader partnership areas also provide greater scope to capture synergies and foster collaboration across disciplines, sectors and value chains, rather than reproducing existing thematic boundaries.

This is particularly relevant from a forward-looking perspective. **A more integrated portfolio should not only rationalise the current landscape, but create space for new combinations of knowledge, technologies, and actors to emerge**. Cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary collaboration is an important driver of innovation and can help ensure that the future portfolio remains adaptable as technologies, markets, and European strategic priorities evolve.



Scope descriptions are available in Annex III.

Disclaimer: The indicated modes of implementation are preliminary. Work programme-based partnerships are the default, while the case for Treaty-based partnerships will be further substantiated through the relevant preparatory processes, including the Impact Assessments, before being confirmed.

4. CONSIDERATIONS MAINSTREAMED ACROSS THE PORTFOLIO

For some cross-cutting areas, **integration across the portfolio was considered more appropriate than a dedicated partnership**, as their contribution is relevant across multiple thematic areas rather than confined to a single partnership ecosystem. This applies in different ways to:

- social-sciences & humanities and skills as horizontal enabling dimensions
- R&I-driven SMEs and start-ups as key innovation actors
- urban and territorial transformation as a place-based dimension for implementation
- biodiversity and circularity for resource autonomy as cross-cutting considerations to be embedded in relevant R&I and value-chain transformations

Mainstreaming does not mean relying on these dimensions to emerge organically, nor does it imply lower policy priority. Where relevant, their integration should be **systematic and visible**, including through partnership objectives and Strategic Research & Innovation Agendas (SRIAs), participation of relevant actors and expertise, dedicated activities where appropriate, and monitoring of their effective integration. The approach should be tailored to the nature of each cross-cutting dimension.

Mainstreaming across partnerships would also be **complemented by relevant activities elsewhere in Horizon Europe 2028-2034**, notably through the **Societal Challenges component** and **Part III ‘Innovation’**, as appropriate. **Existing Partnerships extending into FP10**, such as Social Transformations and Resilience (2027–2034), could also provide expertise and support integration across the wider portfolio.

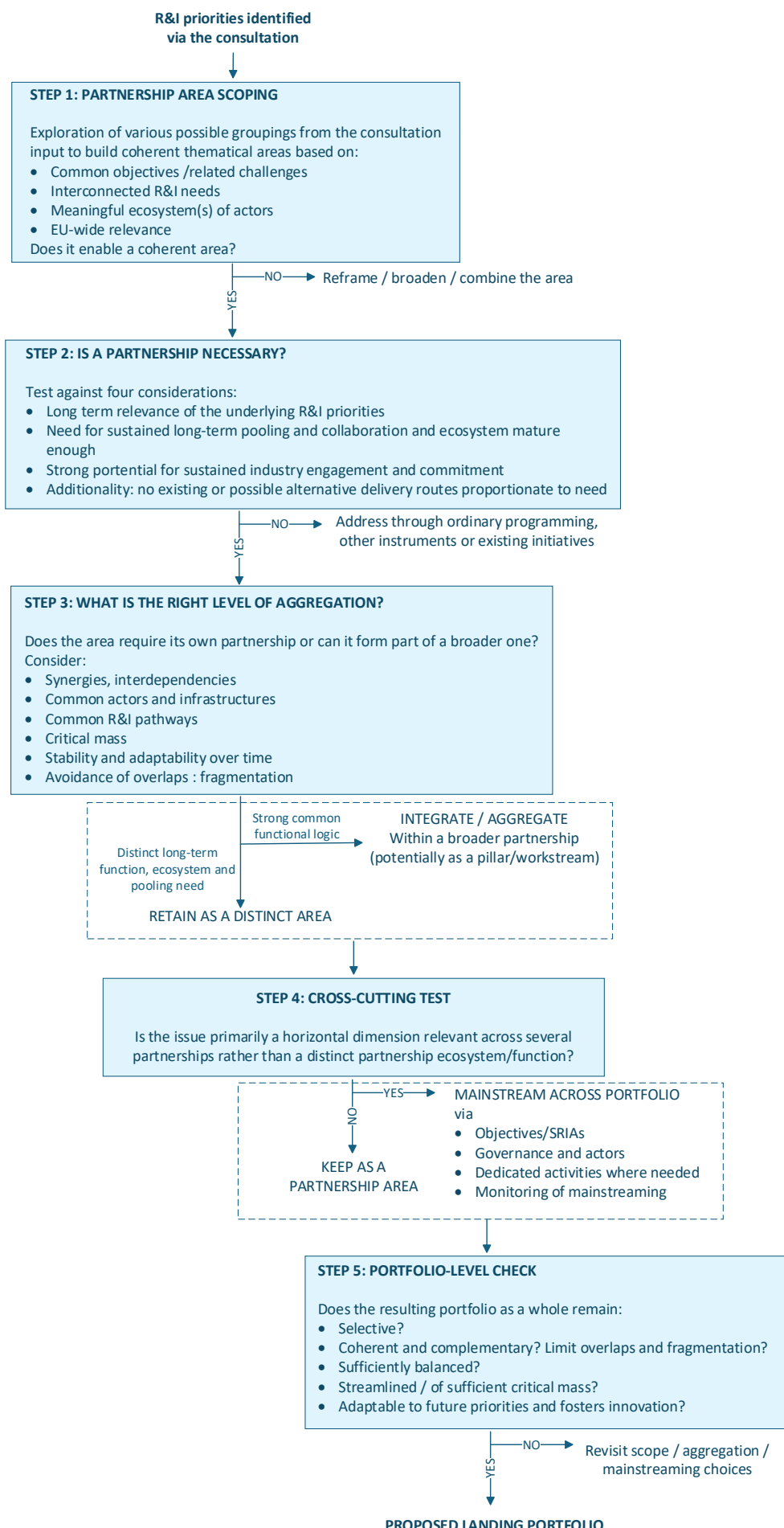
ANNEX I: PROCESS

The methodology reflects the process preferred by MS/ACs. When consulted in March 2026 on alternative approaches, over 90% of delegations favoured a process combining meaningful bottom-up input with strategic direction, followed by assessment and consolidation at portfolio level, over an approach based on reconfiguring the existing partnership landscape. This approach has therefore guided the construction of the emerging portfolio.

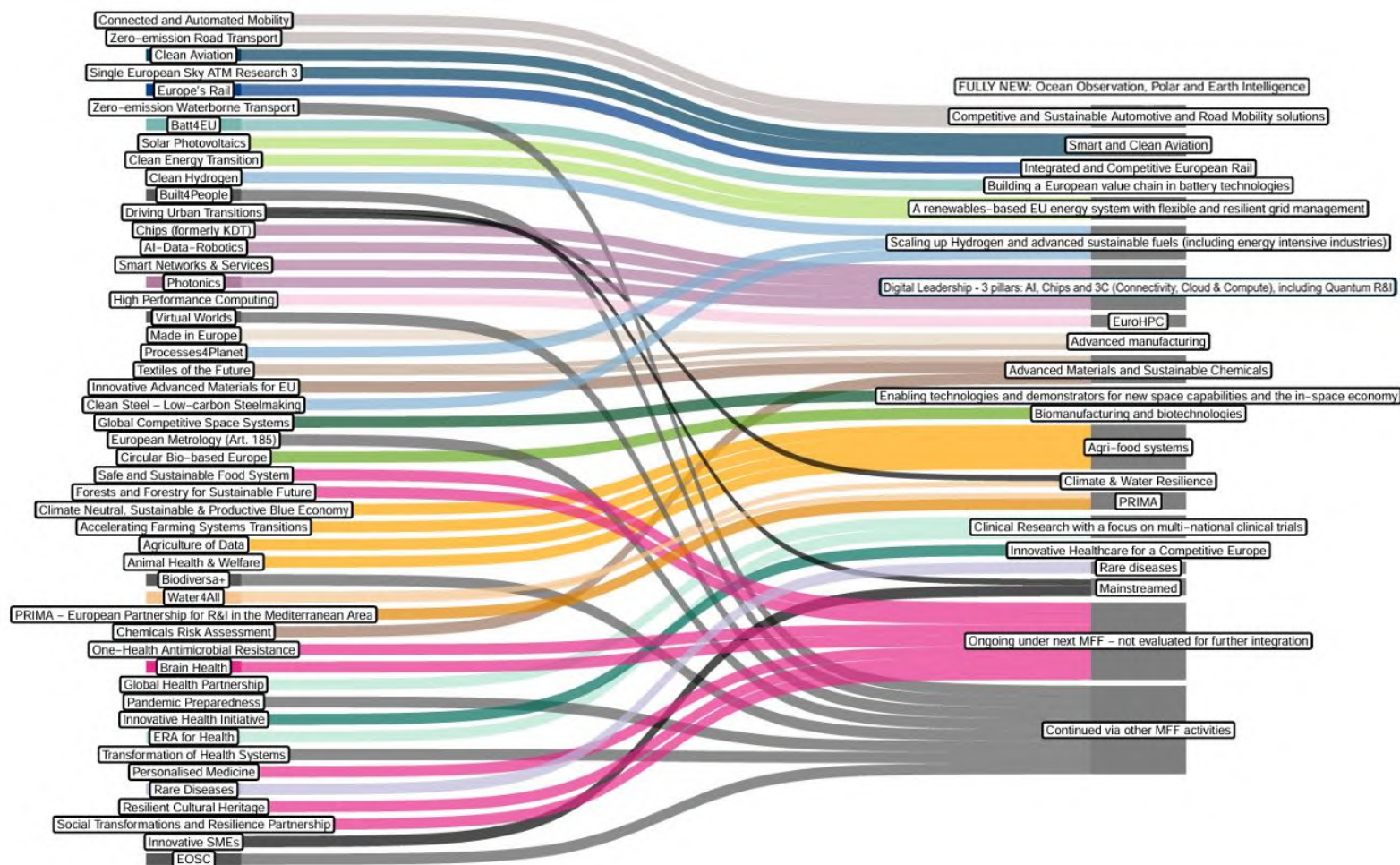
The **decision tree** below provides an illustration of this methodology, translating the agreed approach into a more structured format. It does not introduce a new methodology or additional criteria, but makes the underlying logic and successive steps more explicit. It illustrates how the process moves from a broad landscape of thematic needs towards a selective and coherent portfolio. Successive filters test first whether a partnership approach is warranted, and then whether an area should be retained as distinct, aggregated, mainstreamed or addressed through another instrument, taking into account the portfolio as a whole.

The framework provides a structured basis for judgement, not a mechanical scoring or pass/fail exercise. It is deliberately qualitative and evidence-informed: successive consultations help test the case for individual areas and the choices between keeping them distinct, aggregating, mainstreaming or addressing them differently. This provides consistency while recognising that portfolio construction ultimately involves **judgement and trade-offs**.

The distinction between partnership necessity and portfolio-level assessment is essential: many R&I areas can make a credible individual case for a partnership, and assessing each in isolation would naturally lead to portfolio expansion rather than the intended rationalisation. Non-retention therefore does not mean that an area “failed” the criteria or is not a priority. It may instead reflect a portfolio-level choice to address the same objectives more coherently through aggregation, mainstreaming or another delivery route.



ANNEX II: RELEVANCE OF THE EMERGING PORTFOLIO CONFIGURATION TO THE EXISTING PORTFOLIO OF PARTNERSHIPS⁵



⁵ IMPORTANT: The graph provides a preliminary mapping of the relevance of proposed Partnership areas to existing Partnerships, based on connected R&I activities and/or underlying sectoral and scientific ties. As Partnership scopes and selection modalities will be further refined through discussions with Commission services, MS/AC and stakeholders, these links may evolve. The figures should therefore be interpreted only as an indication of the potential level of streamlining under each configuration and do not prejudice the future of any existing Partnership.

ANNEX III: SCOPES

Disclaimer: The scope descriptions are indicative and remain subject to further refinement. The boundaries of individual partnership areas are interdependent and will need to be further developed as the overall portfolio configuration and interfaces between areas are consolidated.

<u>Scaling up Hydrogen and advanced sustainable fuels (RFNBOs, biofuels, e-fuels)</u>	13
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Scaling up Hydrogen and advanced sustainable fuels (including energy intensive industries)

Scope

The partnership area will cover hydrogen (electrolytic and biological) and advanced sustainable fuels (RFNBOs, advanced biofuels, e-fuels) as fuels and feedstocks for energy-intensive industries and other hard-to-abate sectors, as well as for renewable energy integration. It will address their shared value chains and enabling technologies (electrolysers, CO₂ capture, synthesis, sustainable feedstocks, catalysts, storage and distribution), including emerging pathways such as direct solar fuels. For energy-intensive industries, it will support the transformation of industrial processes towards competitive, low-carbon and circular production, including the integration of low-carbon energy and feedstocks, circular carbon and resource-efficient production routes and breakthrough process technologies. The focus is on cutting costs, scaling manufacturing and industrial uptake, building EU supply chains and infrastructure, and ensuring sustainability and common standards.

Implementation mode:

Work programme-based

Building a European value chain in battery technologies

Scope

The partnership area will cover the entire battery value chain as a single, dedicated area: sustainable raw materials and advanced materials, battery chemistries, cell design, manufacturing and industrial scale-up, battery management systems, integration into end-use applications, second-life use and recycling, including the recovery of critical raw materials. Its aim is to build a European battery value chain by addressing these elements together, linking upstream technology development with downstream applications and circularity. Applications span transport, stationary storage and industry. Coordination mechanisms with relevant partnerships covering the downstream applications and end-of-life such as on automotive, advanced materials and manufacturing will be sought.

Implementation mode:

Work programme-based

A renewables-based EU energy system with flexible and resilient grid management

Scope

The partnership area will cover the operation and transformation of a secure, renewables-based European energy system in which centralised and decentralised solutions co-exist. It will address:

- **Affordable and Reliable Variable Renewable Energy (VRE) technologies** – reducing cost and increasing efficiency, resilience and reliability of VRE technologies in various climates and system configurations;
- **Smart and digital grid management**, including AI-enabled energy management;
- **System flexibility**, including storage integration and demand-side flexibility and response that reduce and shift peak loads;
- **Energy efficiency**, with end-use sectors as an active source of flexibility;
- **Sector coupling** with renewable heat, electrified transport, buildings and industry;
- **Local energy system orchestration**;

- **Grid resilience** at transmission and distribution level.

Alongside system operation, it will also cover European manufacturing capacity, including for advanced wind and photovoltaics, grid equipment (substations, transformers, power electronics) and storage. The objective is to integrate fast-growing shares and configurations of renewables and electrified end-uses while maintaining security, affordability and resilience.

Implementation mode:

Work programme-based

Smart and Clean Aviation

Scope

The partnership area will cover R&I for the whole aviation ecosystem, merging the scopes of the current Clean Aviation and SESAR Joint Undertakings and opening to new actors such as start-ups and SMEs in electrification and digitalisation. Horizon Europe support will focus mainly on low- to mid-TRL work (up to TRL 6) in three domains:

- **The aircraft of the future**, including fully electric, hydrogen and hybrid-electric aircraft, aviation-grade energy storage and digital-native systems;
- **Next-generation air traffic management**, including AI-based trajectory prediction and automation;
- **Market segments not covered by previous partnerships**: drones, eVTOL, small aircraft and rotorcraft, potentially with strong dual-use content.

Industrialisation and deployment would be supported through links to the European Competitiveness Fund and other instruments. The area is limited to aviation and is linked to the smart and clean aviation moonshot in the Horizon Europe proposal.

Implementation mode:

Joint undertaking

Integrated and Competitive European Rail

Scope

The partnership area will cover the entire rail system as one integrated value chain: rolling stock, infrastructure, signalling and control-command, traffic management, communications, operations, data, maintenance and certification. Key cross-cutting technologies are automation, digitalisation and cybersecurity. It will tackle market fragmentation through common interoperability rules, joint testing and shared standards, and reduce dependence on non-EU suppliers across the system. It is centred on four strands:

- **A simplified and integrated European rail system**, with lower costs through process automation, fewer physical assets and streamlined delivery;
- **Next-generation rail freight operations** based on European digital solutions;
- **A resilient and recoverable railway system**, through real-time monitoring, condition-based maintenance and adaptive operations;
- Innovative EU high-speed rail corridors.

Implementation mode:

Joint undertaking

Competitive and Sustainable Automotive and Road Mobility solutions

Scope

The partnership area will cover the next generation of road vehicles and mobility systems, bringing together electrification, battery technologies for automotive and power electronics, software-defined vehicle architectures, connectivity, cybersecurity, AI-based automated driving, charging and grid integration, advanced manufacturing and circularity. It will take a full value-chain approach, from components and materials to vehicle platforms and system-level solutions. It will address common deployment challenges such as automated-driving testing, vehicle-to-infrastructure communication, and smart and bidirectional charging. The aim is to strengthen competitiveness and reduce strategic dependencies by turning innovation into industrial capacity, standardised solutions and large-scale market uptake. The area is limited to road transport, with coordination mechanisms towards other transport modes. It would merge the current 2Zero and CCAM partnerships into a single ecosystem. It would in addition address the pressing challenges of the EU automotive sector like electrified propulsion (road-mobility-specific layers of battery technologies), digitalisation (system and autonomous driving software) and industrialisation. All this in coordination with the relevant partnerships.

Implementation mode:

Work programme-based

Ocean and polar observations, earth intelligence

Scope

The partnership area will cover the understanding of the Earth system based on observations, with a particular focus on the ocean and polar regions, and turning the resulting data into actionable intelligence, by integrating them with other data and information. It brings together three strands:

- **Ocean observation technologies and marine robotics**, from research to industrialisation and operational deployment, with applications across the blue economy, including security and defence. This includes sensors, fixed and mobile platforms, autonomous and remotely operated vehicles, and the associated data technologies. It also covers shared testing facilities, standards and demand aggregation.
- **Sustained and coordinated observation of the ocean and polar regions**, linking observations to needs and impact through system design, technologies and infrastructures at national, European and global level (including the Global Ocean Observing System). **Earth intelligence**: combining Earth observation and other data with AI and digital twins into solutions and services for policy areas such as climate, agriculture, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, maritime planning, security and health, and supporting international environmental agreements.

Implementation mode:

Work programme-based

Enabling technologies, technological and pre-operational demonstrators for new space capabilities and the new in-space economy

Scope

The scope of the space partnership would focus on:

- The identification and maturation of enabling upstream technologies that can be used for different space systems (Earth Observation, Satellite Communications, Access to Space, Satellite Navigation, In-Space Operations and Services). Such enabling technologies can include digitalisation enablers (e.g., on-

board processing technologies, AI/ML, Quantum etc.), inter-satellite links, cybersecurity technologies, technologies relevant for Access to Space (propulsion, reusability, health monitoring, etc) and technologies relevant for In-Space Operations and Services (automation and robotics technologies, interfaces, markers, electric propulsion, etc), etc.

- Technological demonstrators in relevant environments and/or in space, depending on the targeted TRL.
- Pre-operational demonstrators in the form of pilot or precursor space missions, offering new service prototypes beyond technological demonstrators, also supporting the development of business cases for the new in-space economy. Such demonstrators are instrumental for the establishment of new capabilities and services.

The above scoping elements will contribute to the emergence of new space capabilities in Europe and of a new in-space (orbital) economy, featuring new applications, and products, with European champions able to compete in the global market.

Implementation mode:

Work programme-based

Climate and water resilience including territorial transitions

Scope

The partnership area will cover R&I and its bridge to deployment of solutions for a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Europe, with a focus on cities and territories. It will:

- Develop integrated adaptation and mitigation solutions, including nature-based ones, that address climate hazards and their cascading effects. These locally tailored solutions will be tested and scaled in real territorial systems through co-funding, joint procurement and regulatory sandboxes.
- Protect and restore the water cycle and build a water-smart economy, through integrated and digital water management, water reuse and efficiency, sustainable desalination, dry cooling, irrigation, water-cycle modelling and integrating sponge city concepts to favour infiltration through nature-based solutions.

Note: The potential integration of water resilience with climate resilience and territorial transitions into a single partnership is still being explored.

Implementation mode:

Work programme-based

PRIMA

Scope

The partnership area covers sustainable water management, agri-food systems, and the food value chain, water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus. The partnership could build on the current PRIMA to include aquaculture in the scope of food systems, if agreed by Participating States. Enhanced synergies and complementarities with other funding instruments (such as EU Missions in Horizon Europe) are to be ensured.

Implementation mode:

Article 185

Biomanufacturing and biotechnology

Scope

The partnership area aims to leverage biotechnology and biomanufacturing to foster EU production of innovative products and services from sustainable feedstock, and at a competitive price, while reducing dependence on imported and/or fossil-based resources. It is structured around three pillars and one horizontal action, supported by cross-cutting enablers (e.g. digitalisation, artificial intelligence, public awareness):

- Sustainable and autonomous feedstocks: increase the use of sustainable feedstock in the EU industry.
- Safe and Sustainable Processing Technologies: accelerate the industrial-scale uptake of biomanufacturing, including biotechnology, within a framework that enhances circularity, zero-pollution and nature-positive impact.
- Market-Driven Bio-Based Products & Services: Support lead markets with a view to enable the industry to create strong business cases in the EU.
- Strategic autonomy and regional transformation (horizontal): strengthen regional bioeconomy ecosystems, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe and in rural and coastal areas.

Note: in the absence of a clear EU definition for biomanufacturing, in this text biomanufacturing refers to both: i) The processing of biological feedstocks using any type of technology to deliver services and products. AND/OR ii) The use of biotechnology to process any type of feedstock to deliver services and products. This text (or any text further scoping the partnership) may need to be amended if a new definition is adopted.

Implementation mode:

Joint undertaking

(Agri-)Food systems

Scope

The partnership area will create a framework for long-term, closer-to-market R&I cooperation between all actors along the entire EU agri-food value chain. Its aim is to co-design and upscale competitive, resilient, sustainable and healthy solutions, up to full market deployment at industrial scale. It will address common issues relevant to the whole value chain, complementing sector-specific partnerships through an integrated value chain approach. It is structured around common foundations (technologies, socio-economic opportunities, environmental sustainability, resilience, One Health) and three pillars:

- Pillar 1: Agriculture
- Pillar 2: Fisheries and aquaculture
- Pillar 3: Food processing and consumers

Implementation mode:

Work programme-based

Advanced Materials and Sustainable Chemicals

Scope

The partnership area will cover advanced materials (e.g. composites, nanomaterials) and sustainable chemicals developed according to the SSbD framework, supporting their move from laboratory discovery to market. It will address key challenges such as:

- Reduce dependencies on critical raw materials and hazardous substances;
- Develop, and improve, testing and characterisation methods for advanced materials;
- A fully digitally-based discovery and development process
- Generate data to support regulatory processes;
- Autonomous labs linking the virtual and physical worlds.

Implementation mode:

Work programme-based

Advanced manufacturing

Scope

The partnership area will cover advanced manufacturing technologies (e.g. machinery, tooling, additive manufacturing, robotics and humanoids) that are digital, flexible, circular and that are critical to the long-term competitiveness and resilience of EU industry. This includes:

- Digitalisation and automation for production flexibility and increased quality, productivity and resource efficiency;
- New advanced production technologies and skills to produce key products in the EU and bring them to industrial scale faster;
- Changes to product design, machinery and processes that enable circularity.

This is a cross-cutting area which helps EU companies reducing production lead times, responding more rapidly to changing market demand and manufacturing increasingly complex and customised products.

Implementation mode:

Work programme-based

Digital leadership

Scope

The partnership area will address 3 pillars: AI, chips and 3C (cloud, connectivity and compute), including quantum R&I. The Chips pillar covers the implementation of Chips 2.0 in Chips strand, AI Chips, photonics, quantum chips and strategic projects. The AI pillar will cover data, data spaces, Industry, Physical AI, Agentic AI, GPAI and integration into verticals, including Resource for AI Science in Europe (RAISE – strengthening and supporting the EU's capabilities in AI across scientific disciplines). 3 C will cover Connected Intelligent Systems, open-source, softwarisation, future internet, cloud and edge technologies,

Grand Challenges (data centres sustainability, performance and security, Cloud software/hardware stacks, Integration/deployment for verticals.

Implementation mode:

Joint undertaking

EuroHPC

Scope

The partnership area will cover advanced computing as a coherent computing continuum, from sovereign HPC hardware and software through quantum processors and hybrid HPC–quantum architectures to applications and user access. It will connect the acquisition, operation, federation and access of frontier computing infrastructures with R&I in hardware, software, algorithms and applications. It will also provide common pathways for testing, benchmarking and deployment.

Implementation mode:

Joint undertaking

Innovative Healthcare for a competitive Europe

Scope

The partnership area is the evolution of the Innovative Health Initiative, building on a globally established brand of almost 20 years of successful public–private collaborations beginning in 2008 under the Innovative Medicines Initiative and continued from 2021 under IHI.

It builds on the scientific and organisational capital of these programmes have built, and continues their most successful activities:

- expertise from disease understanding and pre-clinical research to clinical studies, across the whole continuum of care;
- networks and infrastructures linking industry, academia, patients, regulators and HTA bodies;
- the data, cohorts and tools their projects produced.

It then develops this capital further, carrying innovations past proof of concept and into healthcare systems. Co-funded by the health industry, with Member States and foundations/philanthropies playing a stronger role in setting priorities, it develops the shared infrastructures, methods and networks to make Europe the best place to develop and scale health innovations. These include shared research and evaluation methods that help regulators, HTA bodies, payers and care providers assess new health innovations, and pre-clinical and clinical testbeds in care settings across several Member States.

It is built as the research and innovation engine of the European Competitiveness Fund's Health, Biotech, Agriculture and Bioeconomy window. The aim is a partnership whose results reach patients faster while strengthening the global competitiveness of Europe's health industry.

Implementation mode:

Joint undertaking

Clinical Research

Scope

The partnership area will cover clinical research with a focus on supporting multi-country clinical trials, moving towards a single market for clinical research. It will act as a platform for Member States and private sector, including philanthropies, to align clinical research agendas, pool funding, and strengthen and integrate clinical research infrastructures, including harmonisation, standardisation, digitalisation, data sharing and skills development. It is disease-agnostic and technology-neutral, organised around pillars set by its governing bodies. These pillars could refer to specific diseases (e.g., cancer, brain), collectives (e.g., women's health, paediatrics) or technologies (e.g., medical devices). It will also have a global scope with a dedicated strand focused on global health issues, building on the work made in partnership with Africa through the Global Health EDCTP3 JU.

Implementation mode:

Joint undertaking

Rare diseases

Scope

The partnership area aims to close the diagnostic and therapeutic gap for people living with a rare disease (including rare and paediatric cancer) by organising, at European scale, the research that fragmented national populations cannot support. Its specific objectives are to:

- Shorten the diagnostic odyssey through genomics, newborn screening research and coordinated reanalysis of undiagnosed cases;
- Build natural history knowledge, registries and outcome measures to trial-readiness standard;
- Accelerate therapy development, including drug repurposing, advanced therapy medicinal products and gene therapies for ultra-rare conditions with no commercial pathway;
- Strengthen multi-country clinical trial capacity;
- Advance regulatory, health technology assessment and evidence-generation science adapted to very small populations;
- Make rare disease data findable and usable.

Implementation mode:

Work programme-based