

# Bioeco<sup>2</sup>: Towards an Ecological Bioeconomy Interrogating Concepts and Practices from the Human and Social Sciences

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## “Navigating European Research Funding: Opportunities in Bioeconomy”

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### Abstract:

European funding has become a cornerstone for advancing research across numerous disciplines, including bioeconomy. This session aims to provide researchers with a detailed understanding of available European funding opportunities.

It will begin with an in-depth presentation of the Horizon Europe program, focusing on its four foundational pillars<sup>5</sup>:

- **Excellent Science:** Supporting groundbreaking research and fostering global talent through initiatives like the European Research Council (ERC) and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), the European Union’s reference program for doctoral education and postdoctoral training.
- **Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness:** Addressing critical societal issues while strengthening industrial leadership in strategic sectors, including the ecological, digital, and energy transitions.
- **Innovative Europe:** Boosting innovative ecosystems and accelerating the adoption of innovative solutions.
- **Widening participation and spreading excellence:** building research and innovation capacity for countries where successful transnational research is still developing.

This first part will also highlight the role of **European partnerships**, which create synergies between the public and private sectors, co-funding projects aimed at addressing pressing societal and technological challenges, particularly in the field of bioeconomy. **A focus will be addressed on the Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU)<sup>6</sup>, a partnership designed to accelerate the transition to a sustainable bioeconomy by promoting innovation in bio-based industries. This initiative fosters the development of circular and renewable resources while supporting research, innovation, and market deployment of bio-based solutions across Europe, in the context of the European “green deal”.**

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.horizon-europe.gouv.fr/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cbe.europa.eu/>

The second part will focus on **COST Actions** (European Cooperation in Science and Technology). These collaborative networks provide a foundation for researchers to exchange knowledge and form consortia, paving the way for successful participation in larger European programs. COST is particularly useful for interdisciplinary and international research initiatives.

In the final section, participants will be guided through **the process of preparing and submitting competitive applications to Horizon Europe**. Key evaluation criteria, such as excellence, impact, and implementation, will be explored. Practical advice will be shared to help researchers align their proposals with Horizon Europe's strategic goals, supported by concrete examples and best practices.

Lastly, the session will discuss how researchers can leverage **URCA's Project Engineering Office**, which offers tailored support to streamline the application process, enhance project quality, and maximize chances of success. It will be a unique opportunity for researchers and PhD candidates to ask the Project Engineering team their questions.

By the end of this session, participants will have a clearer understanding of European funding frameworks, actionable strategies for proposal preparation, and insight into institutional support mechanisms. This knowledge will empower them to navigate the complexities of EU funding with confidence.

**Keywords:** Bioeconomy, COST Actions, ERC, European funding, European partnerships, Horizon Europe, MSCA, Research Opportunities.