

First ERAvsCorona Action Plan: short-term coordinated R&I actions

EU leaders committed to do everything possible to support research, to coordinate efforts and seek synergies within European scientific and research community. They also underlined that there is an urgent need to share scientific information and to collaborate both within the EU and worldwide. They committed to increase and accelerate support to European research teams and companies in this respect. On 26 March 2020, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen and the President of the European Council, Charles Michel stated that "Europe stands ready to set up an international online pledging event to ensure adequate funding to develop and deploy a vaccine against COVID-19."

The purpose of this first ERAvsCorona Action Plan is to identify first priority R&I work streams for coordinated action between the Commission services and the Member States taking action against the Corona virus that can be executed in the next weeks. It therefore covers first short-term coordinated actions only. It sets key measures we activate now to coordinate, to share and to jointly increase support for R&I, in line with the objectives and tools of the European Research Area. Coordination is also an important prerequisite for stepping up global cooperation, essential to tackle Corona related issues

This first ERAvsCorona Action Plan will be updated regularly with other R&I coordinated actions that can be taken in the short, medium and longer term.

	Action	How	Added Value	Target Group	Time line
A) Creating and informing on funding opportunities for researchers and innovators					
1	Coordination of R&I funding against the Coronavirus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new co-programmed partnership through Programme level cooperation (instead of ERA-NET to be faster); 	Coordinated funding for research and innovation in cases where this will lead to maximum impact, in complementarity with support to ongoing partnerships (e.g. IMI and EDCTP).	Public administrations and national funding entities.	In the coming weeks.
2	Extending and supporting large EU wide clinical trials for clinical management of Coronavirus patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional funding to extend and support the implementation of large-scale, multi-centric clinical trials across Europe : i.e. REMAP-CAP and DISCOVERY. Support could also be provided to an EU wide 	Additional funding and increased coordination will guarantee a sufficient number of patients, increasing the potential for strong and conclusive results, supporting the evidence base on therapeutic approaches to the Coronavirus. Member	Researchers	As soon as possible

		<p>study on convalescent plasma treatment).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These trial sites could be linked into an EU wide network of research sites that could be used to test new compounds or potentially for vaccine trials in the future. 	States can contribute to either of these or both, adding hospital research sites.		
3	New call 'Expression of interest' in Horizon2020 for innovative and rapid health-related approaches for responding to Coronavirus and deliver quick results relevant to society and a higher level of preparedness of health systems.	<p>Call(s) for innovative approaches, researchers in and innovators to deliver quick results relevant to society</p> <p>(1) Social and economic impacts of the outbreak response;</p> <p>(2) Medical technologies and ICT-applications;</p> <p>(3) Health systems preparedness (including manufacturing).</p> <p>Funding: Possibly an "Expression of interest" under the Societal Challenge 1 Health, demographic change and wellbeing of Horizon 2020</p>	<p>Deliver results within 18-24 months to end-users at scale._</p> <p>Data shared in 'real time' in Coronavirus-dedicated results platforms_</p>	<p>Consortia of researchers, public sector, industry, civil society organisations.</p> <p>End-users, or innovation accelerators and investors should be involved in the consortium. Projects should have a clear deployment plan and actions inside the project._</p>	As soon as possible.
4	Increasing support to innovative companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase support to the recently closed Horizon 2020 EIC pilot Accelerator addressing Coronavirus related issues both by Commission and Member States should 	<p>On the increased support: to use the opportunity of the recently closed EIC Accelerator bottom-up call where much more than 1,000 Coronavirus related applications have been received (out of a</p>	<p>Startups and SMEs developing solutions to fight against COVID-19</p>	<p>As soon as possible.</p> <p>The increased support by the Commission to EIC Accelerator recently closed bottom-up call may require an adjustment of the Horizon 2020 Work</p>

		<p>be considered eg via reallocation of budget within Horizon 2020 and the involvement of interested other investors such as national promotional institutions/banks</p> <p>• Increase support to R&I financial instruments addressing Coronavirus related issues both by Commission and Member States should be considered eg through internal reallocation of Horizon 2020 Access to Risk Finance InnovFin financial means in close cooperation with the EIB group, including priority allocation of previous and current financial instruments reflows/repayments, to Coronavirus related InnovFin products such as InnovFin Infectious Disease Finance Facility (IDFF) on the Commission side, possibly complemented</p>	<p>global number of around 4,000) to support the best applications relating on Coronavirus.</p> <p>• The support to R&I financial instruments addressing Coronavirus related issues would cope with the increasing demand of financial support notably for rapid vaccines development and deployment / upscaling of Good Manufacturing Practice production facilities of EU enterprises (for which a support under this type of instrument has already been announced).</p>	<p>• Enterprises developing innovative vaccines candidates, drugs, medical and diagnostic devices or novel critical research infrastructures (including production facility) for combatting Coronavirus.</p>	<p>Programme, depending on the option chosen.</p> <p>As soon as possible</p>
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5	<p>Creating opportunities for other funding sources to contribute to R&I actions on Coronavirus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award of Seal of Excellence for Coronavirus relevant innovations by SMEs/startups evaluated as excellent, but unfunded, under EIC calls. In addition to request consent of SMEs/Startups to provide their contacts to Structural Fund managing authorities 	<p>Maximised impact of R&I support by exploiting central evaluation of excellent projects (SMEs and MSCA)</p> <p>In particular, through the Coronavirus Seal of Excellence, MS and regions will be give the possibility to easily and quickly identify and support many of these excellent Coronavirus relevant innovations which cannot be funded by the EIC accelerator, also benefitting</p>	<p>Innovative startups and SMEs (receiving the Seal of Excellence)</p> <p>National/regional authorities too to mobilise their own funding.</p>	<p>The Seal of excellence Community of Practice will be informed in the week of 6 April of this upcoming opportunity and a meeting will be convened; as soon as available, and following project consent, info on COVID-19-related Seals will be provided to them (mid-April & May) .</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore State aid favorable treatment to COVID seal proposals. • Explore additional and complementary opportunities for the Seals: national / regional funding, private foundations, InvestEU, Access4SMEs project also in Interaction with EIC COVID Community Platform (see below). • 	by State Aid compatible higher co-funding rates.		
6	Establish a one-stop shop for Coronavirus R&I funding	<p>Extend the existing platform with information on Commission funding to a “ERA Corona platform” with information on both Commission and national calls on Coronavirus.</p> <p>Information on national funding opportunities can be sent to: 5.1.2e@ec.europa.eu</p>	<p>A complete overview of all ongoing R&I funding initiatives on the Coronavirus.</p> <p>This platform could indicate which national calls are open for all Member States.</p> <p>Links with other initiatives (CEPI, GloPID-R, WHO, etc) could be included.</p>	Researchers and innovators.	<p>The platform exists with information on Commission funding and could immediately be expanded with information from national authorities. See https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/covid-19</p>
B) Creating framework conditions for researchers and innovators					
7	Establish an ad-hoc High Level R&I Task Force on the Coronavirus	Nominations by Member States and Commission	To advise on possible R&I actions of EU relevance on identified medium and long-term priorities and to communicate about coordinated R&I actions to	Member State experts covering a range of expertise to address health, social, economic and other Coronavirus related aspects	In the coming weeks

			the general public.		
8	Access to Research Infrastructures (RIs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repurposing existing Commission grants to Research Infrastructure projects in cooperation with beneficiaries • Extra funding to ongoing projects providing vital Coronavirus services <p>Information on relevant services provided by RIs to be gathered (via ESFRI and relevant Horizon 2020 funded projects) to be presented on relevant Platforms (EOSC, ESFRI, ERA Corona).</p>	The availability of the services provided by RIs (analytical facilities, biological samples, reagents, pathogen labs, regulatory support, social science RIs etc) and of the data they hold (eg for the re-testing of raw data and assessing the societal effects and effectiveness of pandemic responses) is vital for researchers working on the Coronavirus. New services (including HPC and AI) and datasets (see also action 10) are being brought on stream and it is important to match supply and demand across borders.	Researchers	As soon as possible; information on available services will be provided on existing Platforms (see for example the EOSC, ERF and ESFRI site) and will be continuously updated.
9	Research data sharing for SARS-CoV-2 and the Coronavirus	<p>Establishment of European data exchange platform for SARS-CoV-2 and Coronavirus-related information exchange, connected to the EOSC.</p> <p>The Commission services are working with the European Bioinformatics Institute (EBI) of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) and a number of other partners, initiatives and projects to create a European research data exchange platform on the</p>	To quickly share research data and results to accelerate discovery. Researchers should be required to provide immediate and full OA and to share research outcomes (data, models, workflows, results) that are as FAIR as possible in real time.	Researchers and innovators	Initial deployment of the platform is expected by the end of April supported by EMBL-EBI's management. The platform shall bring together a number of other European initiatives and infrastructures and will link to national and community data repositories. It will complement other platforms for knowledge exchange targeted at health practitioners, clinicians or policy makers.

		<p>virus/disease to allow the research community to share and access relevant data faster (including raw research data and other research output such as protocols and workflows). This scales up ongoing efforts by EMBL, ELXIR (the European research infrastructure for life science information) and other partner organisations to implement the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC).</p>			
10	<p>Pan-EU Hackathon to mobilise European innovators and civil society</p>	<p>Patronage given by the Commission to a pan-European Hackathon (#EUnitedvsVirus) which will be organised through a coalition with the organisers of the hackathons held in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Spain.</p>	<p>To shorten the time to deployment of innovative solutions developed by startups and policy makers. Innovators will be able to leverage the work already done by other innovators in Europe instead of starting from scratch or redoing the work done already by other innovators.</p> <p>To provide information to hospitals and public administrations on the existing innovative solutions in other Member States.</p>	<p>Civil society, Startups, policy makers and innovators in general</p>	<p>24-26 April 2020</p>