

Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area (WIDERA)

Work Programme 2026 - 2027

We have categorized the calls from the WIDERA work programme 2026-2027 according to the impact that microfluidics can have on the projects and related topics. We are sharing our analysis in case it can help you with project funding efforts. And, of course, if our expertise can be of use to you, we would be delighted to discuss it further.



How to read the stars in terms of the % of microfluidic technologies' relevance for the call:

By microfluidic relevance, we mean the relevance of microfluidic technologies to the topic in question.

Additionally, we outline key points on how a microfluidic partner could contribute to the topic.

Relevance (%)	90-100	80-89	70-79	60-69	50-59	40-49	30-39	20-29	10-19	0-9
Relevance (*)	*****	****	***	**	*	—	--	---	----	-----

Administrative dates per call:

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-01/04/05-WIDENING 01: Opening 13 Jan/23 Apr 2026, deadline 24 Sep 2026

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-02-WIDENING-01: Opening 08 Jan 2026, deadline 09 Apr 2026

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-03-WIDENING-01: Opening 02 Sep 2026, deadline 04 Mar 2027

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026 06-WIDENING-01: Opening 09 Apr 2026, deadline 09 Sep 2026

HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-07-ERA: Opening 10 Dec 2025, deadline 24 Mar 2026

HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-01-WIDENING-01: Opening 05 May 2027, deadline 18 Nov 2027

HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-02/03-WIDENING: Opening 06/07 Apr 2027, deadline 08/14 Sep 2027

HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-04-ERA: Opening 08 Dec 2026, deadline 11 Mar 2027

******* HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-01-WIDENING-01 - EIC PRE-ACCELERATOR**

- **Type of Action:** CSA
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 40.00
- **Expected EU contribution per project (M€):** 0.30-0.50
- **# projects:** 100

Scientific focus

- Mono-beneficiary support for **SMEs established in Widening Countries** to accelerate **deep-tech commercialization** and pave a pipeline towards the **EIC Accelerator**.
- Grants sized for **feasibility, validation, early traction** activities; **funding rate 70%**.
- Expected to combine **business services, technical maturation, IP strategy, market discovery**, investor readiness, and links to national/EU instruments.
- Orients projects to **raise TRL**, de-risk adoption, and **crowd-in private investment**.
- Designed to be **country-contextualized** while building EU-level excellence pathways.

Why microfluidics could be impactful

- **Microfluidics is textbook deep-tech:** hardware + wet-lab validation + regulated markets (diagnostics, biotech) - fits the pre-accelerator's maturation and business-building services.
- Funding can underwrite **beta prototypes, biological validation, design-for-manufacture** (polymer chips), **biocompatibility testing**, and **QMS steps** toward ISO 13485.
- Supports **IP bundling** (chips, surface chemistries, cartridges), **freedom-to-operate** checks, and **clinical KOL** engagement.
- Bridges to **EIC Accelerator** readiness and to **industrial pilots** with OEMs/instrument makers.

******* HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-03-WIDENING-01 - EXCELLENCE HUBS**

- **Type of Action:** CSA
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 100.00
- **Expected/project:** 1.50-4.50
- **# projects:** 30

Scientific focus

- **Networks of regional innovation ecosystems in Widening Countries**, built on **quadruple-helix** collaborations (academia, business/SMEs, public sector, citizens).
- Mandatory **joint cross-border R&I strategy** aligned with **Smart Specialization** and EU priorities.
- **R&I component** (distinct work package) to close knowledge gaps and generate **tech with market potential**; **not** the dominant cost share.

- **Investment plans, pilot/demonstrator pre-planning, and secondments** to cement durable collaboration and industrial uptake.

Why microfluidics is relevant

- Microfluidics can serve as the **industrial anchor** for **bio-med/bioprocess/diagnostics** hubs, co-authoring the strategy and shaping **pilot lines** for **polymer chip** manufacturing.
- Provides **application-driven R&I** (organ-on-chip, cell culture-on-chip, single-cell analytics) to **validate ecosystem strengths** and catalyze **investor interest**.
- Helps design **innovation pathways** (GMP-adjacent cleanroom microfabrication, consumables scale-up), **supplier networks**, and **standardization** (interfaces, cartridges).
- Leads **skills & training** modules (microfluidics design, biocompatibility, entrepreneurship), strengthens **university-industry pipelines**, and **valorization** plans.
- Enhances **synergies** with cohesion funds and regional healthtech strategies via demonstrators co-sited in hospitals/bioclusters.

**** HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-04-WIDENING-01 - HOP-ON FACILITY

- **Type of Action:** RIA
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 30.00
- **Expected/project:** 0.20-0.60
- **# projects:** 60

Scientific focus

- Adds **one new beneficiary from a Widening Country** to an **ongoing** Horizon Europe **Pillar II** or **EIC Pathfinder** action that currently has **no Widening entity**.
- Proposal is submitted by the **coordinator of the ongoing action**; ≥90% of the grant goes to the **new Widening beneficiary** (≤10% coordination fee).
- The new beneficiary must deliver a **clearly defined task/WP** with **demonstrable R&I added value**.

Why microfluidics is relevant

- Contributions fit well: **on-chip assays, bioprocess analytics, POC diagnostics modules, standardized testbeds** (reproducibility, QC).
 - Microfluidics' **specialized prototyping + biology** enable quick impact within the residual project time.
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***** HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-06-WIDENING-01 - ERA FELLOWSHIPS**

- **Type of Action:** TMA Postdoctoral Fellowships - European Fellowships
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 8.00
- **# projects:** 50

Scientific focus

- Mirrors **MSCA-PF** rules but **reserved budget for Widening** to enhance mobility/excellence.
- Supports **postdoctoral fellows** hosted in eligible organizations; strengthens **career development**, training, and **intersectoral exposure**.

Why microfluidics is relevant

- Host **postdocs** to advance **organ-on-chip**, **cell culture micro-bioreactors**, **single-cell workflows**, **polymer chip process optimization**.
 - Fellows can drive **open protocols**, **standardized datasets**, and **validation in clinical/industrial settings** through secondments with microfluidics' partners.
 - Useful to **seed future IA/RIA** proposals and **recruit permanent talent**.
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***** HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-03-WIDENING-01 - ERA FELLOWSHIPS**

- **Type of Action:** TMA Postdoctoral Fellowships - European Fellowships
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 8.00
- **Estimated # projects:** 50

Scientific focus & microfluidic fit: Same structure/benefits as 2026

**** HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-02-WIDENING-01 - TWINNING**

- **Type of Action:** CSA
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 258.00
- **Expected/project:** 0.80-1.50
- **# projects:** 210

Scientific focus

- Capacity-building partnerships between a **Widening coordinator** and **at least two leading institutions (HEIs/RPOs)** in the chosen field.
- Activities include **training**, **short visits/secondments**, **summer schools/workshops**, **management upskilling**, **knowledge transfer**, and **limited joint R&I**.
- Aim: raise **research excellence & management quality**, embed **ERA practices**, ensure **sustainability** beyond the grant.

Why microfluidics is relevant

- As an **industrial training partner** and **application use-case provider**, microfluidics can help shape **practice-oriented curricula** (chip design, fluidic interfacing, cell-on-chip), host **short secondments**, and co-define **benchmarks/testbeds**.

** HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-07-ERA-04 - PILLAR II: PILOTING INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO SUPPORT ACADEMIC STARTUPS & SPINOFFS

- **Type of Action:** CSA
- **Call:** Call - Enhancing the European R&I system (2026)
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 4.00
- **Expected/project:** ~2.00

Scientific focus

- **Pilot services/models** to support **academic spinoffs/startups**: guidance, **methodologies**, **test-and-validate with users/markets**, and **knowledge valorization synergies**.
- Large stakeholder coverage; portfolio learning; links to the **EU Knowledge Valorization Platform**.

Why microfluidics is relevant

- Provides **specialized prototyping facilities** and **go-to-market playbooks** (OEM partnering, cartridge recurring revenue).
- Adds **entrepreneurship training** specific to **lab hardware + bio-validation**.

** HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-04-ERA-02 - PILLAR II: TALENT ECOSYSTEMS FOR ATTRACTIVE EARLY RESEARCH CAREERS

- **Type of Action:** CSA
- **Call:** Call - Enhancing the European R&I system (2027)
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 30.00
- **Expected/project:** 2.00-4.00
- **# projects:** 12

Scientific focus

- Builds **ecosystems** that improve early-career **attractiveness, mobility, intersectoral paths**, aligned with the **European framework for research careers**.
- Activities could span **training, placements, services, and policy interfaces** across institutions and sectors.

Why microfluidics is relevant

- Microfluidics contributes to industry placements and mentored projects (microfabrication, assay integration, device reliability), **sharpening employability and industry-ready skills**.
 - Co-designs **competence frameworks** for bio-microfabrication and **open-bench standards**.
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*** HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-07-ERA-03 - PILLAR II: STRENGTHENING ECOSYSTEMS FOR OPEN, ETHICAL & SUSTAINABLE ERA**

- **Type of Action:** CSA
- **Call:** Call - Enhancing the European R&I system (2026)
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 6.00
- **Expected/project:** 2.00
- **# projects:** 3

Scientific focus

- Ecosystem-level actions for **research ethics & integrity, environmentally sustainable science, open science, knowledge valorization, research careers**.
- Examples include **networks for green labs** (energy/waste), **EOSC-aligned data practices, international open-science standards**.

Why microfluidics is relevant

- Microfluidics enables **lower-reagent/low-waste** experimentation - a **core lever for green labs**; microfluidics can contribute **protocols & benchmarks**.
 - Standardization of **FAIR data** and **reproducible chip assays** align with open-science ecosystem building.
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*** HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-07-ERA-08 - PILLAR IV: ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE FOR ERA**

- **Type of Action:** RIA
- **Call:** Call - Enhancing the European R&I system (2026)
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 16.00
- **Expected/project:** 1.50-2.50
- **# projects:** 8

Scientific focus

- Research to **create new methods/evidence** supporting **ERA policy design & monitoring** (open science, research careers, integrity & ethics, gender equality, etc.).
- Produces **policy-relevant indicators, frameworks, and tested practices** for implementation.

Why microfluidics is relevant

- Microfluidics can co-design **reproducibility toolkits** (standard chips, reference materials, QC metrics) as **case studies** feeding ERA metrics.
 - Offers empirical data on **environmental impacts** vs conventional lab workflows (reagent savings, waste).
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*** HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-07-ERA-01 - PILLAR I: ACCELERATING OPEN ACCESS & RESEARCH-ASSESSMENT REFORMS IN ERA**

- **Type of Action:** CSA
- **Call:** Call - Enhancing the European R&I system (2026)
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 6.00
- **Expected/project:** 2.00-4.00
- **# projects:** 2

Scientific focus

- Cascading grants to support **non-profit OA models** for scholarly societies and **institutional reforms** aligned with **ARRA/CoARA**.
- Shifts away from **JIF/h-index**; promotes **qualitative peer review**, recognition of **diverse outputs** (citizen science, science for policy).

Why microfluidics is relevant

- Microfluidics can **pilot OA data & methods** for chip assays, contribute to **assessment criteria** recognizing **engineering & translational** outputs.
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*** HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-04-ERA-01 - PILLAR I: OPEN ACCESS POLICIES VIA RIGHTS RETENTION**

- **Type of Action:** CSA
- **Call:** Call - Enhancing the European R&I system (2027)
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 2.00
- **# projects:** 1

Scientific focus

- Supports **institutional rights-retention policies** to enable **immediate OA**; outputs include **guidance, tools, training, and aligned policies** across RPOs.
 - Microfluidics intersects through **OA of methods/data** while safeguarding **product IP** (chips/consumables) - informing **balanced policies**.
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- HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-07-ERA-02 - PILLAR I: BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES FOR ETHICAL, EQUITABLE, OPEN & INCLUSIVE ERA

- **Type of Action:** Lump-sum CSA
- **Call:** Call - Enhancing the European R&I system (2026)
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 9.00
- **Expected/project:** 1.50-2.00
- **# projects:** 6

Scientific focus

- Institutional capacity-building under **four areas: ethics & integrity, inclusive gender equality, and equity in open science.**

Why microfluidics is relevant

- Provides **industry perspective** to implement **ethics-by-design** for **human/animal-on-chip** models, **data equity**, and **open-science skills**.

- HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-07-ERA-05 - PILLAR III: FOSTERING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT FOR MORE RESPONSIBLE & DEMOCRATIC R&I

- **Type of Action:** CSA
- **Call:** Call - Enhancing the European R&I system (2026)
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 2.00
- **Expected/project:** ~1.00
- **# projects:** 2

Scientific focus

- Develop **approaches/guidelines** for citizen participation & science communication; address **equity & inclusion**; portfolio balance across sub-areas.
- Microfluidics can contribute **engagement formats** (e.g., **lab-to-citizen demos** using **biochips**), but impact is **indirect**

- - HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-07-ERA-06 - PILLAR III: EUROPEAN CITIZENS' HACKATHON CHAMPIONSHIP

- **Type of Action:** CSA
- **Call:** Call - Enhancing the European R&I system (2026)
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 3.00
- **Expected/project:** ~3.00
- **# projects:** 1

Scientific focus

- Pan-EU citizen hackathon format; mobilization, inclusion, portfolio learning.
 - Potential brand/CSR value via **challenge sponsorships**; limited **R&I depth** for microfluidics.
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-- HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-04-ERA-04 - Pillar III: PROMOTING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN R&I & SCIENTIFIC LITERACY

- **Type of Action:** CSA
- **Call:** Call - Enhancing the European R&I system (2027)
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 2.00
- **Expected/project:** ~1.00
- **# projects:** 2

Scientific focus

- Two selectable areas: **(1) Youth, science & democracy, (2) Guiding principles for inclusive engagement**; aims at **broad, inclusive participation** and **evidence-based practice**.
 - Microfluidics can contribute **youth labs / hands-on demos** with safe **fluidics kits** and **career storytelling**; limited direct R&I.
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-- HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-07-ERA-07 - PILLAR III: SCIENCE COMES TO TOWN 2028

- **Type of Action:** CSA
- **Call:** Call - Enhancing the European R&I system (2026)
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 6.00
- **# projects:** 1

Scientific focus

- Multi-city science engagement (incl. **EUCYS & EU TalentOn**); requires **city authority commitments** and co-funding/sponsorship leverage.
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-- HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-04-ERA-03 - PILLAR III: SCIENCE COMES TO TOWN 2029

- **Type of Action:** CSA
 - **Call:** Call – Enhancing the European R&I system (2027)
 - **Budget (topic, M€):** 6.00
 - **# projects:** 1
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--- HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-02-WIDENING-01 - ERA CHAIRS

- **Type of Action:** CSA
- **Call:** Call - ERA Chairs and Research Managers (2027)
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 175.00
- **Expected/project:** 1.50-2.50
- **# projects:** 80

Scientific focus

- Supports appointment of **ERA Chair holders** and structural reforms in **Widening** host organizations; typically, **mono-beneficiary host institutions; long-term** capacity effects.
- **SMEs are not typical beneficiaries** (fit mainly as **external stakeholders**).

Why microfluidics is only tangentially relevant:

- Possible **advisory/adjunct** role for curriculum/industry co-creation; not a primary funding route for microfluidics.
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--- HORIZON-WIDERA-2027-02-WIDENING-02 - ERA RESEARCH MANAGERS

- **Type of Action:** CSA
- **Call:** Call - ERA Chairs and Research Managers (2027)
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 65.00
- **Expected/project:** 1.50-2.50
- **# projects:** 30

Scientific focus & microfluidics fit

- Builds **institutional research-management capacity** and professional networks in **Widening**; SME role at best **training provider/mentor** on innovation management.
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--- HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-05-WIDENING-01 - RESEARCH MANAGEMENT FACILITY

- **Type of Action:** CSA
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 7.00
- **# projects:** 1

Scientific focus & microfluidics fit

- One **facility-like consortium** to deliver **tailored support** (advice, trainings, services) that helps institutions in **Widening Countries** build research-management capacity; **the Facility does not fund implementation** at beneficiaries.

- Microfluidics' angle: niche **training modules** (e.g., regulated R&I, valorization for lab-hardware).
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----- HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-01-WIDENING-01 - TEAMING SYNERGIES

- **Type of Action:** CSA
- **Call:** Call - Teaming Synergies
- **Budget (topic, M€):** 7.00
- **# projects:** 1

Scientific focus

- Builds **coordinated platforms & synergies** to sustain/scale earlier **Teaming Centres of Excellence** using multiple funding streams (cohesion, national, private).
 - Very **narrow eligibility** (entities with Teaming track record). Microfluidics' role is **ancillary** (training/industry ties).
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Notes useful to microfluidic entity (quick strategy takeaways)

- If microfluidic entity (or a controlled SME/spinoff) is established in a **Widening Country**, prioritize **EIC Pre-accelerator - Widening (2027)** and **Hop-On (2026)** for **direct, near-term business value**.
- **Excellence Hubs** is the **consortium play** to shape a **regional microfluidics healthtech node** with durable pilots and investment plans (2026-2027 window).
- **ERA Fellowships** (both years) are **low-friction talent instruments** to expand the **organ-on-chip** and **polymer chip** R&D pipeline at/with a **microfluidic entity**.