



The Societal Readiness (SR) pilot

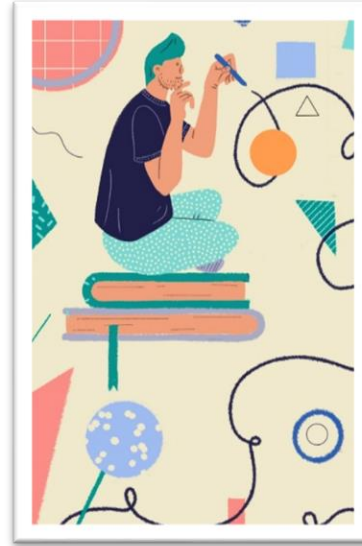


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(Policy Officer - DG RTD)
3 September 2025



What is Societal Readiness (SR)?

- SR **IS** about:
- the readiness of **R&I practices**
- forcing R&I processes that facilitate an **inclusive and society-focussed approach**
- supporting all R&I actors to do societally relevant and engaging R&I
- focusing on **mindsets, processes, practices and outcomes** so that project results are most relevant to societal challenges



- SR **IS NOT** about:
- the acceptance from societies on projects' outcomes at the latest stage of the solution's development
- rating technological solutions

SR is connected to the design and implementation of R&I, to generate better understandings so that the research would be ready to be acted upon by society.

To achieve a well-developed Societal Readiness of R&I results, social and cultural perspectives need to be covered – SSH disciplines are key to achieve that!

SSH disciplines and expertise focus on Societal Readiness goals.

Societal Readiness pilot topics in WP 2025



2) Societal Readiness (SR) pilot topics:

- Integrated in thematic topics
- Include the SSH flag (standard sentence)
- 8 SR pilot topics in WP 2025:
 - 1 in Destination 1 – (DL: Sept 2025) → 3 projects
 - 1 in Destination 3 – (DL: Sept 2025) → 3 projects
 - 1 in Destination 4 – (DL: Feb 2026) → 3 projects
 - 1 in Destination 5 – (DL: Sept 2025) → 2 projects
 - 4 in Destination 6 – (DL: Sept 2025) → 2, 1, 2, 2 projects
- 1 CSA for the pilot's monitoring and evaluation in Destination 2 – (DL: Jan 2026)

~18 projects

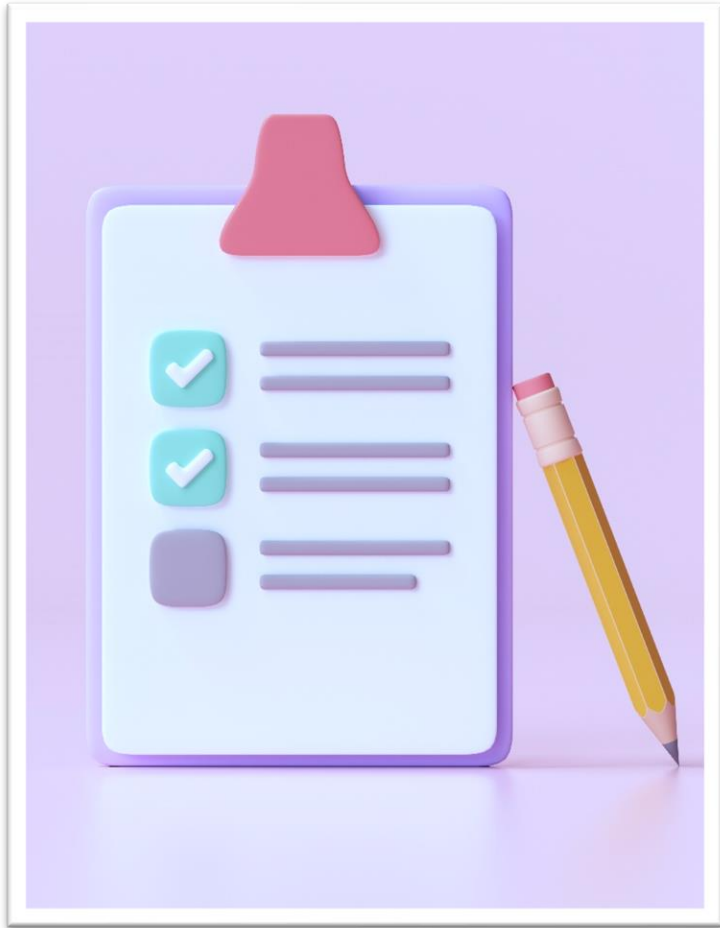
Application form

The standard template of the Application Form remains unchanged, and its **page limit is increased by two additional pages**. The proposed work is expected to **reflect an integration of Societal Readiness consideration into the overall project design**.

- The two additional pages are intended to accommodate the integration of SR in the proposal.
- They do not constitute a separate section, as SR is expected to be integrated across the whole project narrative.

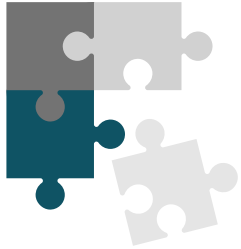
References to SSH activities requested under section 1.2 Methodology of the standard Application Form remain valid → they should aim at achieving Societal Readiness goals

Instructions for the SR pilot

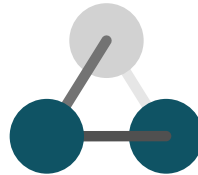


- 6-page instructions in CL5 WP 2025 main introduction including:
 - ✓ Implementation requirements
 - ✓ A list of ‘guiding questions’ following RRI* processes
 - ✓ Information on the evaluation aspect
 - ✓ Definitions of SR, SSH, RRI*

Key aspects of pilot



Interdisciplinarity



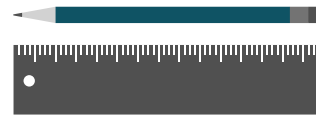
**Project
partners**



Flexibility

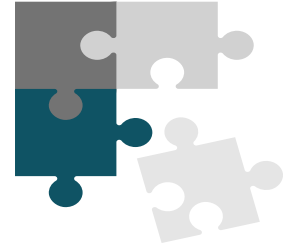


RRI* methodology



**Monitoring and
evaluation**

1- Interdisciplinarity



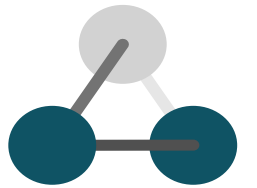
Definition*

Interdisciplinarity focuses on specific **‘real world’ system problems** and, as a result, the research process forces participants (from a variety of unrelated disciplines) to **cross boundaries to create new knowledge**, based on a common language.

Interdisciplinary work

- ☐ **brings together capabilities from diverse perspectives** fostering creativity, and a common understanding of the challenges at stake
- ☐ allows for more **comprehensive problem-solving** by combining expertise from different fields
- ☐ **encourages collaboration** and often leads to new ideas and solutions that wouldn't arise from a single discipline alone
- ☐ **enhances adaptability** making it especially valuable in tackling multifaceted real-world problems from various angles





2 - Projects' partners

Types of SR profiles

- ☐ experience in addressing **social and cultural perspectives** to e.g., design and lead **co-creation**, facilitate **inclusion**, support the consideration of and **responsiveness to societal needs and concerns**.

Involvement in proposal preparation

- ☐ from the **very beginning!** To enable the **appropriate design** of project objectives, methodology and tasks compatible with societal readiness.

Other partners (STEM)

- ☐ should **meaningfully and actively collaborate** to SR activities **across all stages** of a project life cycle.



Contributions might be of different nature but have **equal value**.
All partners share responsibility for RRI*/SR activities !!

**Responsible Research and Innovation*





3 - Methodology

RRI dimensions:

- Reflexion
- Inclusion
- Anticipation
- Responsiveness

RRI categories:

- R&I goals
- Societal actors
- Benefits and burdens
- Objections and concerns

- ☐ Based on **Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)** processes.
- ☐ The instructions include a set of **guiding questions** that are meant to bring project partners to **reflect, include, anticipate** and **respond** to the societal needs and concerns identified.
- ☐ Those four dimensions support **co-creation with societal actors** in different ways and offer a set of procedural interventions in policy makers and researchers' activities.
- ☐ They support the outreach of a **well-developed Societal Readiness**.



The guiding questions are a starting point for reflexion and it is possible to address other questions relating to RRI dimensions and categories.





4 - Flexibility

RRI guiding questions are the starting point for a comprehensive consideration of all societally-related side aspects in the development of a given solution

- ☐ Partners are **free to choose in which way SR is integrated** in the proposal and in the project, and which societal actors to engage with.
- ☐ **No prescription of specific pathways**, the expertise lies within the consortium.
- ☐ **Creative options are encouraged**, no one-size-fits-all.

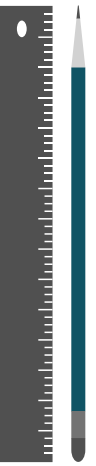


However, the horizontal instructions are common to all SR pilot projects and need to be entirely fulfilled.

5 - Monitoring and evaluation of the SR pilot

HORIZON-CL5-2026-01-D2-09: Monitoring and Evaluation of the Societal Readiness Pilot:

- Coordinating and Support Action (CSA) – 42 Months – EUR 1,5M
- Aims at learning from the pilots' implementation to improve future SR topics by:
 - analysing the way SR is addressed and integrated in piloted projects
 - supporting the designing of an efficient, clear, and impactful way of applying the SR approach in future EU funded R&I projects
- In addition, the CSA includes the following milestones:
 - **annual workshops** gathering SR pilot project partners
 - a **web platform** with tips and tricks supporting future EU projects
 - a **publication** to support effective **interdisciplinary** practices



SR deliverables

« A public report called **First report on Societal Readiness** should be delivered within the first six months of the project.

- The report will build on the Societal Readiness approach for the project as set out in the proposal.
- It should primarily focus on:
 - the project's vision for and approach to Societal Readiness;
 - reflections on initial impressions of societal needs and concerns as connected to the project;
 - preliminary responses to the guiding questions;
 - more detailed plans on how Societal Readiness will be addressed (e.g., time plans, roles and responsibilities, relation to tasks/work packages, anticipated results and how these will be integrated into the project activities).»

« A public report called **Final report on Societal Readiness** should be delivered within the last three months of the project.

- The report will reflect upon:
 - the project's experience with implementing Societal Readiness approaches;
 - any differences in experience between expected and actual outcomes;
 - challenges and lessons learned from successful or unsuccessful efforts;
 - ways in which different societal actors were identified and engaged in interdisciplinary or intersectoral activities, as well as these actors needs and concerns considered, identified, and responded to;
 - recommendations for future projects on similar thematic areas.
- The Final report on Societal Readiness is expected to directly address the questions identified in the First report on Societal Readiness. »



Summary of key points

- **SR is not penalising the project main goal, at the contrary!** → it fosters trust and legitimacy from involved actors
- **Requires real ownership/commitment from all partners** (trust in the process + proof of potential) → **No tick box exercise**
- **Collaboration at all levels**
- **Acknowledgment of the diverse array of R&I activities** and communities funded by the Commission
- **No extra administrative complexity:** no duplication with existing standards, full transparency on process



What's next?

The pilot is extended in WP 2026-2027 and integrated into three topics:

- HORIZON-CL5-2026-03-D3-23: AI-driven forecasting algorithms for Grid and Consumer friendly Energy Sharing – Societal Readiness pilot (*Deadline 31 March 2026*)
- HORIZON-CL5-2027-07-D3-33: Delivery of industrial CCUS clusters – Societal Readiness pilot (*Deadline 1 December 2027*)
- HORIZON-CL5-2027-06-D6-08: Enhancing Mobility for All: affordable, reliable, and accessible multimodal transport for inclusive rural and urban connectivity – Societal Readiness pilot (*Deadline 7 October 2027*)

Full WP 2026-2027: <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/comitology-register/screen/documents/107811/3/consult?lang=en>



Improvement of the pilot



- The Commission will collect information and feedback from:
 - The evaluation process
 - The applicants
 - The evaluation and monitoring CSA
- To improve the instructions in future calls.

Cluster 5 Infoday (6 May 2025)



Complete presentation on the Societal Readiness pilot [here](#).

Scroll down to the session title and access to the **recording** (« Watch replay ») and **slides** (« Show details » (scroll down) → « download presentation »)

Also, SR topics include related Q&A on the funding and tender portal, don't forget to check them out!

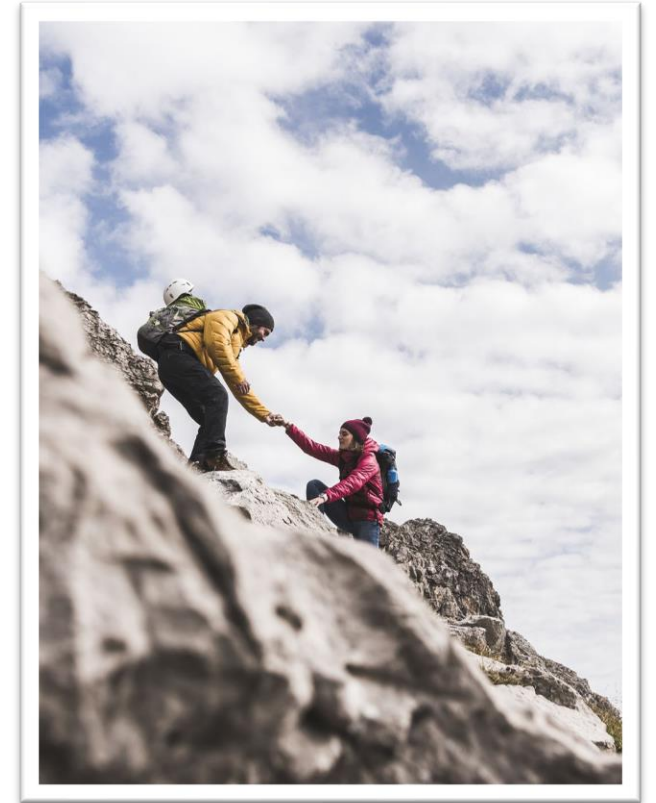
Contact and resources

Email of contact:

- EC-HE-SOCIETAL-READINESS@ec.europa.eu

Useful resources to support SR activities in piloted projects:

- [Societal Readiness Think Tool](#) – online tool
- [Engaged Research report \(IE\)](#) – report
- [Transdisciplinary collaboration \(NL\)](#) – report



Questions?

